# Indigenous Agency within 17th & 18th Century Jesuit Missions: the Creation of a Hybrid Culture in Yaqui and Tarahumar Country

---

A Thesis Presented to The Honors Tutorial College

Ohio University

---

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for Graduation

from the Honors Tutorial College

with the degree of

Bachelor of Arts in History

---

By

Catherine M. Semones

June 2010

## Introduction

The discovery of America in the 15th century instigated a new era of conquest and colonialism. This wave of Spanish imperialism was prompted by the want of new trade routes and commercial markets, but was justified with Christianity.[1] The Spanish reasoned that they must occupy and control the new lands and resources in order to fulfill their Christian duties of spreading the faith to the native populations. In order to gain control of the New World, the Spanish attempted to control and alter the economy and cultural practices of the indigenous population. *Encomiendas, mitas*, and other colonial practices facilitated economic domination. Religion regulated native social practices and facilitated cultural domination. The Spanish encounter with the natives, however, was not a one-sided affair. The indigenous populations actively engaged the colonial powers, creating, fostering, and defending relationships that were beneficial to their societies. The native population did not remain culturally static, but adapted and developed the Christian culture for the duration of their relationship with the Spanish crown.

The indigenous population interacted with the Spanish mainly through two institutions, the secular government and established, religious missions. Whereas the government was more intent on promoting prosperity through their commercial and labor relationships with the natives, missionaries were more eager to convert the native populations. Competition over access and control of native land and labor emerged and increased as the colonial period progressed. At the root of the tension

[1] Matthew Restall, *Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest (*New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 27-43.

were royal decrees and grants of authority over natives. Originally, the Spanish crown gave the conquistadors control of the natives in return for military service to the Crown. Throughout the Spanish conquest, conquistadors boasted about their military campaigns and material gains enacted in the name of the royal crown through *probanza de méritos.* Upon receiving the letters of accomplishment, the Spanish monarch reciprocated by rewarding the actions of conquistadors with *encomiendas*, "grants of indigenous towns which allowed [owners] to demand taxes and labor from their charges in return for military protection and religious instruction."[2] Yet, the *encomenderos* did not fulfill their responsibility of providing religious instruction. Instead, "the place of the discredited *encomendero* was largely taken by the missionary, and that of the *encomienda* by the mission, the design being to check the evils of exploitation, and at the same time to realize the ideal of conversion, protection, and civilization."[3] Missionaries were already present within colonial society alongside the *encomiendas*, but with the *encomienda*'s failure, missionaries became the prime agents of conversion, provoking competition between secular and religious authorities over control of the native population.

The role of missions within Latin America was to convert indigenous populations to Christianity, as well as prepare them for inclusion within colonial society. Although many missions began with priests entering indigenous villages, indigenous communities were eventually relocated into one village, known as

---

[2] Kenneth J. Andrien, *Andean Worlds: Indigenous History, Culture, and Consciousness under Spanish Rule, 1532-1825* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2001), 44.
[3] Herbert E. Bolton, "The Mission as a Frontier Institution in the Spanish American Colonies," *The American Historical Review* 23 (Oct., 1917): 47.

*reducciones* or *pueblos.* This relocation disrupted the previous social order and caused many indigenous people to rely on the mission priest, who offered the natives new agricultural techniques, new material goods, a new faith, and acted as a protective intermediary between the natives and the secular presence. Yet that relationship of dependency proved to be reciprocal: natives provided the missionaries with aid in building churches, keeping peace with neighboring natives, and spreading the faith beyond the mission.[4] Nevertheless, concentrating the population of the natives into larger settlements increased colonial control in an attempt to impose a unified Christian identity. [5] This unified identity, however, ended up representing a mixture of European and indigenous cultural and religious beliefs.

Several different religious orders participated in the enterprise of massive conversion, starting with the Franciscans and Dominicans, who were the first missionaries to the Americas. Soon thereafter the Jesuits arrived. Although not among the first missionaries in the new land, Jesuits significantly impacted the American landscape. Jesuit missions quickly became important tools of cultural exchange and facilitated religious dialogue with the native populations.

The Society of the Jesus was founded by Ignatius of Loyola in 1540, years after the initial discovery of the Americas.[6] Their fervor for the faith led to a strong

[4] Andrien, *Andean Worlds,* 49.
[5] Charles W. Polzer, *Rules and Precepts of the Jesuit Missions of Northwestern New Spain* (Tuscon: University of Arizona Press, 1976), 1-59.
[6] Thomas Worcester, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Jesuits* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 3.

missionary structure that expanded throughout the globe.[7] They remained dedicated to the Pope and the conversion effort as seen in the Jesuit *Constitutions*. Commitment to missions was vital to the existence of the Jesuits. As founder of the Society of Jesus, Ignatius of Loyola wrote:

> We are obliged by a special vow to carry out whatever the present and future Roman pontiffs may order which pertains to the progress of souls and the propagation of the faith; and to go without subterfuge or excuse, as far as in us lies, to whatsoever provinces they may choose to send us-whether they are pleased to send us among the Turks or any other infidels, even those who live in the region called the Indies, or among any heretics whatever, or schismatics, or any of the faithful.[8]

Although the Jesuit devotion to establishing missions was unwavering, the employed conversion tactics varied by region, necessity, and indigenous reactions. The general pattern of foundation of missions consisted of the priests making contact with the natives, learning the native language of the region, convincing them to live in a *reduccion,* and then continuing to preach the gospel.[9] The means of accomplishing these steps varied from peaceful negotiations to violent actions, and often were accomplished with the aid of previously converted natives. Priests had the option of learning the indigenous language in a European college, living amongst the natives, or stealing away children to teach them Spanish so that the children could teach their indigenous language to the Jesuits. Sometimes, as seen in the case of Jesuit missions in the regions that today correspond to the state of California, Jesuits used military

---

[7] Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions*, ed. Owen Chadwick (London: Penguin Books, 1990), 151-179.
[8] St. Ignatius of Loyola, *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus,* ed. George E Ganss, S.J., (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1970), 68-69.
[9] David Block, *Mission Culture on the Upper Amazon: Native Tradition, Jesuit Enterprise, and Secular Policy in Moxos, 1660-1880* (London: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 1-78.

force to gain contact with indigenous villages. This initially violent confrontation then subsided as the Jesuit offered cattle to the indigenous population in return for allegiance.[10] Other times, the presence of the Jesuits provided protection from the exploitation of the colonists and the indigenous populations flocked to the *reducciones* rather willingly. The Jesuit missionaries of Paraguay relied on this external pressure to coral the indigenous Guaraní.[11] Once within the village, missionaries relied on different means of retaining the indigenous people. Music played a large role in these efforts, since it existed within indigenous culture before the arrival of the Spanish. Jesuits used existing and new cultural practices to convert the natives. Manipulating peer pressure, providing continued protection from exploitation, and offering a constant source of material goods were also tactics commonly employed.[12] Methods varied, as each Jesuit mission applied whatever strategy deemed necessary to convert the "heretical" population.

As the main institution representing the Catholic Church in Latin America, missions became a tool of cultural exchange. Missionary priests became intermediaries, serving as liaisons between the Spanish secular presence and the native towns. They facilitated trade, provided new agricultural techniques, offered a new religion, and provided protection from exploitation. These missionary fathers were go-betweens, a term employed by scholar Alida Metcalf in her work, *Go-Betweens*

---

[10] Father Eusebio Francisco Kino, *Kino's Historical Memoir of Pimeria Alta: A Contemporary Account of the Beginnings of California, Sonora, and Arizona, by Father Eusebio Francisco Kino, S.J., Pioneer Missionary Explorer, Cartographer, and Ranchman*, trans. Herbert Eugene Bolton (Berkley: University of California Press, 1948).
[11] Bartomeu Meliá, *El Guaraní Conquistado y Reducido* (Asunción: CEADUC, 1988).
[12] D. Félix de Azara, *Viajes por la América Meridional por D. Félix de Azara,* ed. G. Cuvier. (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1941).

*and the Colonization of Brazil.* Metcalfe analyzes the unacknowledged role of go-betweens, or liaisons, and the extent of their ability to affect the parameters of their relationship with the emerging state and indigenous population.[13] Jesuits acted as intermediaries between the Spanish and indigenous cultures, and more often than not they were helping negotiate how the two cultures were going to interact instead of imposing one over another. Natives, therefore, had as much input in this process as did the Spanish institutions because they recognized the authority of this mediator and accepted the value of the cultural practices that were introduced. The introduction of Christianity did not imply the complete subjugation of the indigenous population to European cultural and religious practices, social mores, or political control. The mission was a reciprocal affair in which no one remained passive during the encounter.[14] Natives chose to accept or reject the Jesuit and Spanish presence, demonstrating that native society developed alongside colonial society, adopting and adapting Spanish culture.

The indigenous perspective of religion is important in understanding the complexity of the hybrid Christian culture in the colonial setting. Kenneth J. Andrien analyzes the indigenous perspective in a study of the collision of Spanish culture and native culture in the colonial New World in his book *Andean Worlds*. He argues that there was continuity between the pre-conquest and colonial worlds, articulating that although the Spanish imposed new structures of social order, this new order

---

[13] Alida Metcalfe, *Go-Betweens and the Colonization of Brazil, 1500-1600* (Austin: Universtity of Texas, 2005), 1-17.
[14] Jonathan Wright, *God's Soldiers: Adventure, Politics, Intrigue, and Power, A History of the Jesuits* (New York: Doubleday, 2004), 75.

incorporated pre-conquest indigenous practices. He cites the example of the affect of indigenous perspectives and practices on the establishment of colonial relationships. Andrien argues that the indigenous concept of mañay, or religious compromise, led to the acceptance of Christianity. Indigenous civilization perceived the worshipping of multiple gods as acceptable, so long as the different ethnic groups recognized the superiority of the gods of the ruling elite.[15] Understanding the indigenous perspective of religion enables scholars to comprehend the extent to which Christianity was forced upon the natives and to what extent the indigenous population accepted the new religion. Moreover it provides a more accurate account of the history of the conquest and colonization by highlighting indigenous perspective of the encounter and redefining the native's role from passive to active. Natives incorporated various religious practices of the dominant culture into their religious practices before the arrival of the Spanish, so there is no reason to believe this practice of religious acculturation changed after the Spanish arrival.

Inga Clendinnen's *Ambivalent Conquests: Maya and Spaniard in Yucatan, 1517-1570* also recognizes the respective perspectives of the natives and Europeans and their affects on the acculturation within colonial Latin America. In an analysis of the continuity of cultural practices pre-conquest and post conquest, she suggests that the Maya population were able to experience political domination without relinquishing their sense of autonomy. Rather, the ancient civilization absorbed and

[15] Andrien, *Andean Worlds*, 160-161.

transformed Christian religious practices into the original indigenous culture.[16] Religion might have been forced upon the natives by missionaries, but it was the native's own initiative to accept and incorporate these practices that led to Christianity's success. *Religion in the Andes: Vision and Imagination in Early Colonial Peru* by Sabine MacCormack also imparts the transformation of religion, with a focus on Andean religion from 1532 to 1660. Just as in the work of other scholars mentioned above, MacCormack contextualizes Andean religion in an attempt to properly understand the confrontation between Andean and Spanish and Christian religion and culture.[17] Careful analysis of historical events and recognizing natives as active participants in forming colonial relationships enriches the study of colonial Latin America and reinvigorates its diverse culture.

In the following study, I apply the theoretical framework of native agency to the Northwest region of New Spain, known today as the Mexican states of Chihuahua, Sonora, and parts of Sinaloa. At the time of the Spanish arrival, many native populations inhabited the region, but this study focuses on the Yaqui and Tarahumar natives at the time of initial contact in the 1600s and extending to the late 18th century. The history of Yaqui and Tarahumar contact with Spanish religious and secular authorities can be recovered through the analysis of documents such as royal decrees, the Jesuit Constitutions, and traveler's accounts. Particularly useful, however, were Jesuit journals, letters, and documentation that interpreted and told the story of the

[16] Inga Clendinnen, *Ambivalent Conquests: Maya and Spaniard in Yucatan, 1517-1570* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 154-161.
[17] Sabine MacCormack, *Religion in the Andes: Vision and Imagination in Early Colonial Peru* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1991), 3-15.

missionary system. I argue that the foundation of missions initiated a process of cultural exchange in which natives were able to negotiate which practices would remain, be transformed, or be introduced to mission life. By resisting or selectively accepting conversion, the indigenous population was shaping hybrid cultural practices within the missions and, consequently, managed to exercise some control over the impact of the Jesuit and Spanish presence had upon their cultural practices.

The chapters are generally laid out in chronological order, beginning with a discussion of the natives' first encounters with missionaries and finishing with an interpretation of the various rebellions that occurred in the latter part of the colonial occupation. Chapter one begins by analyzing the Jesuit's limited ability to impose Spanish culture upon the native society. It argues that the Jesuit's internal structure and relationships with the Papacy, Spanish Crown, and colonial settlement limited the number of missionaries working in the Yaqui and Tarahumar region, which led to a dependence upon the native society for survival and to convert the indigenous population. Chapter two describes the native ability to form political and social relationships with the Spanish colonial government and Jesuits, as well as their ability to accept and reject certain aspects of Spanish and Christian culture. It begins by describing the lifestyles of each indigenous population and how variations in settlement patterns translated into differences in political organization, arguing that the political organization of the native villages influenced the type of relationship they formed with the Spanish presence. Furthermore, despite the overarching political relationships established, the natives actively helped determine political relationships

due to the lack of a proper Spanish frontier government. Chapter three describes the rebellions within each region and analyzes them as something more complex than an attempt to throw off the Spanish presence. Rather, the events of the rebellions demonstrate that the natives saw certain social and religious aspects of Spanish culture as advantageous, and rebelled against the political authority of the Spanish. Rebellion was not an attempt to destroy the colonial presence, but rather an attempt to re-negotiate the terms of the relationship for the benefit of the natives.

## Chapter 1

### Jesuits: A Nurturing Environment

In 1605, a native Christian woman, Luisa, and fellow caciques guided the famous Jesuit Perez de Ribas through the indigenous Zuaque nation. Upon arrival at the principal pueblo of Mochicahui, the natives kissed Perez de Ribas' hand in reverence, as Luisa gathered all the women and their children to receive baptism. Other caciques were baptized, materials were collected, and the pueblo church was built by the indigenous population under instructions given by the local cacique. Perez de Ribas details the celebration that followed the completion of the church, explaining that the natives gathered in the central plaza and "burned other fires and around these they held their native dances accompanied by their great drums which had once called them to war; these now being played in celebration of feasts in honor of Christ and his holy mother." The following day, the pueblo celebrated with a procession, showcasing Padre Juan Batista de Velasco, a visiting "padre who spoke their language most perfectly." Perez de Ribas claimed that the native Zuaques were soon after "planting a common lot of ground from which to sell corn to the Spaniards and the soldiers of captain Diego Martinez de Hurdaide, using the proceeds to buy ornaments for their church." After initial contact, the Zuaque nation was reduced from three down to two villages about seven miles apart, each with an estimated 800 people.[18] And so with the help of native intermediaries such as Luisa and her fellow

[18] Perez de Ribas, *My Life Amongst the Savage Nations of New Spain,* trans. Tomás A. Robertson (Los Angelos: Ward Ritchie Press, 1968), 60.

caciques, the Jesuit mission in the Zuaque nation began as a productive pueblo, participating in Christian culture and the Spanish economy.

