

# LA RAZA Y LA DEFINICIÓN DE LA IDENTIDAD DEL "INDIO" EN LAS FRONTERAS DE LA AMÉRICA ESPAÑOLA COLONIAL

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## Resumen

El estudio a continuación examina el proceso de creación de la identidad del "indio" y su estatus (al menos el que quedaba registrado en el papel), como características que definieron el papel que jugaron los nativos en la sociedad colonial, en tres misiones distintas ubicadas en las fronteras de la América española. Dentro de este contexto, la misión era una institución de frontera diseñada para despojar a los nativos de su cultura buscando transformarlos en agricultores sedentarios, e incorporarlos dentro de un nuevo orden colonial. El primer caso es el de la misión jesuita de Chiquitos, ubicada en la frontera noreste de Perú (la actual Bolivia), la cual estaba poblada de agricultores sedentarios de diversas etnias. La segunda comprende la misión jesuita de la frontera con Paraguay, compuesta por una población Guaraní mucho más homogénea. La tercera y última es la misión franciscana del norte de Coahuila, la cual se encontraba poblada por pequeños grupos de cazadores-recolectores nómadas.

## Palabras clave:

*Creación de identidad, misiones, Chiquitos, Paraguay, Coahuila.*

## RACE AND THE DEFINITION OF "INDIAN" IDENTITY ON THE FRINGES OF COLONIAL SPANISH AMERICA

### Abstract

The following study examines the process of the creation of indio identity and status, at least on paper, that defined the role of the natives in colonial society, on three distinct mission frontiers on the fringes of Spanish America. The mission was a frontier institution designed to acculturate and ostensibly transform native populations into sedentary agriculturalists, and incorporate natives into the new colonial order. The first is the Jesuit Chiquitos mission frontier of eastern Upper Peru (modern Bolivia), populated by ethnically diverse sedentary agriculturalists. The second is the Jesuit mission frontier of Paraguay with more a homogeneous Guaraní population. The final case study comes from the Franciscan missions of northern Coahuila (Mexico) populated by small bands of nomadic hunter-gatherers.

### Keywords:

*Identity creation, missions, Chiquitos, Paraguay, Coahuila.*

## A RAÇA E A DEFINIÇÃO DA IDENTIDADE DO "INDIO" NAS FRONTEIRAS DA AMÉRICA COLONIAL ESPANHOLA

### Resumo

O presente artigo examina o processo de criação da identidade e do status do "indio", pelo menos o que foi registrado por escrito, que definiu o papel que tiveram os nativos na sociedade colonial, em três missões diferentes nas fronteiras da América espanhola. A missão era uma instituição de fronteira desenhada para aculturar os nativos, procurando transformá-los em agricultores sedentários e assim incorporá-los dentro da nova ordem colonial. O primeiro caso é a missão Jesuíta de Chiquitos, localizada na fronteira nordeste do Peru (Bolívia contemporânea), a qual estava povoada de agricultores sedentários de diversas etnias. A segunda missão da fronteira em análise é a Jesuíta do Paraguai, composta por uma povoação Guaraní muito mais homogênea. O terceiro e último caso em estudo é a missão Franciscana do norte de Coahuila, a qual se encontrava povoada por pequenos grupos de caçadores - coletores nômades.

### Palavras-chave:

*Criação de identidade, missões, Chiquitos, Paraguai, Coahuila.*

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In a 1999 book, I discussed the creation of an "Indian" identity in different types of societies in colonial Spanish America. These included an important agricultural region in Upper Peru (modern Bolivia), which would be considered a core area, and mission areas on the northern frontier of Mexico (Jackson, 1999). Not surprisingly, the social-political structure of the native societies, the trajectory of the evolution of a colonial society, and Spanish policy objectives defined the extent to which Spanish officials, priests, and census takers relied on caste terms to differentiate between different groups as defined within a corporate social structure. In some frontier regions, such as California, there was little need to create distinctions other than between local native groups and the colonizers, who were collapsed into the single generic category of *gente de razón* ("people of reason"). In other areas, such as the Cochabamba region of Upper Peru, on the other hand, a more diversified society emerged, and Spanish officials used a wide range of caste terms to categorize the population between Spaniards, *indios*, and peoples of mixed ancestry. At the same time, as a general proposition, the Spanish collapsed native ethnic groups into a single *indio* category defined by the obligation to pay tribute and in some instances provide labor services. The discussion of the creation and use of racial identities in this essay builds upon the works of other scholars who have examined ethnicity and identity in frontier missions from different perspectives, particularly missions in South America (Block, 1994; Saeger, 2000; Tomicha Charupa, 2002; Radding, 1997; Radding, 2005). Spanish policy attempted to create stable native communities that were to play an integral role in the new colonial society as labor reserves and contributors to economic development and the treasury. Missionaries often formed communities constituted from populations of different ethnic origins, and sought to meld these populations into new identities oriented to the geographic location of the mission rather than the identity of a native leader or *cacique*. (The term *cacique* itself originated in Hispaniola in the Caribbean, and became generalized as a term to identify indigenous leaders throughout Spanish America, furthermore the name of indigenous leaders was often used to identify different ethnic groups.) At the same time, the missionaries frequently preserved and perpetuated the authority of native leaders as a means of assuring social and political stability within the missions, and did so under different power arrangements such as *cacicazgos* or *parcialidades* modified by grafting an Iberian model of municipal government onto native clan or tribal forms of power.