Luisa is a typical native intermediary that aided the spread of Christianity, just like many others throughout the Sierra Madre region. She encouraged the baptism and instruction of children, and her rhetoric persuaded natives to relocate their pueblos. Perez de Ribas commented that this resettlement and concentration of the population "made it easier for the Padre to attend to these two pueblos, while at the same time attending to the Ahomes."[19] A denser concentration of natives allowed quicker and more efficient spreading of the Christian faith, as Jesuit fathers were usually in charge of more than one mission. Jesuits within the Spanish Americas were always outnumbered by the indigenous population, causing the Jesuits to depend upon natives to fill the void and spread Christianity; this same pattern also marked missionary efforts in the Tarahumar and Yaqui regions.

The limited number of Jesuit priests and their consequent reliance on native intermediaries was, to a large extent, a function of the internal structure of the Jesuits. The rules and regulations of the Jesuits, as written in their constitutions, not only affected the number of Jesuits active in the missionary field, but also their mobility. Their allegiance to the Papacy, moreover, meant that at times the Jesuits had to abandon their role as missionary and fulfill their role as orator or preacher within Europe. The Spanish crown also affected the success of the Jesuits' efforts by acting as a gatekeeper of the New World. They dictated who could enter the region, when they entered, demanded thorough records to be kept, and filtered letters as well as

[19] Perez de Ribas, *My Life Amongst the Savage Nations of New Spain,* 61.

other forms of communication between the Papacy and the Americas. Regulations developed to maintain structure, order, and control created missions that were ill prepared to impose cultural domination. Furthermore, interactions between the Jesuits and the Crown, on the one hand, and the Jesuits and the expanding colonial society, on the other, constantly challenged the Jesuit hegemonic control of the region. As a result, the stage was set for significant native autonomy in shaping the terms of their cultural, social, economic and political exchange with the missionaries and with Spanish colonial society.

The Jesuit religious order limited its own capability of spreading faith by stipulating high standards of admittance. The extended requirements for admission efficiently eliminated greedy profiteers and ensured obedience to the religious order, yet the same standards limited the number of Jesuits professed to the order and generated a group of unprepared men in the mission field. Before entering the order, Jesuit missionaries had to swear the four vows of the Society of Jesus. The four vows of membership of the Jesuits included chastity, poverty, obedience, and loyalty to the sovereign pontiff. In order to complete the four vows of faith and to enter the mission field, men had to "possess sufficient learning in humane letters and the liberal arts and, beyond that, in scholastic theology and sacred scripture."[20] This meant an initial seven year study of humanities and arts, and four more years of the study of "the school of the heart," or theology, which incorporated three written theses with successful defenses. Applicants were moreover judged by the provincial general on their

[20] Loyola, *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, 235.

character, activities, and contributions to the perpetuation of faith amongst the community.[21] The admission process required many years of study, perpetuating the pattern of predominantly learned men entering the mission field. Those devoted men who fulfilled these admission requirements composed the backbone of the mission system, providing a small viable group of candidates to become missionaries.

Although disciples fulfilled the admission requirements, the nature of Jesuit schooling did not provide practical knowledge to the pledged Jesuits. Practical skills were not taught in school, but were expected to be learned alongside the required curriculum.[22] For example, although members of the order were required to learn a language while attending college, this language was rarely a native language applicable to the mission field. Fathers generally had to learn native languages at an established mission before being able to begin their own mission work.[23] Skills required for the survival of missions, such as carpentry, blacksmithing, and weaving, were also neglected under Jesuit education. Yet, Jesuits understood the value of practical skills that would help them survive, as well as attract the natives to their settlements. One priest explained before leaving the port of Seville that "we ourselves made all sorts of trinkets and worked at practical things. Some of us made compasses or sun-dials, this one sewed clothes and furs, that one learned how to make bottles,

---

[21] Ibid, 235. Jesuits wrote theses in logic, philosophy, and scholastic theology; Harry Hopfl, *Jesuit Political Thought: The Society of Jesus and the State, c. 1540-1630* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 13.
[22] Hopfl, *Jesuit Political Thought*, 14.
[23] Ondina E. González, and Justo L. González, *Christianity in Latin America: a History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 83; John L. Kessel, *Mission of Sorrows: Jesuit Guevavi and the Pimas, 1691-1767* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1970), 43; Charles Wilson Hacket, *Historical Documents Relating to New Mexico, Nueva Vizcaya, and Approaches Thereto, to 1773* (Washington D.C.: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1926), 2: 203.

another how to soder tin […] a third with the art of sculpting."[24] Although important to the success of missions, Jesuit education focused on theory and religious studies rather than including practical life skills. The shortcomings of Jesuit education left them semi-dependent on natives to serve as interpreters and to provide for their material needs to establish and maintain missions.

The growing and diverse roles Jesuits were assuming during the Catholic Reformation also limited the spread of missionary work. Jesuits' roles within old Spain and Europe weighed heavily upon the society's mission and obligation to the papacy. With Europe in the midst of the Catholic Reformation and Counter Reformation, the Papacy was in urgent need of Catholic vernacular preaching throughout urban and rural Europe. The Jesuits applied their general knowledge of rhetoric to persuade the population to continue observing the proper Catholic religion. Some royalty even employed Jesuit preachers as their family funeral orators.[25] Thus the Jesuits actively involved themselves as preachers and orators in defense of established Catholicism.

The mission of the Jesuits also required their practice as confessors. Under the Fourth Lateran Council of 1214, every Catholic had to confess at least once a year to their parish priest or someone designated by their bishop. Jesuits, however, had papal license to hear confession and absolve sins everywhere. Although Jesuits may seem to be an added appendage to the system of confession, the population welcomed their presence because Jesuits took a vow of poverty and did not accept or demand payment

[24] Kessel, *Mission of Sorrows*, 41.
[25] Hopfl, *Jesuit Political Thought,* 14.

for their services. Soon the members of the Catholic royal courts and patrons of the society enlisted Jesuits to be their personal confessors. Although the spread of this practice threatened members' ability to carry out other responsibilities they, as well as the Pope, did not want to ignore the needs of the royalty, who were Christians in need of counsel but, more importantly, paying patrons of the religious order.[26] Finally, Jesuits partook in the growing field of publication, taking time to write extensive college textbooks, compose guides to confessionals, and different preaching curriculum.[27] The Jesuits emerged during a critical time for Catholicism, a time when the roles of preachers, orators, confessors, and publishers were in high demand within Europe. This diverse demand for their services, however, consumed their time and inhibited their ability to enter the mission field.

At the foundation of the Society, Ignatius of Loyola foresaw the problem of not having enough men to provide proper services and fulfill the responsibilities of the society. This led to the creation of another class of Jesuits, those who only took the three vows of chastity, obedience, and poverty. Known as coadjutors, these men were priests that possessed "knowledge of grammar and cases of conscience for confession" with little background of theological studies.[28] They performed simple tasks such as confession and celebrating mass. Ignatius assumed the number of coadjutors would drop as the society gained prestige and members, but quite the opposite actually occurred. In 1556, 8% of Jesuits were coadjutors, by 1565 it rose to 11.6%, then 24.9% by 1572, and finally from 1573-1580, the percentage rose to 46%. By the time

[26] Ibid, 15-18.
[27] Ibid, 20.
[28] Loyola, *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, 81.

missions in New Spain were beginning to expand, however, the numbers of the coadjutor diminished, not because they were not needed, but because they were seen as being less legitimate than the regular members of the order.[29] Their decline renewed the problem of having enough members to fulfill the different roles of preacher, orator, and confessor within Europe.

The standards and roles of the Jesuits, however, were not the only dynamic of the Jesuit internal structure that affected the Jesuit missionary work. The Jesuits' allegiance to the Papacy led to a hierarchical structure that provided a chain of command and a web of rules and regulations that appeared productive in theory, but were actually impractical, inefficient, and not flexible enough to deal with the missions. The leading authority within the society was the Pope himself, followed by several elected officials within the congregational body of the Jesuits. The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus states "that the entire Society and individual members who make their profession in it are campaigning for God under faithful obedience to His Holiness Pope Paul III and his successors." It further adds that those members are "obliged by a special vow to carry out whatever the present and future Roman pontiffs may order which pertains to the progress of souls and the propagation of faith."[30] Following the Pope was a series of individually elected officials, all of which were subordinate to their specific Jesuit Superior General. The Pope and the Society charged each Superior General with the care of one individual mission region. The hierarchical system maintained control of the missions, but the experiences and

[29] Ibid, 81.
[30] Ibid, 68.

opinion of the Jesuit Superior General reigned over thousands of miles of land and people, which he only visited once or twice. Political scholar Harry Hopfl expands on the dichotomous implications of the Jesuit structure stating that:

> Its consistent structure of super- and sub-ordination, command and obedience, strict hierarchy and concentration of authority in a single superior at every level of the order, culminat[es] in the overriding authority of the Superior General, at the expense of the authority of any collective representative body or collective decision-making by Jesuit communities.[31]

The Jesuits' devotion to order and obedience restricted the power of a collective input. Although officials were elected at every level, the Pope and Superior General maintained the majority of the power.

This ineffective distribution of power emerges from the minute details of provincial laws, illustrating the general trend of Superior Generals to micromanage. The Superior General instituted laws in response to situations throughout his region. For example, repeatedly in 1710, 1714, 1715, and 1716 the Superior General prohibited trade with the secular population, limited loans, and limited contact.[32] Although this stance on relationships with the secular population is understandable, since any dispute causing tension with the colonial population increased negative attitudes towards the Jesuits and jeopardized their presence in the Spanish Americas, the constant repetition of the law illustrates that year after year there was a need to cooperate with the laity. The Jesuits ignored the law prohibiting them from interacting with the laity because the laity provided aid in form of general materials, food, and military support to survive. Furthermore, the Superior General attempted to limit the

[31] Hopfl, *Jesuit Political Thought,* 24.
[32] Polzer, *Rules and Precepts of the Jesuit Missions of Northwestern New Spain,*, 92-118.

distribution of chocolate, demanded that the Jesuits know nothing of mining, and limited the number of mules Jesuits were allowed to use for transport.[33] All of the above rules attempted to rule the daily life of Jesuits, but often ignored the mission's needs to establish some types of exchanges with the colonial population in order to succeed or merely to survive.

The Spanish royalty and the *patronato real* also restricted the flexibility of the Jesuits. By the late 15th century, the Pope deemed the Spanish Crown as the religious authority within the New World, placing the responsibility of Christianizing the natives in the King's hands. On May 4, 1493, Pope Alexander VI gave strict religious authority and control of missions to the Spanish Crown by "conced[ing] to the Catholic Kings the dominion of the Indies and the exclusive privilege of Christianizing the natives."[34] This religious authority over the Indies was expanded in a later bull by Alexander VI, dated July 28, 1501, which "granted to the Spanish crown the tithes and first fruits of the churches of the Indies." In 1508, Julius II sealed Spain's religious control of the Indies "giving to the kings of Spain the right of universal patronage over the Catholic Church in the Indies."[35] All of these regulations and admittances were known as the *patronato real.*[36] Although religious orders were not considered within the realm of secular religion, the *patronato real* still regulated

[33] Ibid, 57-121.
[34] Lloyd J. Mecham, *Church and State in Latin America: A History of Politico Ecclesiastical Relation* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1966), 13.
[35] Mecham, *Church and State in Latin America* , 13.
[36] Ibid, 17. Reference this page for a complete excerpt of the bulls, which emphasizes the sole authority of the Spanish king and their duties as religious ruler of the Indies.

their existence and organization within the New World under the Law of 1574. Jesuits were strictly under the influence of the Spanish Crown.

The Spanish Crown reasserted its authority over the Papacy and the actions of the Jesuits in the law of 1574. Essentially, the law restated the Crown's authoritative role over the decisions of the Papacy, stipulating that no person of a religious order would enter the Indies without appearing before the Council of Indies with proper paperwork indicating by what authority they wished to enter the territory. As seen in the 1730 account of a German Father, Jesuits endured a tedious inspection before receiving the right to enter the Spanish territories. After being stared at from head to foot so that his "lineaments and stature could be carefully described, to the end that no imposter might embark and thus illegally reach the Indies," the German Father stated his name, nationality, schooling, and status. After this interrogation, the members of the council once again began to stare at the Jesuit fathers, causing the German Father to remark, "I could hardly contain my laughter as these gentlemen so gravely regarded us and dictated to the scribe our entire physiognomies….No butcher stares at a calf as these men looked at us."[37] Furthermore, in an effort to restrict access to the New World, the Spanish Crown and the Council of Indies only allowed Spanish missionaries to enter the new region. Eventually this ban was lifted in 1664, but while it was enforced, this ban severely limited the numbers of Jesuit priests available for mission activity.[38] The Council of Indies was a scrupulous gatekeeper of all priests

[37] Kessel, *Mission of Sorrows*, 41.
[38] Peter Masten Dunne, *Early Jesuit Missions in Tarahumara* (Los Angelos: University of California Press, 1948), 102.

entering and exiting the region, ensuring that the Crown maintained authority over religious orders within their territory.

The Crown's authority over the Jesuits not only regulated the entrance of missionaries, but also inhibited their ability to travel freely once within New Spain. One problematic practice of the Spanish Crown was its filtering of any Jesuit communication between the New World and the Papacy, intercepting all mail through the Council of the Indies for inspection before it could be sent to its proper destination. Although this process ensured that the Papacy did not step on the rights of patronage of the Spanish Crown, it delayed important papal bulls, briefs, rescript, and other pontifical documents, which in turn affected the deliverance of new mission priests, supplies, and orders of action.[39] In the case of the California missions, the Crown's interventions halted the transport of provisions to aid in easing the pain of the region's growing famine.[40] The Jesuits' ability to move freely also suffered under the law of 1574. When a new member of a religious order or society was elected to replace another priest, the incumbent priest could not resign until a replacement had gone through the same system of acceptance.[41] Furthermore, the new replacement could not trek to his new post until the Spanish crown had properly notified the local authorities. The king justified his authority stating that such preliminary actions had to be taken "so that our viceroys, *audiencias,* justices and other vassals may admit and receive him to the exercise of his office, and give him all protection and aid in it."[42]

---

[39] Mecham, *Church and State in Latin America,* 31.
[40] Kino, *Kino's Historical Memoir of Pimeria Alta*, 57.
[41] Mecham, *Church and State in Latin America*, 32.
[42] Ibid, 32.

Jesuits faced legislation that reduced the speed of written communication and further regulated the placement of Jesuit Fathers, both factors which made the missions dependent on native peoples and might have left a power vacuum that allowed the population in the missions to take matters into their own hands.

The Spanish Crown also retained power over the Jesuits by demanding mission fathers to record their mission's demographics and fiscal investments. Priests were asked to keep extensive records of the demographics of each mission, detailing information such as age of each religious figure, qualifications, administration of sacraments, agricultural production rates, and the number of natives being Christianized. This information, in addition to missionary descriptive reports of conversion activities, created a transparent mission system holding priests accountable for economic activity. Each established mission received 300 pesos per year from the Spanish treasury for funding, and the Crown aspired to regulate the distribution of the monetary items, as well as agricultural production. Although the Spanish Crown did not dictate how the Jesuits used the money, they did use the statistical information gathered to inform their decisions made about the Jesuit missions.[43]

The papacy willingly ceded the right to missionary activity to the Spanish Crown, producing a mutually beneficial relationship between the Jesuits and secular population that advanced both parties' goals in the colonial frontier. The Spanish Crown's interest lay within the development and incorporation of the newly discovered land into the Spanish empire. Consequently, the amount of money that the

[43] Ignaz Pfefferkorn, *Sonora, A Description of the Province,* trans. Theodore E. Treutlein (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1989), 272-274.

Jesuits were able to secure from the crown depended greatly on the extent to which their missionary religious goals fulfilled the political goals of the Spanish imperial state.[44] The Jesuits promoted the Spanish culture by introducing the native population to productive market economic activities such as new agricultural practices, the herding of cattle and sheep, sewing, spinning, weaving, forging metal, and tanning leather.[45] The Jesuits even taught some natives the "arts and letters" of the Spanish language. As intermediaries between the native population and the Spanish imperial advance, the Jesuit missions "counteracted foreign influence among neophytes, deterred them from molesting interior settlements, and secured their aid in holding back more distant tribes."[46] The Jesuits pacified the natives so that the Spanish could expand their settlement and continue their economic development. In return, a larger presence of settlers made it safer for the fathers to advance further into each missionary region.[47] The Jesuits also received money and military support for their missionary activities. Thus, the Jesuits served the interests of both the Papacy and the Spanish Crown. While Christianizing "pagans," Jesuits were expanding the borders of the empire and establishing relationships with the natives that provided a semi-stable environment for colonial settlements to develop and exploit the natural resources.

This symbiotic relationship was delicate, however, and as time progressed the secular population deemed the Jesuit missions as a hindrance to economic development. The Jesuit missions began to feel tension between the interests of the

---

[44] Bolton, "The Mission as a Frontier Institution in the Spanish American Colonies," 9.
[45] Ibid, 18.
[46] Ibid, 11.
[47] Dunne, *Early Jesuit Missions in Tarahumara*, 39.

secular, Spanish population and the wishes of the Pope and the Society of Jesus. Perhaps the strongest manifestation of this tension erupted from the debate of the control of Indian land and labor within the setting of frontier mining towns. Legally, while the natives were under the care of the missions, their land was communal and natives were partially exempt from forced labor laws. In some regions, such as the Pimería Alta, baptism freed natives from labor taxes for twenty years.[48] Jesuit missions were allowed to carry out their activities in the colony for a period of ten years.[49] Officially, after the initial ten years expired, the mission was supposed to have fully Christian and "cultured" natives ready to be incorporated into Spanish society.[50] At this point the Spanish government would split the land amongst the acculturated natives and sell the rest of the land to settlers. Settlers pined over the good agricultural lands that the natives and missions held communally, which were particularly promising because the missions, having first occupied the region, had selected the most fertile land to establish their settlement. Secularization also meant the end of native exemption from the labor taxes, giving settlers access to labor force required to cultivate more land and create more stable lives through consistent harvests. With the growing presence of the secular population, society placed more pressure on the missions to secularize and release the natives into the control of the

[48] Kessel, *Mission of Sorrows,* 6.
[49] Ibid, 7.
[50] Polzer, *Rules and Precepts of the Jesuit Missions of Northwestern New Spain,* 47; Kessel, *Mission of Sorrows,* 5.

secular religious authorities.[51] The increased collision of interests of the Jesuit order and Spanish State manifested as tension and competition for resources.

The Society of Jesus reacted quickly to the growing tension and problematic relationship with the laity, attempting to minimize the possibility of missions being ejected from New Spain. The Jesuit Provincial's correspondence, rules and regulations written for and by the Jesuits of the region of Northwestern New Spain reflect this anxiety. Spanning from 1662 to 1716, these documents reiterate and emphasize the need to limit contact with the lay society, so as to not perpetuate rumors that would lead to the Spanish Crown removing the Jesuits from the region. In 1710, Father Provincial A. Xardón wrote to Father F. X. Mora advising that Jesuits "shun all familiarity with the laity" so as to conceal the society's faults and shortcomings. In addition, Xardón proclaimed that "all possible dependence and dealings with the laity should be avoided," including minimizing debt between the laity and Jesuits so as to not "cause scandal and grumbling among those who know."[52] Xardón concerned himself with the image of the missions and the relationships they formed with the laity, avoiding becoming dependent upon the latter. He stressed this same sentiment and need for seclusion of activities in a later letter of the same year. Again, writing from Mexico, Xardón decreed that:

> In order to avoid thoughtless murmuring among Ours, I am ordering that no missionary Father who finds himself injured by some layman in his vicinity, whether that injury is personal or to the lands and holdings of the district of Indians, will stick out his nose in defense without first giving leave to the immediate superior. Through consultation, he shall

[51] Polzer, *Rules and Precepts of the Jesuit Missions of Northwestern New Spain,* 58.
[52] Ibid, 92-93.

> decide what consultation method is easiest and most effective by letter.[53]

Xardón's preoccupation with controlling the relationships formed between the laity and the mission Fathers was well warranted. Rumors and miscommunication could easily lead to the ejection of Jesuit missions if they were constantly in conflict with the interest of the secular population and the development goals of the Spanish State. Ejection meant a failed harvest of souls for the Jesuits, and complete control of native land and labor by the secular population. In order to prevent the potential exploitation of the natives, Jesuits attempted to regulate their relations with the secular population and maintain the interests of the State as carried out by the Spanish settlers.

If the tension between the competing interests of the Papacy and the Spanish Crown left the Jesuit missions performing a delicate balancing act in order to survive in the colonies, the actions of the settlers also had direct implications on the success and stability of missions. Secular treatment of the natives affected the natives' willingness to accept Christian culture and Spanish presence. Some settlers seemed more driven to exploit the natives than to Christianize them, and went so far as to spread simple rumors to derail the efforts of the missions. In hopes that the failure of Jesuit missions would lead to their being exiled and control of native labor placed under secular authority, settlers gossiped and instigated fear of the order amongst the natives. An example of such an intimidating rumor which spread throughout the entirety of northern New Spain suggested to the natives that the reason for the general

[53] Polzer, *Rules and Precepts of the Jesuit Missions of Northwestern New Spain,* 94.

captain's next visit was to kill all of the natives.[54] Jesuits complained to their superiors constantly about secular rumors and actions, arguing that "it was the old story of Spanish oppression, kidnapping, forced labor, and practical slavery" inhibiting the progression of their missions.[55] One example of such maltreatment occurred under the secular rule of Governor Valdez, a man reprimanded for his actions by the King himself. Valdez's maltreatment led the King to reemphasize the cédulas demanding mild and just treatment of natives to be observed. Furthermore, he warned the Valdez' successor of Valdez' atrocious acts and wrongdoings, explaining that "the Governor Don Luis de Valdes began to punish them [the natives] immoderately and without regard to public faith, for after calling them to attend religious instruction he seized and shot some of them."[56] In response to the governor's abuses the natives rebelled and it cost the royal treasury over 50,000 pesos to quiet the region. Certainly if the governor of the region was abusing native labor and land laws himself, he was not punishing the rest of the Spanish population for neglecting to adhere to dictated land and labor policies. Unfortunately, this disregard for natives was widespread and when the missionaries proved unable to protect them, the natives suspected that the missionaries were "in league with their oppressors."[57] The secular mistreatment of the natives altered the native perspective of the Spanish from respectable to illegitimate, proving to be a thorn in the Jesuits efforts of conversion.

[54] Kessel, *Mission of Sorrows*, 57.
[55] Dunne, *Early Jesuit Missions in Tarahumara*, 63.
[56] Ibid, 51.
[57] Ibid, 63.

Whether spurred on by papal regulations, tension between the secular and religious population, or internal regulations of the order, the Society of Jesus created an environment in northwest New Spain that encouraged native interaction and negotiation. High admittance requirements, lack of practical knowledge, multiple responsibilities, and the hierarchical structure of the Jesuit order limited the number of Jesuits in the field. The Spanish Crown restricted the number of Jesuits available for work as well, only allowing those of Spanish descent in the region until 1664. The Council of Indies, overseen by the King, also contributed to limiting the pool of viable missionary candidates by scrupulously inspecting each Jesuit father entering the region. Once in New Spain, Jesuits still faced the challenge of moving about freely. The Spanish crown scrutinized their every movement and regulated communications. Such internal structures and external pressures such as the Pope, Spanish Crown, and secular population created a situation in which the Jesuits were not fully prepared to baptize and instruct the natives under their charge. The Jesuits' limited numbers and conflicts with the colonial society prevented the religious order from having complete control over the terms of native acculturation in northern New Spain. As seen in the next chapter, this environment proved a fertile ground for the development of native practices and the rise of native intermediaries that helped dictate the political and social relationships formed with the Spanish presence.

## Chapter 2

## Creation of a Hybrid Culture: The Establishment and Development of Political and Social Relationships

In 1673, the governor of Nueva Vizcaya called a meeting to discuss the advancement of the Tarahumar frontier. Mine owners, military leaders, the governor, and several Jesuits attended the meeting, as well as several Tarahumar and Tepehuan natives. Amongst these natives was Don Pablo, a Tarahumar cacique "known and respected by both [native] nations." When the Spanish were debating the entrance of missionaries into an isolated region, Don Pablo knelt down, kissed the missionary's hand, and voiced his opinion. In the discussion of Spanish expansionism Don Pablo promised the governor in the name of the natives that he "would do all in his power to further the activities of the fathers for the Christianization of his tribesmen." To do so, Don Pablo proposed that he "assist the fathers in their travel to the interior of the country, in choosing suitable sites for the organization of Christian pueblos, and in building houses and churches necessary for the missions." Months after the meeting, Don Pablo followed up on his word, escorting pagan natives to Spanish towns and mines to illustrate the benefits of the productive, prosperous Spanish lifestyle in an attempt to persuade them to adopt Christianity.[58] As demonstrated by Don Pablo's intent and later actions, natives took an active role in the formation of relationships with the Spanish. Don Pablo used his influence as a native leader to negotiate relationships that were beneficial to himself and his people and was able to dictate, to

[58] Dunne, *Early Jesuit Missions in Tarahumara*, 98- 113.

a certain degree, the Spanish cultural influence and Spanish penetration into the region.

Don Pablo was one of thousands of natives who actively engaged with the Spanish conquistadors, settlers, and priests in a process of cultural exchange that would progressively shape a hybrid colonial society. Often overlooked, natives and their lifestyles affected the types of political and social relationships formed throughout the colonial era. Part of this neglect of the indigenous population derives from older, Eurocentric perspectives of colonialism. The successful establishment of the Spanish empire has previously been attributed to the spread of Old World disease, advanced Spanish warfare technology, translation mistakes, and the leadership of a few distinguished men such as Hernan Cortes or Francisco Pizarro. Such factors contributed to the successful conquest, but their role within the domination of the Americas has been overemphasized.[59]

The Spanish interpretation of the conquest, portraying the European culture as superior, derives in part from *probanzas de merito,* or primary documents describing the conquest. Written by Spanish conquistadors to the King, *probanzas de merito* described Spanish military success, which the King rewarded with grants of land and rights to native labor. In order to acquire as much land and labor as possible, *probanzas de merito* exaggerated military success, the number of natives defeated, and the degree of stability within the region while ignoring native participation and contributions to their military campaign.[60] The Spanish perpetuated a myth of

[59] Restall, *Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest*.
[60] Ibid, 12-18.

superiority and diminished the role of the indigenous population in order to attain the patronage of the King. However, as seen with the example of Don Pablo, natives were constantly negotiating the terms of their relationships with the Spanish settlers, choosing to accept or reject certain Christian cultural practices.

The actions of individual native leaders (caciques) determined the success of the Jesuit missions and created a hybrid culture, but the political associations of each indigenous nation as a whole dictated the initial political relationships that were formed. The lifestyles and the political association of the Sierra Madre natives played a large role in the establishment of Spanish society. Yaqui and Tarahumar native lifestyles led to the development of different political cultures which, in turn, shaped the type of relationship formed with the Spanish occupation. The Yaqui pattern of settlement, in more compact, permanent villages, led to an intricate system of a strong, pan-tribal governance. This united Yaqui governance was able to drive off the Spanish military and engage in peace negotiations.[61] In these negotiations, the natives chose to allow the Spanish missionaries into the villages, but denied the presence of a Spanish secular authority. The Yaquis welcomed cultural exchange and trade, but withheld their right to political control of the region. The Tarahumar, on the other hand, occupied semi-permanent residences, rotating villages by season and harvest period.[62] The constant migration led to an atomistic governance with little to no unity

[61] Edward Spicer, *Cycles of Conquest: The Impact of Spain, Mexico, and the United States on Indians of the Southwest, 1533-1960* (Tuscon: Arizona University Press, 1967), 46-48.
[62] Campbell W. Pennington, *The Tarahumar of Mexico* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1963), 1-25.

between neighboring settlements.[63] The divided leadership of the Tarahumar nation was inefficient at defending their land against Spanish invasion and, in turn, there was less of a coherent and centralized response which could shape a unified policy guiding general interactions with the Spanish. Centralized political organization curbed Spanish political domination; decentralized organizations were ineffective at doing so.

Yaqui and Tarahumar natives differed in political organization because of different settlement patterns, each determined by the fertility of their geographic region. Even though the Spanish similarly categorized the Yaqui and Tarahumar native living patterns as *rancherías,* the ability to produce a consistent food supply determined differences in migratory practices. Both native populations developed a *ranchería* style of living, a colonial Spanish label that implied dependency on agriculture as a source of calories and fixed settlement, and that identified almost three quarter of the natives within New Spain.[64] Both tribes also depended equally upon hunting and gathering techniques to supplement their diets.[65] In general, these settlements stretched out over miles of territory, with perhaps a house every mile or half mile. Community organization and the pattern of *rancherías* among the Tarahumar, however, followed a more semi-nomadic lifestyle. Settlements spread throughout the region, stretching from the southeastern most point of Parral to the northeastern most point of the capital Chihuahua, with the Sierra Madres Occidentals

[63] Spicer, *Cycles of Conquest,* 25-28.
[64] Spicer, *The Yaquis: A Cultural History* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1980), 12-15. For further explanation of other community organization.
[65] Dunne, *Early Jesuit Missions in Tarahumara*, 5.

as a western boundary.[66] The entire population planted small plots of corn in the summer in the mountains and retreated to the lowlands or caves for the winter to hunt. No one location was stable enough to provide prolonged living arrangements, so the natives migrated. The Yaqui, in contrast, lived in densely populated villages at river mouths in a more settled *ranchería* community. The river provided a constant water source that flooded each spring to provide a consistent climate for two planting seasons and that attracted animals, which the natives hunted during the winter season.[67] The food supply was constant, negating the need for the Yaqui population to migrate. The geographical layout of the Yaqui region fomented a more unified, consistent settlement pattern, whereas the Tarahumar environment nurtured a nomadic population.