A *cacicazgo* was not synonymous with an ethnic identity, and particularly as the Spanish used the concept in frontier missions. The Spanish created a colonial political system based upon indirect rule. Indigenous political leaders

governed as representatives of the colonial state, and were held responsible for maintaining order in native communities and delivering tribute payments and labor. It was not uncommon for frontier missions to consist of composite populations drawn from different bands, communities, or socially, culturally, or linguistically distinct ethnic groups. Incorporation of diverse populations into a single mission community subject to one or multiple *caciques* did not necessarily lead to an amalgamation into a new socially, culturally, and linguistically distinct ethnicity. The creation of *cacicazgos* within missions was an artifact of colonial rule to implement indirect governance.

At the same time, an argument can be made regarding the creation of a new sense of identity, in the Jesuit missions of Paraguay, as residents of a given mission distinct from other mission and non-mission populations. The native response to the 1750 Treaty of Madrid, the agreement to establish fixed boundaries between Spanish and Portuguese territory in South America, provides hints of the forging of an identity linked to individual missions. Under the terms of the treaty, Spain transferred the sites and territory of seven missions located east of the Uruguay River to Portugal, in exchange for Colonia do Sacramento, an outpost located in modern Uruguay. The *caciques* and *cabildos* (town councils) of the affected missions protested the cession of their communities, and framed their response in terms of an identity constructed within the communities (Ganson, 2003).

Evidence regarding marriage patterns at Corpus Christi mission, discussed in more detail below, provides clues to social processes that fortified identification with the mission communities. Men primarily married women from the same mission, but most likely from different *cacicazgos*. Inter-marriage between the *cacicazgos* re-enforced Guaraní self-identification with their mission community of residence.

The model for social and political change in missions on the frontiers of Spanish America drew upon previous experience in the more densely populated core areas such as central Mexico and the Andean region. In the sixteenth century royal officials modified existing political systems based upon the *ayllu* or *altepetl*, but also engaged in what can be called social engineering by reconstituting new communities from the fragments of existing settlements disrupted by demographic collapse and migration. The policy of *congregación* or *reducción* combined ethnically diverse indigenous populations into new communities, and divided power between clan or moiety leaders.<sup>1</sup> The Crown

1 In the late sixteenth century, for example, royal officials created three new communities in the Valle Bajo of Cochabamba in Alto Peru from 65 different *ayllus* divided into the dual moieties of Urinsaya and Anansaya. The creation of new communities and the erection of political authority also led to disputes and at times litigation. Royal officials gave authority over Tiquipaya, one of the new communities, to native leaders from one ethnic group, and the leaders of the other groups took the issue through the colonial courts. See Jackson, 1994, 2003; Cahill and Tovas, 2003.

sponsored missions on the frontiers to develop similarly structured communities.

In one sense, discussion of the creation and use of racial identities in different records, such as censuses and parish registers of births, marriages and marriage investigations, and deaths, is akin to the construction of an official history of what the colonizers hoped to be the configuration of the colonial society they attempted to shape the missions, but that did not necessarily reflect the real society and the nature of social relations that evolved on the ground. At the same time, some historians and social scientists who try to make sense of the workings of colonial Spanish American society have often found documents that can be used to neatly quantify, analyze, and categorize groups of people seductive. Nonetheless, a discussion of the construction of race in colonial Spanish America does provide insights to understanding colonial policy in both the abstract and concrete.