The differences in the lifestyles of the native populations due to migratory practices translated into differences in political organization. Less sedentary because the harsher environment of their region prevented a stable agricultural output, the Tarahumar natives mobility increased the chance of one group transgressing the boundaries of another group's territory. Land was valuable and disputes often emerged over natural resources. Thus, constant shifting of populations inhibited the growth of a unified identity as a nation. These blood feuds disputing power seemed to trump any overarching governance system.[68] The Yaqui natives, on the other hand,

---

[66] Ibid, 2; Robert H. Jackson, *Mission and the Frontiers of Spanish America: A Comparative Study of the Impact of Environmental, Economic, Political, and Socio-cultural Variations on the Missions in the Rio de la Plata region and on the Northern Frontier of New Spain* (Scottsdale, AZ: Pentacle Press, 2005), 9-12; Pennington, *The Tarahumar of Mexico,* 4-8.
[67] Spicer,*The Yaquis: A Cultural History*, 5-9.
[68] Ibid*,* 56.

presented themselves as a united population under the rule of a few select leaders. Their higher concentration of people and tendency to live a more settled life fostered a greater unity and sense of permanence. Intertribal quarrels occurred, but the Yaquis followed and fought under the leadership of two to four key chiefs.[69] In their case, a more permanent population, led to the prevalence of more political unity.

The united political organization of the Yaqui provided a single response to the initial contact with the Spaniards. Although previous skirmishes between Spanish settlers and the Yaqui nation occurred, formal relationships began in 1609 under Spanish General Hurdaide. In an attempt to advance the Sinaloa frontier, Hurdaide attacked the Ocoronis, neighbors of the Yaquis. When the Ocoronis retreated in defeat, the General pursued them with vigor into Yaqui territory. Native Yaqui warriors, however, deterred the Spanish pursuit at the mouth of the Yaqui River. In place of a full fledged battle, the two parties negotiated a peace settlement in which the Yaqui gave up the Ocoroni refugees. The agreement, however, did not go according to plan and the Yaqui killed the Christian native intermediaries sent to retrieve the Ocoroni leaders. Not prepared for battle, Hurdaide left to gather forces. He came back with two thousand Indian foot soldiers and forty Spanish soldiers, but the Yaqui natives swiftly and soundly defeated his army. Within a short period, Hurdaide returned with the largest amassed military force in northwestern New Spain, a total of four thousand Indian foot soldiers and fifty mounted Spaniards. Once again, the Yaqui nation won and rejected the military presence of the advancing Spanish

[69] Spicer, *The Yaquis: A Cultural History*, 51.

frontier.[70] Political unity among the Yaquis enabled them to raise a trained army that could defeat the Spaniards.

The Yaqui's military success enhanced their ability to negotiate relationships with the Spanish as one political unity, limiting their subjugation and securing political control of their land. Yet, maintaining political control of their land did not inherently mean the rejection of Spanish culture. Soon after the Yaqui defeated the Spanish, Yaqui intermediaries traveled to the closest Spanish fort in Sinaloa and offered to negotiate the entrance of the Spanish into the region. Native Yaquis visited other Jesuit missions within Sinaloa, and after seeing the vibrant, thriving communities, they recognized the agricultural and trade benefits of establishing working relationships with the Spanish. After investigating the other missions, Yaqui leaders asked that Jesuit fathers enter their territory. At first only two Jesuit fathers were allowed in the region, enabling the natives to control the social impact of the Jesuit presence.[71] Nothing cultural could truly be forced upon the natives because of the minuscule number of Spanish present to enforce the changes. The Yaquis were able to negotiate a relationship with the Spaniards in which they maintained control over the terms of cultural and political exchanges between the two societies.

The political disunity amongst the Tarahumar, on the other hand, generated various degrees of acceptance and rejection of the Spanish culture. The Tarahumar were a landlocked tribe, so the Spanish approached the region from the southeast, slowly advancing from the shoreline of the Gulf of Mexico. No full frontal military

[70] Spicer, *Cycles of Conquest,* 47; Perez de Ribas, *Triunfos de Nuestra Santa Fé entre Gentes las más Bárbaras y Fieras del Nuevo Orbe* (Mexico: Editorial Layac, 1944), 2: 71-77.
[71] Spicer, *The Yaquis: A Cultural History,* 15.

campaign occurred within the region; rather, missionaries initiated contact accompanied by a few soldiers and native Christian allies. Some natives openly accepted the missionary presence, persuaded to adopt the new culture and social structure because of the trade opportunities, agricultural techniques, and the ability to make peace with warring neighbors they offered. Missionaries entered the region slowly, beginning with one Jesuit in 1610 and five Jesuits in 1646.[72] After the rebellion of 1648, only 2 missionaries remained in the region, jumping to around 4 in 1681.[73] The Jesuits were constantly negotiating relationships with each native Tarahumar settlement due to political disunity. There was no centralized control over how many Jesuits entered the region or how many missions were established, as each different group of Tarahumar invited missionaries into their territory.

Such a factional political environment fostered relationships that politically and culturally varied. Contact was precarious as the Spanish did not negotiate with a single leader or party. No united effort to deflect the Spanish influence emerged, and therefore the Tarahumar did not retain control of the region as one political entity.[74] Instead, the Tarahumar had to individually approach the Spanish settlement by settlement and negotiate cultural and political relationships with the Spanish at a local level. Jesuit priests entered the region not knowing whether or not their presence would be accepted, but most Tarahumar leaders accepted the initial presence of the missionaries. As seen in the example of native Tarahumar Don Pablo and his work

[72] Dunne, *Early Jesuit Missions in Tarahumara*, 47; Ribas, *My Life Among the Savage Nations of New Spain,* 182-186.
[73] Dunne, *Early Jesuit Missions in Tarahumara,* 149.
[74] Ibid*,* 14.

with the Mission of San Aguilar, some natives encouraged and negotiated the establishment of missions.[75] Other native leaders, such as those of the Pachuca region and the mission of San Ignacio, simply welcomed Jesuits into their villages and slowly received the Christian doctrine without actively spreading the faith to their neighbors.[76]

The Tarahumar's lack of uniformity in their decision to accept the Jesuits facilitated to some extent Jesuit entrance in their region, but it also led to constant controversy over the missionary presence. Some native leaders consistently resisted the Jesuit presence, as those seen in the pueblo of Zape. In 1616, the priests entered the region and began to establish missions. Yet, by the end of the year, the natives were in revolt and rejecting their presence. The mission was not restarted until 1623, still Jesuits faced constant challenges to their authority. These challenges exploded in 1638, when two cacique leaders, Don Felipe and Don Pedro, incited rebellion amongst the natives of Zape, and when the rebellion attempt failed, fled to the safe haven of the mountains.[77] Other natives under the command of the cacique Corosio banded together with the neighboring Conchos to reject Father Juan Antonio Estrella within a year of his installment in the region.[78] Although there was not a coordinated effort amongst the Tarahumar to dictate the terms of Spanish presence and activities in their

[75] Ibid, 98-113.
[76] Francisco Javier Alegre, *Historia de la Provincia de la Compañía de Jesús de Nueva España. Vol 4, Años 1676-1766,* ed. Ernest J. Burrus and Felix Zubillaga. (Rome: Institutum Historicum, 1960), 17-34.
[77] Ribas, *My Life Among the Savage Nations of New Spain,* 181; Dunne, *Early Jesuit Missions in the Tarahumara,* 33-40.
[78] Alegre, *Historia de la Provincia,* 69-74.

regions, individual collectivities of Tarahumar were able to exercise some control over the terms of their local interaction with Spanish missionaries and settlers.

Political power, manifested in military power, affected each party's ability to negotiate developing relationships. The Yaquis defeated the Spanish military, allowing them to maintain political control of the region and dictate how many and what persons would enter. The Yaquis sought out the presence of the Jesuit missionaries once they realized the material benefits of Christianity—which perhaps warmed them to the ideological views of the priests—and instigated a cultural exchange with the Jesuits. The Tarahumar, on the other hand, did not fend off the encroaching Spanish military, leading to their decreased ability to negotiate relationships of power. The Tarahumar reacted at a local level to the Spanish presence. Both the Yaqui and Tarahumar natives were active intermediaries, forming and defending relationships with the Spanish that benefitted their communities. The terms of interactions were, even if to a varying degree, shaped in part by the natives and the cultural and political presence of the Spanish was still small enough to foster a relationship based on exchange and cooperation rather than merely imposition and domination.[79]

Even though both regions accepted Jesuit missions, the entrance and acceptance of those missions in both territories was not imposed on them. Instead, it was negotiated and renegotiated as these native peoples revisited their interests in having the Jesuits present. In the process, a hybrid culture emerged. Jesuit efforts to indoctrinate natives with the Christian faith and western culture were in some cases

[79] Yanna Yannakakis, *The Art of Being In-Between* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), 18-24.

undermined by caciques and shamans who, despite the newly imposed Spanish power structure, still maintained influence over the general native population and villages. Some caciques and shamans welcomed the Jesuits and the economic and social advantages they brought, but those who opposed the missionaries proved to be important obstacles to the flourishing of Jesuit missions. Shamans and caciques spread rumors about the Jesuits, spoke out against the Jesuit encroachment, and even led rebellions in an attempt to control the Spanish presence. Natives within the indigenous hierarchy chose to exercise the power given to them by the native social and political structure to limit Jesuit command and control over their people and society. [80]

The native political structure, as seen in the role of caciques and shamans, inhibited the Jesuit advance with various tactics that ranged from simple rumor spreading and rhetoric persuading villages to not accept priests and baptism to the extreme end of the spectrum, full on revolt. Multiple times, discontent and rumors amongst smaller villages expanded throughout the region and instigated regional unrest and revolt. As the Jesuit scholar Peter Masten Dunne explains, "Normally it was the *hechicero*, the medicine man, or wizard" that stirred up trouble for the priests. For example, one leader and medicine man "gained a following by telling a different story which for a while was believed. The fathers, said he, came here and did this work just in order to get paid in money by the Kings of Spain."[81] One of the most common rumors that the Jesuits encountered was that baptism and last rites caused

[80] Spicer, *Cycles of Conquest,* 25-61.
[81] Dunne, *Early Jesuit Missions in Tarahumara*, 123.

children and babies to die, a rumor usually spread by shamans. Rumors alone, however, did not start a revolt. Rather, as Jesuit historians described it, "this occurrence, added to the ill treatment which the Indians had been receiving and the evil influence of the three chiefs and of certain *hechiceros*, seems to have been the final drop which made the cup of discontent overflow with the desire for destruction and murder."[82] The shaman planted the seeds of discontent, preached against the Jesuits, and in an alliance with local native leaders, led an offensive against the Spanish Jesuits. Such discontent was costly and caused the mission to be abandoned for almost twenty years.[83] Other revolts instigated by native Tepehuan leaders halted the activities of the Tarahumar missions, to the north, for at least 15 years.[84] Since missions were interdependent, with established missions providing supplies, manpower, Christian natives for escorts, and safe passage through the region, the removal of one mission in the chain meant a regression rather than advancement of the Jesuit Christianizing mission in upper Sonora.

Furthermore, when native leaders became apostates, they limited and challenged the Jesuit missions to a greater extent. Seeing natives as highly superstitious, irrational beings, a Jesuit explained that, "as the simple Indian collapses morally before even the most obvious propaganda, accepting that is true anything that is told him, these apostates, dissatisfied and treacherous, could be a source of extreme annoyance to the fathers, and they were."[85] Native leaders that were apostates

[82] Dunne, *Early Jesuit Missions in Tarahumara*, 64.
[83] Ibid, 90.
[84] Spicer, *Cycles of Conquest,* 27-28.
[85] Dunne, *Early Jesuit Missions in Tarahumara*, 121.

withheld their prestige as a local authority and gained a larger following due to their contemplation and further rejection of the Christian faith. Apostates judged the Christian presence as ill-suited for their people and challenged the authority of Spanish missions by using their leadership positions as chief or shaman. Their presence was so prominent that even though local chiefs invited Jesuits into their villages, such as the chiefs of Cárichic, Papigochic, and Tutuaca, the rumors spread by the native leaders and apostates frightened the native individuals, who in turn shunned the missionary presence and refused baptism.[86] At times, local chiefs even warned Jesuit missionaries to leave because their people were plotting to kill the priest, egged on by rumors fueled by shaman, apostates, and other native leaders. Such resistance on behalf of native culture restricted the presence of Jesuit missions and their attempts to indoctrinate the populations with Christian and Spanish practices.

The limitations placed on the Jesuits by native leadership limited the impact of the missionary presence within the regions, which in turn limited the impact and extent of contact with the natives. For example, in the year 1623, six Jesuit fathers claimed to have baptized all 30,000 of the Yaqui native residents. The natives clearly outnumbered the missionaries. Even including all of the European population of the region, the Spanish were outnumbered 3,000 to one.[87] Neither the Jesuit fathers, nor the settlers could properly attend to the edification of all the Yaqui Christian souls. This limited ability of fathers to provide for the needs of thousands of newly baptized Christian natives allowed indigenous populations to determine which aspects of

[86] Ibid, 121.
[87] Spicer, *The Yaquis: A Cultural History*, 19.

Christianity they would incorporate into their society and which aspects they would reject. Jesuit missionaries had to depend upon and employ the labor and loyalty of the natives to successfully establish their missions and spread the Christian faith.

Christian missionaries relied heavily on native intermediaries to spread the faith amongst their peers, a practice which led to a native reinterpretation of Christianity. When entering new regions, Jesuit priests had to learn the native language and then write a copy of the catechism in the native tongue. While it was hard enough to learn the language and its dialects, many Fathers complained that native languages were too primitive and did not have the necessary words to express the bible and the word of god. At times, the Jesuit fathers acted out words to see what the natives would say, hoping they would give them a translation of the word they were looking for. For example, when Father Kino of the California missions was trying to determine the native Piman word for resurrection, he stunned three flies with cold water so they would lay on the table motionless. He then placed the flies on some ashes in the sunlight to warm them back up. Anxiously the Jesuits waited with their pens to hear what the natives said. The natives, however, simply replied with the words *ibí- muhuete-ete*, literally "It died a little while ago" or "Just now it was dead."[88] Father Kino used this native word for some time before he realized his translation mistake. Such mistakes in translation, some of which were made into

[88] Franceso Saverio Clavijero, *Clavijero's History of Lower California,* ed. AA. Gray, trans. Sara E Lake (Riverside, CA: Manessier Publishing Company, 1971), 144.

written catechisms that were later used by Jesuit missionaries, led to different interpretations and understandings of the Christian doctrine.[89]

If this process of native reinterpretation of the Christian faith began due to miscommunication, it nevertheless continued after the Jesuits overcame the language barrier. For instance, when natives were introduced to the concept of hell, they were often baffled why no one would want to go there. The way the Jesuits described hell to the natives was a place with fire and snakes, which from the native perspective, were positive aspects of life. After displaying a picture of hell in church, many natives revered the place and agreed that "the Inferno was without doubt a better country than [lower] California, because if a perpetual fire were down there, they would never have to suffer cold."[90] In reference to the snakes in hell, the native responded that with the presence of snakes there was a constant source of food. The natives understood snakes and perpetual fire to be a positive aspect of hell, whereas the Europeans saw them as negative and harmful.[91] Different world views led to different interpretations of the same material.