There were significant differences in the construction of race on the frontiers of Spanish America when compared to regions inhabited by more socially and politically advanced, and hierarchically organized sedentary native societies. This was the case even among those frontier native societies based on forms of sedentary agriculture (Jackson, 2005). Moreover, and this certainly was the case in the records relating to the frontier missions in northern Mexico and in different regions of South America, the ethnic diversity of the populations brought under Spanish control also modified the ways in which Spanish officials and missionaries from different orders recorded the status of native peoples. As is also discussed below, demographic collapse and change framed the processes of identification, ethnic classification, and ethnic transformation and survival. This essay outlines distinct patterns of identification of native peoples living on missions on three frontiers of Spanish America in the eighteenth century with different types of indigenous populations. The first example comes from the Chiquitos missions, in what today is eastern Bolivia, which were ethnically mixed communities of agriculturalists who practiced swidden farming and also continued to be active *congregaciones* prior to the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1767-1768. In other words, the Jesuit missionaries continued to resettle non-Christians to the missions from different ethnic groups. The Jesuit records for the Chiquitos missions, however, show that the missionaries de-emphasized ethnic distinctions in the populations of the missions, and identified the majority of residents as generic *indios* or by their religious status as Christians or non-Christians undergoing religious conversion.

Records for the Paraguay missions, also managed by the Jesuits and an example of missions with presumably more homogeneous populations of agriculturalists, show a de-emphasis of distinct ethnicity, and identifications based on status as *indios* subject to the Crown, residents of one or another of the missions, and subjects of one of the *cacicazgos* (clan-based) social-political jurisdictions in the

missions<sup>2</sup>. Surviving records from the early mission period, such as reports, do not distinguish between ethnicities, which may reflect the creation of a new "Guarani" ethnic identifier to describe the populations brought to live on the missions.<sup>3</sup> However, the elimination of ethnic identifiers in mission records made it easier to make the transition to registering the mission residents as *indios*. The discussion here focuses on records related to Corpus Christi Mission. The final case study examined in this essay is from two Franciscan missions located in northern Coahuila on the Rio Grande River, in northern Mexico. This case study provides an example of missions populated by nomadic hunter-gatherers from small bands of extended families. Records from these missions recorded a multiplicity of identities, and the process, at least on paper, of collapsing these identities into a single indio category. The Franciscans, unlike the Jesuits in the Chiquitos missions, did not attempt to perpetuate the authority of traditional indigenous leaders in *cacicazgos* or a similar arrangement as part of a scheme for a system of indirect rule. As such there was no need to record information regarding the natives with the same degree of detail as was the case in the Chiquitos missions.

### **Ethnic Diversity and Religious Identity on the Chiquitos Missions Frontier, 1691-1768**

The Chiquitos missions were located on a relatively isolated frontier. Unlike the contemporary Jesuit missions of Paraguay that were integrated into regional trade networks, the Chiquitos missions did not maintain close connections to other Spanish settlements, such as Santa Cruz de la Sierra. The Jesuits established the first mission named San Francisco Xavier in the Chiquitos region in 1691, and eventually founded a total of ten missions. In the 1690s, the Black Robes founded four missions: San Francisco Xavier (1691); San Rafael (1695); San José (1697); and San Juan Bautista (1699).

However, there was some instability in the mission program resulting from shortages of missionaries during the War of Spanish Succession (1701-1713). The Jesuits temporarily abandoned San Juan Bautista in 1709, but then re-established the mission with a resident priest seven years later in 1716. It is more likely to have existed as a *visita*, a community visited periodically as a priest until an increase in the number of Jesuits allowed for the stationing of a resident priest in 1716. At the same time the Jesuits founded

2 The populations collectively known as "Guarani" spoke a language or languages within the larger Tupi-Guarani linguistic family. Ethnic distinctions may have existed in the populations brought to live at the missions by the Jesuits, in the same sense that the Chiriguano of eastern Bolivia, who also spoke a Tupi-Guarani language, was a distinct group that spoke a language related to that of the residents of the Paraguay missions.

3 Registers of baptisms, burials, and marriages do not survive for the Paraguay missions, particularly for the early period in the seventeenth century. These types of records often recorded ethnic identifiers.

Concepción in 1709 (Tomicha Charupa, 2002, p. 517). There was a second expansion in the number of missions in the 1720s. In 1721, the Black Robes established San Miguel, and San Ignacio de Zamucos three years later. The latter mission operated until 1744, when the Jesuit leadership decided to abandon it. However, four years later, in 1748, they established a new San Ignacio mission at a different location, closer to the other Chiquitos missions (Tomicha Charupa, 2002, pp. 536-537, 547, 549). The final expansion came between 1754 and 1760, with the addition of three new missions to the Chiquitos chain. The first was Santiago, established in 1754 with natives transferred to the new community from San José and San Juan Bautista missions. In the following year the Black Robes founded Santa Ana, and in 1760 Santo Corazón de Jesús. The Jesuits relocated neophytes from San Miguel and San Juan Bautista to form the last named community (Tomicha Charupa, 2002, pp. 557-559).

Some reports prepared by the Jesuit missionaries show that the Chiquitos missions had multi-ethnic populations, and the designation given to the missions represented geographic rather than ethnic identification. In 1745, for example, the population of the Chiquitos missions totaled 14,706. The majority, some 9,625 natives or 65.5 percent of the total, spoke Chiquita, but there were neophytes living on the missions that spoke other languages. There were 1,617 Arawak speakers (11 percent), 649 Chapacura speakers (4.4 percent), 1,341 Otuqui speakers (9.1 percent), 1,160 Zamuca speakers (7.9 percent), and 314 Guaraní speakers (2.1 percent) (Tomicha Charupa, 2002, p. 278). The populations of each individual mission consisted of clans drawn from different native communities, and with the periodic resettlement of new converts the populations became even more ethnically diverse.

At the same time, most records the Jesuits kept tended, at least on paper, to reduce the ethnically diverse population in the Chiquitos missions into one of several categories that defined the natives as Christian *indios*, which was an identification consistent with the general trajectory of Spanish policy towards native peoples who shared unique obligations to the Crown that included the payment of *tributo* and the formal or informal provision of labor. This was most evident in general censuses that recorded the total mission populations and other categories of information.

As noted above, during most of the Jesuit tenure the Chiquitos missions were active *congregaciones*, with non-Christian recruits resettled on some of the missions periodically as a result of expeditions sent out by the Jesuits to locate new converts. Table 1 summarizes information on the numbers of non-Christians resettled on the missions following selected *excursiones*, as Jesuit missionaries called the expeditions sent to locate new converts. Most of the expeditions consisted of neophytes from the missions, and perhaps a Jesuit priest. The 1735 report for San Miguel mission described one such expedition. On July 1, 1735, a

group of 112 natives left the mission to visit a group called the Guarapes. They returned on December 12 of the same year with 282 people to be settled on the mission.<sup>4</sup>

Mission censuses also distinguished between residents already considered to be Christians, and recently congregated peoples undergoing religious instruction. In 1713, for example, Joseph Ignacio de la Mata, S.J. enumerated a population of 1,677 Christians and 119 neophytes receiving instruction at San Francisco Xavier.<sup>5</sup> In the same year, San Jose mission had a population of 1,392 Christians and 428 undergoing instruction.<sup>6</sup> In 1734, the Jesuits reported the baptism of sixteen adults, all new converts.<sup>7</sup> These reports, however, did not identify the ethnicity of the non-Christians living at the missions, and recorded them by their religious status as individuals undergoing religious instruction in preparation for baptism. The missionaries followed a similar practice in the registration of baptisms of new converts, particularly adults. A 1738 baptismal entry recorded by Martin Espinosa, S.J., at San Francisco Xavier Mission, recorded a native name or surname, but identified the group as *infieles* and not as members of one or another ethnic group or clan (see Table 2).<sup>8</sup>

By the 1760s, towards the end of their tenure, the Jesuit missionaries no longer maintained the pretext of using any ethnic identifiers in the records they kept describing the different groups living at the Chiquitos missions. The missionaries identified mission residents either as Christians or non-Christians, or by the generic *indio* category that denoted membership in the *república de indios* with the unique obligations to the Crown that membership in the corporate group imposed. The 1765 census of the Chiquitos missions, for example, recoded population totals also broken down into different broad gender and age categories, and vital statistics. However, the census did not incorporate any ethnic identification, but instead lumped the diverse populations living at the missions into one single generic category. This method of registering the populations of the missions was, more than anything else, an artifact of Spanish colonialism. It was a reaffirmation of how Spanish officials viewed the structure of colonial society in the Americas, or at least the structure of what it should be, but the use of one or another term to categorize people

4 No Author, No Date, "Anua del Pueblo de San Miguel. Año de 1735," Biblioteca Nacional, Archivo General de la Nación, Buenos Aires (hereinafter cited as BN, AGN), 6468/12.

5 Joseph Ignacio de la Mata, San Francisco Xavier, December 10, 1713, "Estado del Pueblo de S[a]n Fran[cis]co Xavier de las Misiones de Chiquitos," BN, AGN 6127/8.