In addition, the general tactics of conversion through *temastianes* and methods of organizing a mission, such as the *visita*, encouraged natives to interpret the Christian doctrine from their own perspective and incorporate Christianity into their indigenous culture. Missions were usually founded after an initial *visita,* quite literally a visit into an unexplored native lands. If the natives accepted the Jesuits gifts of trinkets and appeared friendly, the priest would stay for a short duration of time and

[89] Clavijero, *Clavijero's History of Lower California*, 158.
[90] Ibid, 187.
[91] Ibid, 188..

briefly instruct a few key natives in the way of Christianity. These appointed religious leaders, referred to as *temastianes*, preached, instructed, and led the native population in prayer services in the absence of the Fathers. [92] Although documentation in reference to the number of *temastianes* present within each mission is rare, scholars have estimated that anywhere from one to twenty religious officials and *temastianes* were present within each pueblo.[93] Not until 1715, over a hundred years after the initiation of missions in Latin America, was a rule written regulating this conversion practice. The 1715 rule mandated that each district should have a copy of the catechism in the native language so that "the *temastianes* will not change them and the words will not be corrupted through the passage of time, nor will the newer Fathers who come to find themselves beset by doubts and scruples."[94]

These practices of the *visita* and the *temastianes* are exemplified in the case of the Tarahumar natives and Jesuit Juan Fonte. Uncertain of when he would be able to return to the region again, Fonte designated four men as fiscals in charge of religious activities. Before Fonte left he "acted as a primitive normal school teacher" and instructed the natives on the "basic truths of the Christian religion and pointed out the proper psychology in the carrying on of so delicate a work."[95] These fiscals, now possessed a "tincture of Christianity" as result of previous encounters with Christians, and were intended to gradually instruct their peers in "the fundamentals of the Faith." Soon after, Fonte left without returning or contacting the natives for over a year. Jesuit

[92] Polzer, *Rules and Precepts of the Jesuit Missions of Northwestern New Spain*, 49.
[93] Spicer, *The Yaquis: A Cultural History*, 21.
[94] Polzer, *Rules and Precepts of the Jesuit Missions of Northwestern New Spain*, 101.
[95] Dunne, *Early Jesuit Missions in Tarahumara*, 20.

Fathers believed that in their absence the natives could instruct their peers in the basics of Christianity so when the Fathers were able to start a mission the natives would readily accept Christianity. The natives were given basic instruction and then left alone to foster the Christian religion.

Although this encounter occurred in frontier missions and *visitas* abroad, the documented history of the mission of Los Santos Angelos de Guevavi, located slightly north of the Yaqui and Tarahumar region, illustrates that native interpretation also occurred after the initial *visita,* within established missions. Initially the small mission was only visited a few times a year, allowing the natives to behave as they wished and choose which fundamentals of the Christian faith and Spanish culture to follow. It was "Christianity on their own terms."[96] Although the Jesuit instituted a new political structure for the pueblo, the natives chose to selectively apply Spanish regulations, adopting those that benefitted the population. The natives of Los Santos Angelos accepted the economic advantages of the Jesuit presence such as the numerous gifts brought by the Jesuit Fathers and the introduction of advancements in agriculture and herding techniques. They received mass, and respected the authority of the Jesuit Fathers, but would continually dance, sing, and drink in celebration at night. Instead of around a fire, however, natives began to celebrate and dance around a Christian symbol, the cross. Natives also began to incorporate Christian burials and death rites into their culture, but continued their own practices of weeping, wailing, and lashing themselves.[97]

---

[96] Kessel, *Mission of Sorrows,* 17.
[97] Clavijero, *Clavijero's History of Lower California*, 93.

These practices of the *visitas* and *temastianes* enabled natives to inject their own practices and select the Christian practices that made more sense to them, leading to the formation of a hybrid religious culture. Within Jesuit *visitas*, natives actively taught and interpreted the Christian religion without direct supervision, which provided enough freedom and independence to foster the growth of a hybrid culture. Native *temastianes* interpreted the Christian faith within *visitas,* and continued this pattern of interpretation as the *visita* became an established mission. The natives incorporated the Christian practices into their own culture, accepting the economic benefits of Christianity without truly eradicating their own traditions, and in turn, creating a hybrid religious culture.

The Jesuit in charge of the Guevavi mission, Father Kino, actively ignored the presence of a developing hybrid culture, but his successors' letters highlight the mission's unique identity. Contrary to Kino's description of the Pimans as docile, hardworking, good Christians, Kino's replacements found the native population practicing a mixture of native and Christian traditions. The first resident Jesuit commented that despite the claim that the natives were true Christians, they embellished the celebration of mass with races, dancing, and singing. The natives recognized the Christian occurrence as a time of celebration, but chose to celebrate Christianity with native rituals. Furthermore, the Jesuits hinted at their tolerance of Christian acculturation, remarking that they themselves were "mindful of the natives' love [and incorporation] of pageantry."[98] The Jesuits encouraged the native rituals of celebrating Christianity, so long as they acknowledged the Christian religious thought.

[98] Kessel, *Mission of Sorrows*, 49.

In the absence of the Jesuit Fathers, the natives acquired their own definition of the Christian culture. Acculturation of the religion occurred whether or not the Jesuits acknowledged its presence.

The indigenous population played an active role in the development of culture within the New World. Pre-conquest native political associations dictated the formation of political relationships with the Spaniards. The strong, unified Yaqui fended off the Spanish military presence and dictated the Spanish penetration into the region. Tarahumar natives, on the other hand, lived with political disunity and could not curb the Spanish secular presence. Despite overarching political relationships with the Crown, however, the natives were able to negotiate political and economic relationships with the colonial population. The Spanish government lacked the proper funding and support to properly govern the newly acquired territories, and to suffice the Spanish placed native caciques in control. Such positions of authority gave natives some say in which Spanish traditions and practices they would accept, and which they would reject. The situation was the same with the Jesuit missionaries and, in turn, led to acculturation of the Christian religion. The Jesuits were limited in their numbers by their internal structure, relationships with the Papacy, relationships with the Spanish Crown, and relationships with the colonial settlement. Consequently, Jesuits applied conversion methods that depended upon the natives themselves to spread and interpret Christianity. The common practices of *visitas* and *temastianes* led to the creation of a hybrid religious culture as natives began to celebrate traditional mass by partaking in horse races and dances and women began bartering European crops for cotton to make

clothing. The seeds of Christianity were planted by missionaries, but tended to by native intermediaries.

## Chapter 3

### Rebellion: Renegotiating through Violence

Native intermediaries engaged in working relationships with the Jesuit missionaries, but tension over control of land, labor, and resources instigated a series of revolts that shook the foundation of the missionary system. With the growing competition between Spanish secular and religious powers, the indigenous population acted out to secure the future they desired. This future entailed a stronger political control of the region, which would allow the natives authority over the land upon which they worked and the agricultural products which they produced, ultimately eliminating exploitation of native labor and improving the native's economic status. In the case of the Tarahumar, rebellions occurred several times throughout the history of the missions; the most significant occurring in 1648 and 1650. Both rebellions were sporadic and local, as natives under the leadership of several Tarahumar caciques looted and sacked churches, killed priests and settlers, and stole herd for profit and sustenance. The Yaqui also rebelled against Spanish society, but much later in 1740. The rebellion began as Spanish government attempted to enforce new land policy, which caused controversy amongst the native caciques. Displeased with the outcome of the situation, two caciques traveled to Mexico City to petition the Spanish government, and when rumors spread that the Spanish killed the two caciques, rebellion ensued. These rebellions attempted to thwart the abusive practices of secular society and improve the natives' economic standing within Spanish society.

The increasing presence of the secular population pressured natives into articulating their own perspective of society, dictating what was beneficial to their indigenous community, and therefore acceptable, and what was detrimental, and therefore to be rejected. Both the Tarahumar and Yaqui regions came in contact with a growing secular population, simply at different times. The Yaqui's political unity buffered the region from exploitative secular settlements until the 1740's, but the atomistic political environment of the Tarahumar fostered a quick entrance of secular settlement as early as the 1630s. Despite occurring in different eras, the rebellions of the Yaqui and the Tarahumar shared similar characteristics and goals. An analysis of the rebellions demonstrates that the natives did not fully reject the Spanish presence, but rather wanted to re-negotiate their working relationships. Even though they were rebelling, natives continued to practice adaptations of Christian culture. During rebellions, natives kidnapped Jesuit priests but still had them say mass. The cultural practices were important to them, but taking the Jesuit priest hostage enabled the natives to negotiate with the Spanish. Natives also inquired as to what authority soldiers had to enter their region and challenged the Jesuits ability to appoint *pueblo* officials. Yaqui leaders even travelled to Mexico City to petition against the actions of Jesuits and secular authorities. Only with their failure did the natives become violent. They knew, respected, and followed Spanish political and religious institutions, but acted against its corrupt practices. The natives constantly interacted with the Spanish religious and secular authorities, and as a result, the colonial setting that emerged in this region was marked by a hybrid culture. Natives, while having incorporated

Spanish practices into their daily lives, continued to resist practices of impositions they viewed as contrary to their interests. By rebelling, natives were re-establishing their relationships with the growing Spanish presence, fighting for those aspects of Christian culture that they deemed important.

Up until the late 1600s, the Tarahumar region was marked by a general acceptance of the Jesuit missions as natives settled in *pueblos* and began to adopt Christian practices. Those who strongly objected to the missionary presence fled to the mountains, simply removing themselves from the Spanish sphere of influence.[99] Those who stayed realized the benefits of the Spanish and chose to take advantage of the presence of Jesuit missions. Acting as semi-neutral intermediaries between the natives and the secular population, the Jesuits protected the natives against exploitation and taught them new agricultural techniques. This protection from labor levies forcing them into the mining industry gave the natives more time to dedicate to agriculture, which in combination with the new growing techniques, produced a surplus of goods. This surplus then allowed them to engage in various avenues of trade. The Jesuits did not treat the natives as equals, but they provided the natives with the tools to navigate economic avenues within colonial society. When Jesuit Father Superior Contreras was writing about the devoutness of the Tarahumar natives within the Parral and las Bocas region, he stated "those unbaptized wanted baptism, but especially did they desire Christianity and the fruits of the spirit which the Christian culture would produce."[100] Baptism was a means to an end. Many natives

[99] Pennington, *The Tarahumar of Mexico,* 13-24.
[100] Dunne, *Early Jesuit Missions in Tarhumara*, 43.

accepted Christian culture as a means to intensify their economic relationship with the Spanish.

The mission *pueblo* of las Bocas exemplifies the native recognition and eagerness to engage in economic activities and the colonial market, as well as the Jesuit's role in exposing natives to such opportunities. Since its establishment, las Bocas was a highly productive mission settlement. The Jesuit Father in charge of the people, Jose de Lomas, constantly bragged to his superiors about the productivity of the town. He praised their political instinct, weaving skills, building skills, industrious sheep and fowl rearing, as well as their bartering of wool for cloth and other objects. Women would even sell the last of their food for cloth to make into clothing.[101] In 1623, the natives of Las Bocas in the Valley of San Pablo desired to move their pueblo, resettling closer to the highway connecting Durango with the local mine of Santa Barbara. Las Bocas natives argued this transition would allow more access to trade, further illustrating the natives' eagerness to engage in economic exchanges with the colonial population.

The expanding colonial presence, however, threatened the previous balance of power in economic relations and began to cause an increase in native exploitation. Colonial settlers and their descendants pushed for the secularization of lands, which meant the removal of Jesuits and the redistribution of missionary lands to acculturated natives and the settlers.[102] Even without the secularization movement, settlers began to steal native land, establishing their own farms. Not only did the colonial population

[101] Dunne, *Early Jesuit Missions in Tarahumara,* 35.
[102] Jackson, *Mission and the Frontiers of Spanish America,* 99.

demand to own the land natives occupied, they also insisted that all natives, Christian or not, should be subjected to labor levies, forcing them to work in nearby mines and on haciendas. Such demands on native land and labor heightened native exploitation. Mine owners increasingly overworked natives and refused to pay them for work unless they stayed an extra few months after the designated period of service as instituted by the labor levy.[103] The colonial population challenged the natives' control of economic relationships and subjected them to further exploitation.

In order to express their discontent with the growing colonial population and their decreasing ability to control economic relationships, the Tarahumar rebelled. The Tarahumar revolt of 1648 was instigated by a northern neighbor and encouraged a violent and destructive response to the Jesuit presence. Located north of the Tarahumar region, the native Tobosos constantly raided the Tarahumar settlements for food and supplies. Raiding always occurred, but in 1648 a drought made the Tarahumar even more vulnerable to the raiding parties. Lack of sustenance in combination with maltreatment of the natives by the colonial population sparked a deadly rebellion. Beginning in the *pueblo* of Fariagic, rebels led by four native caciques, Supichiochi, Tepox, Ochavarri, and Don Bartolomé, began raiding, heading towards the visita of San Francisco de Borja. The natives could have pushed further north to attack more settlements and missions, such as those of San Felipe and Satevó, but the fertile lands of San Borja produced more than enough cattle and grain to satisfy

[103] Evelyn Hu-DeHart, *Missionaries, Miners, and Indians: Spanish Contact with the Yaqui Nation of Northwestern New Spain, 1533-1820* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1981), 22-58.

the Tarahumar natives.[104] Rebel natives looted and sacked churches, killed priests, and stole herds for sustenance and profit. Yet, despite the colonial government's slow response to the rebellion, the natives did not attack anymore settlements or missions.[105] The natives simply began to engage with the Spanish military in defense of their actions at the *visita* of San Borja. This suggests that the natives were rebelling to suffice their material needs, something that the missions failed to provide in face of the raiding Tobosos.

The seed of rebellion in the Tarahumar region in 1648, common to many revolts, was the exploitation of the native labor and resources, but it was the inability of the secular arm of the administration to properly carry out Spanish law that encouraged large numbers of natives to join the first rebels. One Jesuit father described the ease with which maltreated natives were swayed to oppose of the Spanish, arguing that "When rebellious propaganda had some basis in the ill-treatment of the Indians by the Spaniards the dissatisfaction could spread as flame amidst tinder and dry grass."[106] Yet, the spark in this revolt was not just exploitation, rather it was the government's inability to properly defend and punish offenders of Spanish religious and secular law. The visiting Father Zepeda, reported that "the civil magistrates take no care to see that the Indians live according to Christian law. If they go off from pueblos to the hills to lead a wild and lawless life they are not pursued; if they live in open immorality and polygamy they are not punished."[107] This inability to

[104] Alegre, *Historia de La Provinicia,* 187.
[105] Dunne*, Early Jesuit Missions in Tarahumara*, 55.
[106] Ibid, 63.
[107] Ibid, 50.

efficiently deal with native offenses recurred in confrontations with neighboring warring tribes, such as the Tobosos. The Spanish General Valdes did not pursue the raiding tribes and in turn was not protecting the native population within missions. Even when the Tarahumar joined the raiding rebels, Governor Valdes conjured an army of 40 paid soldiers and 300 native allies, but never actively pursued any of the rebels or engaged in any battle. Tarahumar discontent with mistreatment on the hands of the Spanish and lack of punishment for aggressive natives gradually erupted into a full rebellion that cost the king over 50,000 pesos to pacify.[108] The Tarahumar were displeased with the Spanish government's lack of order and the Jesuit inability to produce material goods and protection from exploitation.

While the Spanish were hunting down the rebels of the 1648 rebellion, the military happened upon the fertile valley soon to be named the Valley of San Aguilar, the future sight of the 1650 rebellion. The valley became the home of a Spanish secular town with an established mission, La Purísma de Papigochic.[109] The natives took to Christianity, giving up native social practices of drinking and polygamy with great ease. In addition, the Jesuit in charge of the mission, Father Beudin, recorded that many natives celebrated Christian festivals. He even foresaw that the natives of La Purísma would "perhaps repeat those developments which occurred in the west coast years before when Mayo and Yaqui in tens of thousands knew the waters of baptism."[110] This Valley offered great potential for economic growth and religious

[108] Ibid, 50-51.
[109] Alegre, *Historia de La Provinicia*, 188-189.
[110] Dunne, *Early Jesuit Missions in Tarahumaras,* 61-63.

acculturation, but the greed of laity and the ingenuity of *hechiceros* halted the region's progress.

The revolt began in the Valley of San Aguilar, with a woman's rumor accusing Jesuit Father Beudin of killing a baby with baptism. Running through the streets she shouted in grief that the Jesuit father had killed her baby. In other regions, such an occurrence was enough to scare off the missionary father. Jesuit father Beudin, however, believed that enough other natives in the pueblo respected him and Christianity. Sparked by an infant's death and fed by constant mistreatment of the natives, violence broke out in the region. Highly organized, the rebel native leaders Don Diego Barrasa, Yagunaque, and Tepóraca rallied their followers, seized the pueblo, stole the flocks, and then killed all but a few Spanish settlers. Those spared were meant to be messengers and witnesses of the massacre.[111] Jesuit father Beudin, seen as in league with the Spanish exploiters, faced the same fate of death as the other Spanish settlers and the accouterments from the church were stolen.

Some natives of the Valley of San Aguilar attempted to help the Jesuit, while others denied the faith and its cultural practices by killing off the missionaries. Yet, even those who attempted to assassinate the missionaries displayed a degree of religious acculturation in their rejection of the faith. The leadership consisted of the natives Don Diego Barrasa, Yagunaque, and Tepóraca. Significantly, Don Diego Barrasa named himself after a Spanish Jesuit missionary, a recognition, perhaps, of the great power missionary fathers held within the settlements and an attempt to gain

[111] Ezequiel A. Chavez, ed, *Apuntes Sobre la Colonia. Vol 52-57* (Mexico, Editorial Jus, 1958), 115.

prowess by invoking that power. Yagunaque also retained significant ties to Christianity, being a hardened apostate. The existence of an apostate symbolizes the native comprehension of religious culture, as well as self-interpretation of religious doctrine. Yagunaque at one point accepted Christianity, but through his own thought and interpretation, decided to reject the faith but accepted the Jesuit presence. All three natives were friendly to the Spanish Jesuit until missionary father was no longer able to protect the natives from the exploitative actions of the secular town.[112] Seen as in league with the untrustworthy Spanish, the natives began to reject the Jesuit presence. Yet, despite the rebel leaders' rejection of the Jesuits and Spanish, the leaders of the rebellion still illustrated openness to the faith and signs of acculturation and native interpretation of religion.

Natives rebelled to re-negotiate their economic and political relationships with the Spanish, but still accepted and practiced parts of Spanish culture. Signs of acculturation prevailed throughout the rebellion, such as apostates, but also included natives pretending to be Spanish religious officials. While in the act of rebelling, one cacique in particular announced that he was a bishop and pretended to say mass to his fellow peers. He continued his masquerade as a missionary, baptizing his people, and making and dissolving marriages.[113] The cacique might have disapproved of the Spanish ability to govern the region and the established economic relationships, but he placed importance on continuing the Christian religious practices.

[112] Chavez, *Apuntes Sobre la Colonia,* 105.
[113] Dunne, *Early Jesuit Missions in Tarahumara,* 52.

Even though a direct Spanish influence and occupation did not return to the valley for over twenty years after the rebellion, the natives of the valley continued to embrace several aspects of the Christian religion. To begin, in the fallow mission years, natives continued to travel to neighboring missions to ask the Jesuit fathers to visit the pueblo and cure their sick and dying relatives. The natives also adopted the Christian calendar of holidays and feasts, as seen in the greeting of the Jesuit priest. When Jesuit Father Neumann arrived, the natives understood that the Father could not eat meat because it was currently lent and had already prepared him another meal.[114] Further indications of acculturation to the Christian religion were seen in the work ethic of the population and their industry in agricultural endeavors. Whereas the natives previously shifted settlements seasonally, they chose to remain in one location and work the land. Natives incorporated material practices of the Spanish missionaries and consistently desired to retain contact with the Jesuit fathers.

Christianity within the Tarahumar region was generally accepted, but the native interpretation of the Spanish religion did not necessarily align with the European perspective. Whereas Spaniards separated materialism and trade from Christianity, the Tarahumar understood trade and agricultural tasks as part of the daily Christian life, and often converted to procure the material benefits derived from those activities. However, when the acceptance of Christianity failed to deliver the expected material benefits, the Tarahumar turned to war and violence as a means to secure control of land, labor, and resources. The Tarahumar rebellions of 1648 and 1650 illustrate the native motivation to accept Spanish cultural domination in order to

[114] Ibid, 144.

engage in economic relationships with the Spanish, but just as clearly their intention to resist the complete domination of their society. The Tarahumar natives resisted the Spanish authority when its corrupt practices became detrimental to their economic interests, but they did not reject altogether cultural practices they had adopted throughout the years to facilitate their economic exchanges with society.

Similar circumstances occurred in the Yaqui territory, leading to rebellion for the renegotiation of economic relationships as well. Yaqui leadership, in contrast to the Tarahumar, was able to retain control of the Yaqui region, allowing very few entrepreneurs to enter their territory. Mines were never established in Yaqui territory proper, buffering the Yaqui region from an abusive colonial population up until the 1700s. By then, the growing colonial population led to an increasingly large Spanish population that practiced many of the same abusive relationships as seen in the Tarahumar territory, leading to general distrust and social tension within Yaqui country. As settlers vied for resources owned communally by the natives, and corrupt secular government administrators exploited the natives, parts of the indigenous population began to actively oppose the entire Spanish presence. Mid eighteenth century abusive relationships, in combination with other complaints, exploded into rebellion.[115]

In general, the Yaqui were amiable towards the Jesuit and Spanish cultural presence until 1734. Natives engaged in the market economy, practiced Christian holidays, and were willing to work in mines. The year 1734, however, was a turning point. Whereas previously the Spanish were only represented through a religious

[115] Spicer, *Cycles of Conquest,* 46-51.

authority, in 1734 civil authorities entered Yaqui territory.[116] Spanish governor Huidobro represented the colonial authority and quickly instituted a regional development plan. This plan included "the assignment of Indian land, the institution of free elections in towns, the long overdue imposition of tribute, and making the labor levy system effective."[117] Assignment of Indian land meant the re-distribution of the mission communal land, placing agricultural fields in the hands of the settlers. The institution of free elections within towns would relinquish the political influence of the Jesuit clergy, allowing those natives who opposed the mission system to gain political prowess. Control of tribute and labor levies placed the economic value of the region in the hands of the Spanish Crown. This entrance of the Spanish colonial authority challenged the established social structure and caused civil unrest.

The Jesuits were adamantly against the introduction of a Spanish political presence, but the issue split the native population. Whereas some natives saw the actions of the Spanish as an aid against the oppression of the Jesuits, others saw the Spanish actions as an aggression towards the Yaqui autonomy. In a town meeting, Jesuits and native governors discussed whether or not to follow Huidobro's new policy of tribute and labor levies. Two native leaders, Muni and Basoritemea, supported an intensification of their interactions with the colonial society in an attempt to distance themselves from the control of the Jesuit authority. Other natives, however, disagreed. In anger Muni and Basoritemea threw down their canes of office and left the conference. The Jesuit quickly took this as a renunciation of office, held

[116] John D. Meredith, "The Yaqui Rebellion of 1740: A Jesuit Account and Its Implications," *Ethnohistory* 22 (Summer 1975): 225.
[117] Spicer, *The Yaqui: A Cultural History*, 39.

new elections in which barely anyone voted, and replaced the rebellious natives. Infuriated by the actions of the Jesuits, Muni and Basoritemea left for Sinaloa to present their complaints to the Jesuit rector Father Napoli. Unfortunately for the native leaders, Father Napoli did not reinstate either of them in office, did not engage their other complaints, and ordered them to return to their resident missions.[118]

In another attempt to peacefully resolve the situation, Muni and Basoritemea left to speak with the Viceroy of New Spain with a new list of complaints that included fourteen requests. Four requests asked for the removal of specific corrupt officials and Jesuits. They also requested that the settlers be removed from within their town. Perhaps the most important requests, however, were that:

> Yaquis be authorized to carry arms, that they be paid for work, that their land boundaries be protected, that they have free elections, that the work for the missionaries be moderated, that the restrictions on individual Yaqui commerce be lifted, that they not be required to provide labor for the mines, and that they name a protector of the Yaqui nation.[119]

The Yaquis wanted equality and were willing to petition to attain it. Issues dealing with residency, control of land, control of labor, and civil rights plagued the previously peaceful Yaqui region.

The native governor of Rahum, Muni, and the native governor of Huirivis, Bernabé Basoritemea, also lodged complaints to the Provincial governor de Mena against local mestizos, mulattos, and other settlers who were appropriating native land and exploiting Yaqui labor. De Mena entered the town to investigate and resolve the conflict. After speaking with the Jesuits of the town, De Mena ordered the two leaders

[118] Spicer, *Cycles of Conquest,* 51; Spicer, *The Yaquis: A Cultural History,* 36-42.
[119] Spicer, *The Yaquis: A Cultural History*, 42.

to be placed in stocks and charged with inciting a rebellion. News of the leaders detainment spread and thousands of armed followers stormed the town to free the leaders. Although the Spanish were outnumbered and would have easily been defeated, Muni negotiated the peaceful retreat of his people and his own freedom.[120] Muni and Basoritemea did not set out for bloodshed, but simply political representation. The natives wanted a say in the government, not its complete demolition. Yaqui leadership was well supported, but chose diplomacy over violence.

Despite the political maneuvers of Muni, Basoritemea, and entourage, a sporadic rebellion erupted. Rumors spread that Muni and Basoritemea had been killed by the Spanish. Though no one knows who started these rumors, sources suggest that they were politically motivated. Meanwhile a poor harvest left entire pueblos hungry.[121] Missionaries denied natives food arguing that other missions were even less fortunate than those in the Yaqui region.[122] No one native leader emerged, but a series of random, local revolts spread across the Yaqui region. One local rally cry for rebellion echoed "Long live the King, Long live the Blessed Mary, Down with the Bad government!"[123] Furthermore, none of the battles of the revolt actually took place within a Yaqui mission town, but closer to the centers of Spanish settlements. The sporadic location of the revolts suggests that the "degree of violence associated with

[120] Ibid, 40; Meredith, "The Yaqui Rebellion of 1740," 225.
[121] Meredith, "The Yaqui Rebellion of 1740," 225.
[122] Juan María Salvatierra, *Selected Letters about Lower California,* trans. Ernest J Burrus (Los Angelos: Dawson's Book Shop, 1971), 91-97. Resources from the Yaqui region were usually sent to Jesuit missions in Lower California.
[123] Spicer, *Cycles of Conquest,* 52.

each incident may serve as a barometer for the degree of tension which existed between Europeans and Indians in each locality."[124]

The revolts were local and did not culminate in a largely organized sweeping revolt. In March of 1740, the mission town of Ostimuri created a raiding party of 200-300 men. This party raided ranches, burned buildings, stole livestock, and only killed one Spanish family and manhandled others.[125] It appears that the main motivation for their rebellion was lack of an internal structure that could support the natives economically. Killing was not the objective. The natives had lost control of their resources, and this was a way of retaining supplies to survive. Yet, this same raiding party decided to take revenge on the Jesuit Father Fentanes, whom they believed punished the natives too harshly. Their revenge consisted of whipping the Jesuit's farm foreman and assistant. They then took the missionary father prisoner, holding him for three days without hurting him, all the while having him say mass. Illustrated by their observance of religious practices, the natives did not reject the Jesuit presence. Rather, as seen in their general goals of attaining rights and diminishing limitations imposed on indigenous participation in commerce, the rebelling natives accepted aspects of the Spanish religion and rejected their political structure of allocating resources.

In the town of Santa Cruz, parts of the Mayo region had joined the Yaqui rebellion under the leader Juan Calixto Ayamea. The confrontation began when a group of patrolling Spaniards entered the region and were thought to have killed the

[124] Meredith, "The Yaqui Rebellion of 1740," 257-258.
[125] Spicer, *The Yaquis: A Cultural History*, 43.

native leader Muni. As the patrol approached the Mayo community, natives demanded they identify themselves and papers which attested to the authority deeming them the right to travel through the territory.[126] This act demonstrated that the Yaquis understood the political system in place, giving them the potential and to manipulate the situation to their benefit. The soldiers presented Governor Huidobro's orders, and the Mayo decided to greet the soldiers in peace. The ingenious leaders greeted the soldiers with traditional Spanish handshakes and hugs. Yet, these handshakes and hugs were engineered to disarm the soldiers, and soon the soldiers found themselves stripped naked, defenseless in the middle of a large group of natives. The natives then rang a church bell, raised a crucifix and a statue of Virgin Mary to the sky, and told the Spanish soldiers to say a prayer before the image. After several more odd ceremonies, the Mayo deemed the soldiers innocent in the killing of Muni and let them go. Ayamea then proclaimed that he was "King, Pope, God, and the Virgin," ordered the soldiers to be whipped, and then released them naked on their way.[127] Ayamea used the Spanish tradition of greeting political authority to embarrass the military patrol, and furthermore diminished their standing by declaring he himself was a combination of Spanish and religious authority. In doing so, he was asserting his strength as a leader and his right to oppose Spanish political presence, while still accepting the religious tradition of the praying, the cross, and the Virgin Mary. Ayamea and his followers actively displayed their discontent with the military patrol

[126] Spicer, *The Yaquis: A Cultural History*, 44.
[127] Spicer, *The Yaquis: A Cultural History*, 45; Meredith, "The Yaqui Rebellion of 1740," 226.

and joined in the rebellion without totally rejecting the Spanish and religious cultural practices.