6 Juan Bautista Cea, S.J., San Jose, October 20, 1713, "Estado del Pueblo de S[a]n Jose de Indios Chiquitos," BN, AGN 6127/10.

7 No Author, No Date, "Anua de la Doctrina de San Juan Bautista en las Misiones de los Chiquitos. Año de 1734," BN, AGN 6468/14.

8 The San Francisco Xavier Mission register is the only surviving Jesuit era baptismal record for the Chiquitos missions.

in census, parish registers, or other documents did not, in and of itself, define the nature of social relations on the ground. The registration of identifications in mission records represented the mind set of the individual recording the information, and not much more.

In other frontier mission regions, records reflected a more homogeneous population, and likewise the collapse of ethnically diverse populations into the generic *indio* category or an artificial ethnic identifier that represented the way the Spanish either understood or idealized the composition and structure of native society. The Jesuit missions of Paraguay (actually parts of Paraguay and neighboring areas in Argentina and Brazil) were an example of this pattern, and the records kept by the missionaries identified the native residents of the mission communities by a generic category or as "Guaraní." Additionally, the Jesuits registered in different documents the structure of a modified form of the pre-Hispanic clan social and political organization in the missions, that preserved a modified form of the pre-Hispanic social-political clan structure common throughout the larger region later dominated by the missions. The records of Corpus Christi Mission, located in Misiones, Argentina, typified this form of record keeping and identification.

### Corpus Christi and the Jesuit Missions of Paraguay

The Jesuits created an internal administrative jurisdiction known as the province of Paraguay in 1607 and in 1610 established a mission known as San Ignacio Guazu in what today is southeastern Paraguay. The Black Robes focused their missionary activities on Guaraní communities not under the control of holders of *encomienda* grants in Paraguay, and between 1610 and the early 1630s rapidly expanded the number of missions to the south and east of Asunción. The Guaraní were sedentary agriculturalists living in clan-based villages under the authority of a clan chief, and the Jesuits incorporated the existing clan system as the *cacicazgos* already mentioned above, and evidence shows that the clan system continued to function in the mission communities following the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1767-1768 and as late as the 1840s if not later (Ganson, 2003; Jackson, 2005) The *caciques* in turn shared power within the communities through the *cabildo*, and the Jesuits re-enforced social-political clan organization within the missions by assigning each *cacique* a block of residences to be used by the Guaraní who were subject to their authority. As suggested above, the Guaraní residents of the Jesuit missions forged a self-identity with their communities of residence, a process not seen on many other mission frontiers, that resulted from several hundred years of relative internal social and political stability.

Corpus Christi was one of what eventually numbered thirty mission communities, also known as *reducciones*, established by the Jesuits among a population of sedentary agriculturalists collectively known as "Guaraní." The Jesuits

established the mission in 1622 on the Paraná River, and relocated the mission to a new site in 1629 on the opposite bank of the river. According to a contemporary report, the Black Robes made the move in 1629 to a site with "*mejor tierra*," or better lands.<sup>9</sup> The report also noted that the original mission site was not healthy ("*malsana*"), and specifically reported an outbreak of dysentery that may have been caused by contaminated water at the first mission site. Seventy years later the mission was moved to its final and current site on the east bank of the Paraná River. The report for that year noted that the decision had already been made to relocate the mission, and that a residence for the missionaries and houses for the Guaraní, all with tile roofs, had been built at the new location.<sup>10</sup>

During the course of the seventeenth century the population of Corpus Christi stagnated. In 1643, it was 1,650, 1,331 in 1657, and 1,350 in 1682. Following the relocation of the mission to a new site in 1699, the number of Guaraní living on the mission increased, the growth resulting from robust birth rates. In 1702, for example, the crude birth rate was 72.6 per thousand population, and it was 62.3 in 1724. The crude death rate in the same years was 42.9 and 37.7 respectively. In 1691, the population totaled 1,655, reached 2,763 in 1714, 3,138 in 1724, and 4,400 in 1731. Contagion exacted a heavy toll on the population of Corpus Christi during the 1730s. In five years the numbers dropped to 2,190 in 1736, a decline in population of more than 2,000. The Corpus Christi mission community appears to have missed the horrific mortality that occurred at other missions during the 1738-1740 smallpox outbreak, and the population recovered and grew over the next several decades. It reached a low of 1,975 in 1738, but then increased to 2,922 in 1741, 3,488 in 1746 and 4,944 a decade later in 1757 (see Table 3). Smallpox struck Corpus Christi again in 1764, and a total of 643 people died at the mission in 1764. The numbers dropped from 4,771 recorded in 1763, to 4,280 in 1764, or a net decline of more than 400. In the wake of the epidemic, the population of Corpus Christi began to grow again, and totaled 4,587 in 1767. Following the Jesuit expulsion and their replacement by Mercedarians, the population of Corpus Christi gradually declined as a result of out-migration and epidemics. In 1772, the population totaled 4,887, showing continued recovery following the 1764 smallpox epidemic. Another census prepared five years later in 1777 recorded additional details on the structure of the population that totaled 4,134.<sup>11</sup> The population declined in the 1780s and 1790s. In 1785, 2,575 Guaraní reportedly were still on the mission, and it further dropped to 1,946 in 1793. Another detailed census prepared in 1799 further documented the level