The Spanish authorities responded to the rebellion with violence, escalating the conflict and ignoring the calls for natives' rights. Rumors of Muni's death did not only instigate the aforementioned event in Santa Cruz, but also sparked other harmful rumors that the Spanish were out to kill *all* the natives, Christian allies or not. Under the elected leadership of Ayamea, the Yaqui natives began a violent frontal attack on Spanish forces. Five main battles of the 1740 rebellion ensued, but the natives were defeated. The politically active leaders of Muni and Basoritemea were captured in their sleep and sentenced to death. Basoritemea's recorded last words were "Señor governor, I am going to die, there is now no remedy…tell me Sir, for the mercy of God, what is the reason that I die, because I know not."[128] Muni and Basoritemea supplied the natives with the concept of equal opportunity, but the records never show them as actively inciting rebellion. The Spanish ignored the natives' demands for rights they believed they were entitled to, and put down the rebellion with sheer, brutal force. The Yaqui natives did not initially respond to the Spanish threat with violence, and only when political solutions were no longer perceivably viable did the natives resort to violence in defense of their region.

The Yaqui rebellion of 1734 was instigated by the political tension between the indigenous population, Jesuits priests, and the secular authority over native labor, land, and resources. By the 1700s, natives were being incorporated into the market system voluntarily and involuntarily, despite the desire of the Jesuits for natives to remain

[128] Ibid, 49.

isolated from participating in the mining industry and other activities that generated material wealth. More importantly, the increasingly stable environment encouraged Spanish settlers to populate the region. The value of land increased as settlements expanded, leading to growing pressure for the division and distribution of indigenous communal lands amongst both natives and settlers. In face of the developing economic situation, many natives changed their course of action from acquiescence and acculturation to rebellion to attain their rights. Natives continued to actively challenge the presence of a purportedly dominating power, taking control of their own labor and resources rather than allowing the Jesuits and Spanish secular authorities to dictate their future.

The political environment of dueling Jesuit and secular powers laid a foundation of unrest, but was not the main catalyst for the rebellion. As the colonial period progressed, the Jesuit missions became fully fledged producers of cattle, crops, and native Christians. By the 1730's, the five Jesuits that resided in the Yaqui region had developed their missions into institutions like the Spanish hacienda, producing massive amounts of agricultural products at the expense of unpaid native labor. The products were then sold to settlers, sent to underproductive missions, or sent to newly established missions in infertile regions. Colonial powers became envious of the Jesuits' perceived wealth and began to push for the secularization of missions. Secularization would divide native land, put the left over land up for sale, and natives

would have to pay a labor tax.[129] Ultimately, secularization of the missions would usurp Jesuit control of land, labor, and other resources.

Yet, the lay population was not the only other demographic vying for control of resources. The natives living within the missions began to challenge the Jesuits. In practice, the Jesuits monopolized native labor and production, distributing the products as they desired, for the benefit of the mission, rather than the benefit of the natives or the Spanish Crown. This distribution of the mission production angered the natives, especially when starving missions saw their communal crops being sent to other missions. Jesuits ignored the natives' claims of entitlement to their communal crops, stirring up tension with the missions.

The native choice to advocate for rights through political avenues instead of first resorting to bloodshed suggests that the Yaqui leadership did not necessarily reject the entire presence of the Spanish. Native leaders Muni and Basoritemea, as well as other Yaquis, wanted to revoke the power of Jesuit clergy and control their own resources. In using the colonial government to pursue that goal by petitioning their rights, the natives acknowledged and reinforced their political and social power. Political actions of the Yaqui suggest that the natives had faith in the authority and legitimacy of the Spanish government. However, when the secular government tried to impose itself upon the Yaqui, replacing the religious government, the Yaqui also rebelled. The Yaqui did not originally mean to destroy Spanish power, rather they meant to reinstate government officials that would protect native rights and follow royal decrees in favor of the natives.

[129] Meredith, "The Yaqui Rebellion of 1740," 232.

The issues presented to the rector Father Napoli by both the natives and the Jesuits illustrate the increasing political activity of the native population and their determination to secure their rights. In their presentation, Muni and Basoritemea demanded that their complaints about various exploitative practices be addressed, practices such as excessive work without pay, excessive whipping and corporal punishment for minor offenses, use of produce as gifts from Jesuits to secular authorities, rigged elections, and settlers on their land. Their demands did not require the removal of the missionaries, or the removal of the Spanish authority, rather they asked for proper rights, representation and treatment as a Spanish citizen without being exploited. The natives recognized the Spanish authority to regulate trade and social practices, but opposed their subservient position. The Jesuits in return argued that "Muni and Basoritemea were vying with each other to demonstrate equality with Spaniards," as well as calling themselves señor and asking that they be addressed in such a manner.[130] In addition, they complained that they went about with guns and swords, dressed as Spaniards, and sat at the dinner table with Spanish relatives. Other offenses that the Jesuits charged the native leaders with were the rebellious activities of engaging in traditional dances, music, and giving speeches to the people.[131] The Jesuit complaints illustrate the native leader's attempt to embrace Spanish social distinctions of political authority. By emulating the Spanish, combining social markers of political authority, such as carrying around guns and demanding to be called by respectful title, with native means of protest, such as dances, music, and

[130] Spicer, *The Yaquis: A Cultural History,* 41.
[131] Spicer, *The Yaquis: A Cultural History*, 41.

speeches, natives were illustrating that their own political culture incorporated notions and expectations of rights of Spanish political culture.

The native rebellions were ultimately suppressed, yet these events demonstrated the continuous acculturation of native society and the hybrid culture that emerged as a result of the native interaction with colonial society. Muni and Basoritemea attempted to oppose the Jesuit exploitation and control of native resources by using the Spanish system of administration. They trusted and believed in both the Jesuit and secular justice structure and their ability to diffuse their problems within their community. The fact that the Spanish elected to kill the ideological leaders instead of the military leaders of the rebellion reinforces the image of an active indigenous population able to navigate the colonial social and political sphere. Muni and Basoritemea were a greater threat than the native leaders who were actually engaging in battle. The philosophy that Muni and Basoritemea propagated opposed the Spanish control of natural resources and labor and empowered natives to actively stand up for their rights as equals. This tendency to accept and reject specific aspects of Spanish culture is seen in the incorporation and respect for religion while still in a rebellion. They did not demolish the mission, which means that they placed some value in these institutions. The Yaqui nation was not willing to take an inferior position in their relationship with the Spanish. Yet, the natives did not necessarily rebel to eliminate the Spanish presence, but rather to regain political and social control of their environment, reestablishing themselves as equals. The natives were trying to

manipulate their surroundings and work the Spanish system rather than build their own new nation.

Throughout the colonial period, the increasing presence of the secular population caused a heightened tension over resources, tensions that gave birth to telling rebellions. Rebellion, however, was not a total rejection of the Spanish culture. Natives prospered from the new agricultural techniques, new trade relationships, and protection from exploitation provided by the Jesuits. Certain aspects of Spanish society were beneficial to the natives, and both the Yaqui and Tarahumar attempted to re-establish working relationships that would empower their people while interacting with the Spanish colonial and religious authorities. The Yaqui natives attempted to pursue indigenous rights through political maneuvers and did not desire to throw off the entire Spanish presence. The Tarahumar rebellions, on the other hand, rejected the political structure that dominated and exploited their people while embracing different aspects of Spanish religious and economic culture.

## Conclusion

In February 1970, the small Tarahumar village of Samachique began preparation of activities for the annual Easter celebration. The people of Samachique live rather independent lives, inhabiting small ranches composed of one to five households, and only coming to the community center for meetings and ceremonies. Here the mestizo, Tarahumar, and two Protestant missionaries began to plan Palm Sunday, Holy Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday activities within the old deserted Jesuit mission. Of particular interest are the Good Friday activities, which began early in the morning. The ceremony commenced with forty prominent males equipped with swords, covered in geometric designs, filing into the church, beating their drums, and dancing to the tune of two flutes. "Once inside, each crossed himself, turned around counterclockwise, and filed back out to the churchyard. Breaking into two groups, each file, led by a Flag bearer with a red bandana, ran loudly whooping in opposite circles." The procession continued until the men reached a stream. Here some men constructed Judas effigies while the others covered themselves in white clay and sat around joking, usually of a sexual manner. They then finished the station-of-the-cross and commenced feasting and drinking.[132]

The Samachique celebration of Easter illustrates the hybrid religious and social culture that permeates the Tarahumar region to this day. Not every village celebrates this holiday in the same manner as the Samachique; rather some are more conservative and follow strict European tradition, while others have their own unique interpretation

[132] John G. Kennedy and Raúl A. Lopez, *Semana Santa in the Sierra Tarahumar: A Comparative Study in Three Communities* (Los Angelos: University of California, 1981), 37.

and celebration. The Yaqui also celebrate Easter, but with a tradition known as the deer dancer, which combines native emphasis on the importance of nature with Christian rituals and beliefs.[133] Although celebrating the same Christian holiday, the natives express their faith and identity through varying native traditions blended with Christian ritual, a pattern of acculturation which dates back to the colonial period.

One of the main contributors to the present day hybrid culture other than the indigenous populations was the Jesuit mission system. Samachique's celebration was held at an old Jesuit mission, one of many that used to populate the region. Jesuits engaged indigenous populations by establishing missions within their territory in an attempt to Christianize and impose European culture upon them. Yet, the nature of the encounter between the Jesuits and the natives was determined by exchange rather than domination or imposition. Established missionary systems offered natives new agricultural techniques, domesticated animals, access to western materials, and provided a buffer between the natives and the expanding colonial presence. The Jesuits provided beneficial materials and aid to the natives, and in exchange the natives offered assistance to the missionary fathers in building churches, gathering local materials, negotiating with other native populations, spreading baptism, and even indoctrinating natives in the absence of the resident Jesuit. Natives filled an active role within colonial development, serving as important cultural intermediaries and facilitating the development of a hybrid culture.

---

[133] Spicer, *The Yaqui: A Cultural History,* 59-118; Valentina Litvinoff, "Theatre in the Desert," *The Drama Review* 17 (Sept. 1973): 52-63.

Natives actively participated in the colonization of New Spain, proving helpful intermediaries partially because of the Society of Jesus' internal structure, which limited the number of Jesuits within the field. Ignatius of Loyola and his seven companions wrote a Constitution that created high standards of admittance for the religious order, limiting the number of people who successfully achieved membership in the Jesuit order. Furthermore, the nature of the Jesuit schooling left missionaries ill-equipped. Education did not provide practical knowledge needed for survival, emphasizing theory and scholarship over woodworking, blacksmithing, or farming. Part of this emphasis on theory over practical skills derived from the Jesuits growing and diverse roles to stave off growing waves of Protestantism within Europe. The Papacy, to whom the Jesuits pledged their allegiance, ordered the Fathers to fulfill other roles such as preacher, orator, publisher, or confessor. The Papacy prioritized other world events, and in combination with the Jesuits internal structure, left the missions in Latin America wanting for more Jesuits. Natives outnumbered the Jesuits in the field 3,000 to one at times, as seen in the case of Yaqui, leaving a single missionary in charge of several different missions miles apart.[134] Without enough Jesuits to attend to each native *pueblo,* the ill-equipped Jesuits had to depend on baptized and Christian natives to attend to each local population in the absence of the father.

Even once in the New World, Jesuits missionaries continued to face challenges that inhibited their movement and progress. Jesuits within Latin America, specifically the province of New Spain, faced challenges in maintaining their hegemonic rule due

[134] Ibid, 19.

to relationships with the Spanish Crown. Although the Papacy dictated where the Jesuits were sent, the Spanish Crown dictated which Jesuits were allowed to enter the region. Up until 1664, this meant that only Jesuits of Spanish birth were allowed into Spanish colonial territories.[135] This royal imposition further narrowed the pool of Jesuits available for duty in the colonies. The Spanish oversight also slowed the progress of the missionaries by filtering Jesuit communications and demanding thorough records of the mission populations and materials. Without quick and efficient communication lines, Jesuits suffered from delayed shipment of goods, forcing the Jesuits to rely on the local colonial population or the natives for aid. In addition, time spent filing paperwork withdrew the Jesuits from active work and put a further drain on the mission's tight budget. Fewer Jesuits and more regulation slowed the building and diminished the proper management of established missions. The Spanish Crown's attempts to regulate and control the activities of the Jesuits delayed the arrival of missionaries and goods which in turn hindered the establishment of, and proper management of missions, ultimately causing an increased Jesuit dependence upon the native population and increased delays in conversion efforts.

Yet another challenge the Jesuits faced in imposing Spanish culture and converting the native population was their relationship with colonial society. Originally the Jesuits established a symbiotic relationship with colonists and the colonial administration, one in which the Jesuits were responsible for the Christianization and "pacification" of the natives, and the colonial society provided military and material support. This collaboration formed an environment which

[135] Dunne, *Early Jesuit Missions in Tarahumara*, 102.

fostered a growing economy based on interdependence. In general, the further the Jesuits were able to penetrate the isolated regions, the more stable the colonial settlement became.[136] Unfortunately, the expanding colonial population at times abused and exploited the natives, stirring up distrust and resistance. This distrust and resistance began to build as, nearing the mid to late 1700s, the colonial authorities and settlers began to push for secularization and division of Jesuit lands. The Jesuit mission was not seen as necessary anymore, but rather an impediment in the progress of Spanish colonial interests. This negative perspective of the Jesuit activity translated into negative attitudes and actions towards the natives, leaving the natives questioning the Jesuits' legitimacy. Missionary efforts expanded throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, but so did the distrust of their establishments in the eyes of the Spanish Crown, and the natives.

Growing native distrust can be understood by analyzing the original political relationships formed between the native populations and the Spanish government. Whereas the natives originally had a say in the establishment of political relationships, the growing colonial population threatened the previously established balance of order. Initially, the Spanish attempted to impose their will and culture upon the native populations with sheer force. This tactic had varying degrees of success, as the native political organization determined the political relationships formed between the two parties. The strong, united Yaqui nation defeated the Spanish military and managed to reject political domination until the late 1700s.[137] The Tarahumar, on the other hand,

[136] Herbert E. Bolton, "The Mission as a Frontier Institution in the Spanish American Colonies," 42-61.
[137] Spicer, *Cycles of Conquest,* 46-48.

were composed of several different tribes led by individual leaders who did not unite in face of the Spanish frontier.[138] Central political organization curbed the Spanish political domination, whereas de-centralized political organization could not. Yet, natives were able to retain some political autonomy throughout the process of colonization, since a stable relationship depended upon colonial interaction with local native caciques. The Spanish did not have a large enough governance system, or the money to impose one, leaving the Spanish government allocating authority to loyal, Christian caciques.[139]

Just as the natives participated actively in the creation of political relationships with the Spanish colonial society, they were also active in promoting cultural exchange. Culture was not imposed upon natives, rather natives had some say in which Spanish cultural practices they would accept, and which traditions they would reject. Although the Jesuit missionaries actively entered isolated regions to initiate contact with distant indigenous nations, some native populations heard of the Christian presence and sought out missionaries for baptism.[140] When the indigenous Christian needs overburdened the number of working Jesuits, natives fulfilled the void of missionaries, becoming intermediaries and providing both the Yaqui and Tarahumar opportunities to culturally adapt Christianity. In turn, conversion methods were highly native driven, with the indigenous population often teaching the Jesuit their native language. The missionary would then write the catechism in the native tongue, leaving it there for natives to read after the father's departure. Mistakes in translation

[138] Pennington, *The Tarahumar of Mexico*, 1-25; Spicer, *Cycles of Conquest,* 25-28.
[139] Yannakakis, *The Art of Being In-Between,* 18-19.
[140] Ribas, *My Life Amongst the Savage Nations of New Spain,* 155-182.

and different worldview interpretations affected the transference of the Christian message. These different interpretations were then nurtured, as the Jesuit father only travelled to the outpost, or *visita,* a few times a year. The native participation in conversion efforts and their willingness to accept Christianity created a hybrid interpretation and celebration of faith.[141]

Native motives to accept Christianity emerge through the analysis of rebellions within each region. Whereas rebellion is usually discussed as a full rejection of society, Yaqui and Tarahumar rebellions in the late 17th and early 18th centuries should be understood as an attempt to renegotiate relationships to benefit the indigenous population. While having incorporated Spanish practices into their daily lives, natives continued to resist practices they viewed as contrary to their interests. Growing Spanish presence meant that resisting those impositions through mere rejection was becoming more difficult, resulting in some incidents of violent rebellion. Rebellion was a negotiation in an attempt to redefine economic, social, and political relationships.

Rebellions within each region illustrate the characteristics of Spanish culture that were beneficial to the native culture, as well as those that were detrimental and rejected. The Yaqui rebellion emerged from several different areas of discontent, but most of the rebellion occurred due to a controversy over land policy. The natives were losing political control of the region as more and more settlers arrived and the governor wanted to appropriate native lands for the settlers. In addition to policy changes, the mistreatment and exploitation of natives by the colonial population reared

[141] Clavijero, *Clavijero's History of Lower California*, 158-188.

animosity amongst the Yaqui. Jesuit control over natural resources also divided the Yaqui population, with some natives arguing that the indigenous population should have control over the products grown within missions. To profess their complaints, Yaqui native leaders travelled to Mexico City and presented their grievances to the Spanish colonial government. Only when this strategy failed did the region break out into warfare.[142] The Yaqui attempt to pursue complaints through the secular government shows respect for Spanish establishment of authority and their understanding of how to manipulate the system. They knew what rights they had and desired them to be fulfilled, rather than to destroy the whole governance system.

The Tarahumar, on the other hand, rebelled several times throughout the mission project in 1648 and 1650 in response to the Spanish government's inability to impose order and a general distrust of the Jesuits. These rebellions were more sporadic, triggered by mistreatment and exploitation of the natives. The Tarahumar originally engaged in relationships with the Jesuits, accepting Christian cultural traditions to strengthen their economic relationships with the Spanish. In 1648, the raiding tribe of the Tobosos to the North challenged the Tarahumar's economic relationship with the Spanish. The Spanish did not properly punish the raiding parties, and the Tarahumar began to see less of an advantage to engaging in relationships with the Spanish. Natives were also suffering from famine, which heightened the effects of the Toboso raids and led to the Tarahumar questioning the Jesuit priests' ability to properly manage communally produced goods. In 1650, another Tarahumar rebellion broke loose, this time due to growing distrust of the Spanish religion and secular abuse

[142] Spicer, *The Yaquis: A Cultural History,* 32-37.

of the native population. Colonial society was exploiting the natives, and when the natives saw that the Jesuits were not doing anything to help, they assumed the Jesuits were in accordance with the colonial society and their exploitative behaviors. Thus, when a woman accused baptism of killing her baby, the natives within the mission rebelled, using the baby's death as an excuse to express their general distrust of Spanish society. The Spanish presence through Jesuit missions promised material benefits and stability, but when that promise was not fulfilled natives, as seen in the case of the Yaqui and of the Tarahumar, rebelled to express their discontent with the Spanish presence.

Yet, neither the Tarahumar nor the Yaqui rejected the entire Spanish presence as seen in the actions of the natives throughout and after the revolts occurred. During the rebellions, some natives took Jesuits hostage, but still asked them to say mass.[143] Others claimed for themselves the power held by a combination of Jesuit and Spanish colonial authorities and carried out the duties of missionaries.[144] Still, others adopted Christian names and navigated the colonial governance system to petition for rights to practice Spanish and Christian cultural practices.[145] After the rebellion, many more natives continued to practice Christian beliefs, such as those seen in the Valley of San Aguilar.[146] The natives might have rejected the Spanish political presence due to their inability to govern and impose an order, two things that proved detrimental to the indigenous population, but the natives did not entirely reject the Christian faith.

---

[143] Dunne, *Early Jesuit Missions in Tarahumara,* 52.
[144] Spicer, *The Yaquis: A Cultural History*, 45; Meredith, "The Yaqui Rebellion of 1740," 226.
[145] Spicer, *Cycles of Conquest,* 51; Spicer, *The Yaquis: A Cultural History,* 36-42.
[146] Dunne, *Early Jesuit Missions in Tarahumara,* 144.

Native rebellions are evident of both acceptance and desire for Spanish presence on one hand, and on the other hand a struggle to maintain some control over the terms of that presence.

Thus, the native populations of the Yaqui, Tarahumar, and throughout the region of Northwestern New Spain, actively participated in the conquest and settlement of the New World, establishing relationships that were beneficial to their respective peoples. The Spanish colonial presence was not strong enough to effectively control the frontier, leaving natives the opportunity to determine, to some extent, what practices and traditions they would accept, and those they would reject. Similarly, the limited numbers of Jesuit missionaries and the constant challenges they faced to their authority and hegemonic influence in the region prevented complete cultural domination of the natives. As a result, both the colonial government and the Jesuits came to rely on political and religious leaders among the natives to serve as intermediaries and to affect their control within the region. These intermediary figures, moreover, while contributing to Spanish imperial expansion, ensured native peoples had some input into and control over the terms of Spanish presence and its impact on their lives.

The environment created within the Jesuit missions empowered natives to adapt Christian culture to accommodate native traditions, and to some extent dictate interactions with the Spanish. The Spanish political and religious institutions attempted to impose cultural changes upon the natives of the new world, but the relationships formed with the indigenous population were marked by exchange.

Indigenous settlements adopted Christian practices as a means of securing semi-stable economic relationships with the Spanish colonial population. When this exchange was challenged, the natives fought to protect the relationships that they saw as advantageous and beneficial to their communities. Rebellion was an attempt to renegotiate established relationships with the Spanish, not an entire rejection of their presence. Although Christian churches and priests were attacked in the rebellions, these targets were seen as a symbol of the exploitative Spanish governance. Instead of complete rejection of the Christian faith, actions of caciques throughout and after the rebellion illustrated the continual acceptance of various Christian religious practices. The various interactions and relationships formed between the indigenous populations, the Jesuit missions, and the colonial population perpetuated a native hybrid religious culture that encompassed both material and spiritual aspects of Christianity.

## Bibliography

### Primary Documents:

Alegre, Francisco Javier. *Historia de la Provincia de la Compañía de Jesús de Nueva España. vol 3, Años 1640-1675.* Edited by Ernest J. Burrus and Felix Zubillaga. Rome: Institutum Historicum, 1959.

_____. *Historia de la Provincia de la Compañía de Jesús de Nueva España. vol 4, Años 1676-1766.* Edited by Ernest J. Burrus and Felix Zubillaga. Rome: Institutum Historicum, 1960.

Azara, D. Félix de. *Viajes por la América Meridional por D. Félix de Azara,* Edited by G. Cuvier. Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1941.

Clavijero, Franceso Saverio. *Clavijero's History of Lower California.* Edited by AA. Gray. Translated by Sara E Lake. Riverside, CA: Manessier Publishing Company, 1971.

Decorme, Gerard. *La Obra de los Jesuitas Mexicanos Durante la Época Colonial, 1572-1767.* vol 1. México: Antigua Librería Robredo de José Porrua e Hijos, 1941.

Dunne, Peter Masten. *Early Jesuit Missions in Tarahumara.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1948.

Hackett, Charles Wilson, ed. *Historical Documents Relating to New Mexico, Nueva Vizcaya, and Approaches Thereto, to 1773.* vol 1. Washington D.C: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1926.

Kino, Father Eusebio Francisco. *Kino's Historical Memoir of Pimeria Alta: A Contemporary Account of the Beginnings of California, Sonora, and Arizona, by Father Eusebio Francisco Kino, S.J., Pioneer Missionary Explorer, Cartographer, and Ranchman.* Translated by Herbert Eugene Bolton. Berkley: University of California Press, 1948.

Loyola, St. Ignatius of. *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus.* Edited by George E. Ganss, S.J. St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1970.

Meliá, Bartomeu. *El Guaraní Conquistado y Reducido.* Asunción: CEADUC, 1988.

Naylor, Thomas H. and Thomas E. Sheridan, ed. *Rarámuri: A Tarahumara Colonial Chronicle, 1607-1791.* Flagstaff, AZ: Northland Press, 1979.

Perez de Ribas, *My Life Among the savage Nations of New Spain.* Translated by Tomás A. Robertson. Los Angelos: Ward Ritchie Publishing, 1968.

Pfefferkorn, Ignaz. *Sonora, A Description of the Province.* Translated by Theodore E. Treutlein. Tuscon: University of Arizona Press, 1989.

Polzer, Charles W. *Rules and Precepts of the Jesuit Missions of Northwestern New Spain.* Tuscon: University of Arizona Press, 1976.

Salvatierra, Juan María de. *Juan María de Salvatierra, S.J.: Selected Letters about Lower California.* Translated by Ernest J. Burrus, S.J. Los Angeles: Dawson's Book Shop, 1971.

**Secondary:**

**Books:**

Block, David. *Mission Culture on the Upper Amazon: Native Tradition, Jesuit Enterprise, & Secular Policy in Moxos, 1660-1880.* Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1994.

Chavez, Ezequiel A, ed. *Apuntes Sobre la Colonia.* vol 52-57. México: Editorial Jus, 1958.

Clendinen, Inga. *Ambivalent Conquests: Maya and Spaniard in Yucatan, 1517-1570.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

Dussell, Enrique. *A History of the Church in Latin America: Colonialism to Liberalism, 1492-1979.* Edited and translated by Alan Neely. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1981.

_____. *The Invention of the Americas.* Translated by Michael D. Barber. New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 2005.

Gagliano, Joseph A. and Charles E. Ronan, editors. *Jesuit Encounters on the New World: Jesuit Chroniclers, Geographers, Educators, and Missionaries in the Americas, 1549-1767.* Rome: Institutum Historicum S.I., 1997.

González, Ondina E. and Justo L. González. *Christianity in Latin America: A History.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Hopfl, Harro. *Jesuit Political Thought: The Society of Jesus and the State, c. 1540 1630.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Hu-DeHart, Evelyn. *Missionaries, Miners, and Indians: Spanish Contact with the Yaqui Nation of Northwestern New Spain, 1533-1820.* Tuscon: University of Arizona Press, 1981.

Jackson, Robert H. *Missions and Frontiers of Spanish America: A Comparative Study of the Impact of Environmental, Economic, Political, and Socio-Cultural Variations on the Missions in the Rio de la Plata region and on the Northern Frontier of New Spain.* Scottsdale, AZ: Pentacle Press, 2005.

Janecek, W. Dirk and George R. Janecek. *Mexico's Sierra Tarahumara.* Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996.

Kennedy, John G. and Raúl a. López. *Semana Santa in the Sierra Tarahumara: A Comparative Study in Three Communities.* Los Angelos: Regents of the University of California, 1981.

Kessel, John L. *Missions of Sorrow: Jesuit Guevavi and the Pimas, 1691-1767.* Tuscon: University of Arizona Press, 1970.

MacCormack, Sabine. *Religion in the Andes: Vision and Imagination in Early Colonial Peru.* New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1991.

Mecham, J. Lloyd. *Church and State in Latin America: A history of Politico Ecclesiastical Relations.* Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1966.

Metcalf, Alida C. *Go-Betweens and the Colonization of Brazil, 1500-1600.* Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005.

Neill, Stephen. *A History of Christian Missions.* Edited by Owen Chadwick. London: Penguin Books, 1990.

Pennington, Campbell W. *The Tarahumar of Mexico: Their Environment and Material Culture.* Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1963.

Perry, Mary Elizabeth, and Anne J. Cruz. *Cultural Encounters: The Impact of the Inquisition in Spain and the New World.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.

Restall, Matthew. *Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Spicer, Edward H. *Cycles of Conquest: The Impact of Spain, Mexico, and the United States on Indians of the Southwest, 1533-1960.* Tuscon: University of Arizona Press, 1967.

_____. *The Yaquis: A Cultural History.* Tuscon: Arizona University Press, 1980.

Worcester, Thomas, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to The Jesuits.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Wright, Jonathan. *God's Soldiers: Adventure, Politics, Intrigue, and Power, A history of the Jesuits.* New York: Doubleday, 2004.

Yannakakais, Yanna. *The Art of Being In-Between: Native Intermediaries, Indian Identity, and Local rule in Colonial Oaxaca.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008.

**Articles and Chapters in Edited Volumes:**

Bolton, Herbert E. "The Mission as a Frontier Institution in the Spanish American Colonies." In *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (Oct., 1917): 42-61.

Cardenal, Rodolfo. "The Church in Central America." In *the Church in Latin America, 1492-1992,* edited by Enrique Dussell, 243-269. New York: Burnes & Oates, 1992.

Clendinnen, Inga. "Landscape and World Views: The Survival of Yucatec Maya Culture under Spanish Conquest," *Comparative Studies in Society and History,* 22 (1980), 374-45.

Deeds, Susan M. "Legacies, Adaptation, and Tenacity: History of the Native Peoples of Northwest Mexico." In *The Cambridge History of Native Peoples of the Americas,* ed. Richard E.W. Adams and Murdo J. MacLeod, Vol. 2, *Meso-America, Part 2,* 44-89. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Estragó, Margarita, Durán. "The Reductions." In *the Church in Latin America, 1492-1992,* edited by Enrique Dussell, 251-362. New York: Burnes & Oates, 1992.

León, Mario A. Rodríguez. "Invasion and Evangelization in the Sixteenth Century." In *the Church in Latin America, 1492-1992,* edited by Enrique Dussell, 43-54. New York: Burnes & Oates, 1992.

Litvinoff, Valentina. "Theatre in the Desert." *The Drama Review* 17 (Sept. 1973): 52-63.

Meredith, John D. "The Yaqui Rebellion of 1740: A Jesuit Account and Its Implications." *Ethnohistory* 22 (Summer, 1975): 223-261.

Dunne, Peter M. "The Literature of the Jesuits of New Spain." *The Catholic Historical Review* 20 (Oct., 1934): 248-259.

Salmón, Roberto Mario. "Tarahumar Resistance to Mission Congregation in Northern New Spain." *Ethnohistory* 24 (Autumn, 1977): 379-393.

Spicer, Edward. "Social Structure and Cultural Process in Yaqui Religious Acculturation." *American anthropologist, New Series* 60 (June, 1958): 433-441.