9 Carta Annuade Corpus Christi, 1629, Angelis Collection, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (hereinafter cited as AC), 28, # 876.

10 Carta Annuade, 1699, AC 925.

11 Jaun Bautista Flores, Corpus Christi, September 30, 1777, "Empadronamiento del Pueblo del Corpus," AGN, Sala 9-6-9-7.

of out-migration from Corpus Christi.<sup>12</sup> According to the census 2,287 Guaraní still lived on the mission, but another 1,671 were absent. The majority of those absent were men and boys, or 65.8 percent of the total, and men constituted 31.7 percent of those absent. Two hundred and sixty eight married couples were also gone. Men and women left with their families, but it was easier for men to leave than for women. Although widows generally outnumbered widowers on the missions, the census showed that more widowers were absent, 147 as against 29. Among those still at the mission were 103 widows and only 13 widowers. The number of orphans provides another indication of the predominance of men among those absent: 115 girls and 327 boys. Despite efforts by royal officials, the fugitives did not return to Corpus Christi. In 1801, the population was 2,443, indicating continued growth through natural reproduction. Out-migration resulted from several factors. In the years following the Jesuit expulsion, individuals or families chafed under the control and authority of the Jesuits and later the civil administrators appointed to manage the missions following the expulsion, and chose instead to leave the mission communities. Work opportunities existed in the Spanish colonial world outside of the missions, particularly as the economy of the Río de la Plata region grew in the last decades of the eighteenth century. One scholar emphasized the importance of natives from the missions in the formation of the society of Uruguay, particularly from the participation of natives from the ex-missions in the labor market in the Río de la Plata (Gonzalez Rissotto, 1989). The groups within the mission populations most likely to be absent were economically mobile young adult males, and many Guaraní routinely left the mission communities to go to the Spanish towns in the region to sell goods on their own behalf or for the Jesuits and later the civil administrators. This acquainted the Guaraní with the larger colonial world, and provided opportunities to obtain work.

A 1759 tribute census provides a detailed look at the population of Corpus Christi at one point in time, and typified the way in which the Jesuits recorded the identity of the native populations in the Paraguay missions. The population totaled 4,530, plus another 112 identified as Guañanas. The census noted that the Guañanas were a small group only recently congregated on the mission in 1724, 1730, and 1754, and was the only group living at Corpus Christi identified by an ethnic term. The Jesuits categorized the rest of the mission population by name, family grouping, and *cacicazgo*, or the clan they belonged to. Data from the census shows that Corpus Christi was a relatively closed community as regards the selection of marriage partners. With the exception of a handful of women

originally from the Chaco region and from neighboring missions, the vast majority of men at Corpus Christi married women from other *cacicazgos* in the mission. Corpus Christi men married eight Guañana women from among the groups congregated in 1724, 1730, and 1754, and one Abipone woman, a native group from the Chaco region. A few men selected wives from neighboring missions: San Francisco de Borja, one; Loreto, two; Santa Rosa, one; San Carlos, one; Ytapua, two; and San Ignacio, one. The census identified these women as natives of one of the other missions, and also did not record an ethnic identity.

The social-political structure of the missions was based on the persistence of a modified form of the Guaraní clan system, and the Jesuits shared power with the *caciques* (clan chiefs) through the Iberian-style municipal government implemented in the mission communities as part of a system of indirect rule. *Caciques* retained authority and influence within the mission communities, and the Jesuits and royal officials reinforced their status and authority in several ways, such as exemptions from tribute payments and labor obligations. Jesuit record keeping reflected the status and authority of the *caciques*, and the use of the *cacicazgos* as one element of the identification in mission records of Christians living on the missions. The Jesuits and the priests that replaced them following the expulsion of the Black Robes identified the *cacique* and *cacicazgo* of commoners when they recorded baptisms and other sacraments,<sup>13</sup> as well as in the detailed tribute counts such as the 1759 Corpus Christi census. Inter-marriage between the subjects of the *cacicazgos* and the high rate of endogamy within the mission community reinforced and solidified the internal social and political structure, and was a social policy the Jesuits fostered. The *cacicazgos* varied in the size of population, as documented in the 1759 tribute census (see Table 4). In 1759, the *cacicazgos* ranged in population between 16 people living in Ara and 25 in Aracay, to a high of 346 in Pindobi.

General censuses of the Jesuit missions recorded the populations in a generic fashion (see Figure 6). The Jesuits registered the mission populations without including ethnic identifiers of any kind, and as a generic *indio* population. These population counts were similar in structure to the contemporary censuses of the Chiquitos missions, and divided the mission residents into rough age categories and civil status. Moreover, the censuses reported vital statistics, the number of baptisms (generally births), marriages, and burials. These general censuses and the tribute censuses were prepared for royal officials, and as such provided information in conformity to the objectives of royal policy.

The two previous examples of the registration and creation

12 Juan Valcarcel, Corpus Christi, April 27, 1799, "Estado que manifiesta el número total de Almas presentes y que se compone este Pueblo del Corpus del Paraguay, y de las que se hallan prófugas", AGN, Sala 9-18-2-2.

13 Only several fragments of baptismal registers survive from the Paraguay missions, including for Santa Rosa and San Francisco de Borja. See Santa Rosa baptismal register, Santa Rosa Parish Archive, Santa Rosa, Paraguay; San Francisco de Borja Baptismal and Burials Registers, Diocese of Uruguaiana, Uruguaiana, Brazil. Priests recorded the *caciques* of the Guaraní commoners as late as the early 1840s.

of identity examined sedentary populations. Missionaries who attempted to convert non-sedentary peoples faced different challenges, particularly when native peoples were organized socially and politically into small bands generally of related family members. The north Coahuila frontier in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries typified the ways in which missionaries and Spanish officials registered the ethnicity or identity of band members, and the process on paper of collapsing multiple ethnic identities to a single generic category. Records from San Juan Bautista and San Bernardo missions, both located in close proximity to each other on the Rio Grande River, illustrate conditions on the Coahuila frontier.

### Creation of Identity on the Northern Coahuila Frontier

The Franciscans opened the Coahuila mission frontier in the mid-1670s, in response to requests for the establishment of mission communities by natives employed on Spanish haciendas in the San Bartolomé Valley in Nueva Vizcaya. The natives sought missions as an alternative to exploitation on Spanish estates that supplied mining camps in the region (Wade, 2003; Deeds, 2003). The Coahuila missions occupied several sites during their history, and experienced instability as congregated natives came and went and as the Franciscans congregated different ethnic groups to repopulate the missions. In 1746, nine missions had a total population of 1,636 (Wade, 2003, pp. 177-178). San Juan Bautista and San Bernardo, the two communities located in the vicinity of San Juan Bautista presidio, counted the largest number of neophytes (Wade, 2003, pp. 177-178). Between 1699 and 1703, the Franciscans established three missions near San Juan Bautista presidio, located a short distance from the Rio Grande River: San Juan Bautista, San Bernardo, and San Francisco Solano. The missionaries relocated the missions several times, and in 1718 transferred San Francisco Solano to the San Antonio River and renamed the establishment San Antonio de Valero. The populations of the remaining missions San Juan Bautista and San Bernardo fluctuated with the pace of congregation of new recruits. In 1727, for example, the population of San Juan Bautista counted 30 non-Christians, and San Bernardo 35. A decade later, in 1738, non-Christians numbered 60 and 347 respectfully at San Juan Bautista and San Bernardo (Almaraz, 1979, pp. 51-53). Similarly, the populations of the two missions declined in the second half of the eighteenth century, and only 125 remained in 1797. The instability and demographic decline of the mission populations can be shown in another way. In 1777, Agustin Morfi, O.F.M. reported that the missionaries had baptized 1,618 and buried 1,073 since the founding of the mission in 1702, with a net difference of 545. However, the population of the mission was only eighty at the time of Morfi's inspection and report, indicating that many neophytes had chosen to not remain on the missions. The missionaries at San Juan Bautista baptized 1,434 natives between 1699 and

1761, but again the population of the mission was small compared to the total number of natives baptized (Weddle, 1968; Jackson, 2004).

Censuses and a set of sacramental registers for San Francisco Solano-San Antonio de Valero recorded the names of different bands congregated on the missions, groups that are now biologically and culturally extinct (Campbell, 1979). Ethnohistorian T. N. Campbell identified 53 names of different bands in the registers of San Francisco Solano, including names also noted in reports of early expeditions into northern Coahuila and Texas in the last decades of the seventeenth century (Campbell, 1979, pp. 55-59; Wade, 2003). The most numerous groups included the Xarame with 98 observations in the sacramental registers, the Terocodame with 73, and the Babor with 30. Censuses noted the presence of varying numbers of band members. In 1702, for example, the most numerous group at San Bernardo was 85 Pacuache. Nearly forty years earlier, in 1734, a census reported on five Pacuache at the same mission (Campbell, 1979). Censuses prepared in 1727 noted that the most numerous bands at San Juan Bautista were the Mexcales, Filijayes, and Pastalocos, and on San Bernardo the Paquaches, Pastancoyas, Pachales, and Pamaques. In 1738, the population of San Juan Bautista included 92 Mexcales, 71 Pastalocos, 37 Filijayas, 9 Pamponas, 27 Pitas, and 2 Bozales (Almaraz, 1979, pp. 51-53).

Bands of hunters and gatherers proved to be fragile demographically. Overall populations were small, and deaths of adults and particularly women of child bearing age from disease and other causes significantly reduced the ability of the populations to recover and grow. The 1727 censuses for San Juan Bautista and San Bernardo recorded the number of burials from the foundation of each mission to the preparation of the census. A total of 207 adults and 157 children had died at the first named establishment, and 156 and 117 at the second (Almaraz, 1979, pp. 51-52). The loss of children reduced the size of the next generation, and deaths of adult women of child bearing age limited the ability of the population to reproduce. Finally, evidence from a census of San Juan Bautista prepared in 1706 suggests a gender imbalance, with more males than females. In that year the population of San Juan Bautista totaled 153, but of this only 43 percent were girls and women (Almaraz, 1979, p. 48). Later population counts do not record figures that allow for a reconstruction of the gender structure, but with small populations and few women of child bearing age, prospects for growth through natural reproduction were low at best.

Although the Franciscan missionaries recorded the names of the bands, or of the individuals they identified as band leaders who brought their kin to live at the missions, they also reduced diverse populations to a single generic *indio* category in the records they maintained for the missions. This was, as I also discussed above, not a mere convenient short-hand for registering information about native peoples, but rather a conscious effort on the part of priests to

categorize native peoples within the corporate group that corresponded to native peoples, the *república de indios*.

### Conclusions

The Spanish erected a medieval corporate society in the New World that defined identity based on membership in one or another social group that each had distinct rights and obligations, based upon birth. The native peoples brought under Spanish domination belonged to the *república de indios*, one such corporate group that membership in counted certain obligations such as the payment of tribute and the provision of labor through drafts such as the *repartimiento* or *mita*. Within the logic of the corporate social structure in Spanish America ethnic identifications were redundant, and the only identifiers necessary were *indio* and tributary. As the discussion of records from frontier missions has shown, the process of identity creation entailed different categories of information. Because the missionaries congregated natives from different bands or ethnic groups to the new mission communities, there was a tendency to record more information on ethnic identification. Records from the Chiquitos and Coahuila mission frontiers, both areas of ethnically diverse native populations, did record ethnic differences, whereas the presumably homogeneous Guaraní population of the Paraguay missions obviated the need to record ethnic differences, and instead the missionaries modified and re-enforced the existing clan system by recognizing the authority and influence of the *caciques* and classifying the mission residents as subjects of one or another native leader. The missionaries also employed a second category to identify the native residents of the missions, their status as either Christian converts or recently settled individuals or family groups still undergoing religious indoctrination and conversion. The missionaries, as did priests and censuses takers in other regions of Spanish America, also collapsed, at least on paper, diverse native populations into the single corporate *indio* category. This registration practice reflected the goals of Spanish policy makers in the Americas that attempted to redefine the status and role of natives in a new colonial society and economic system. The registration practices, however, existed on paper, and most likely failed to reflect social-cultural realities on the ground such as language, how natives defined themselves, and how natives socialized with each other. The categories of identity recorded in sacramental registers, censuses, and other similar documents were more than anything else artifacts of colonialism that reflected a world the Spaniards would like to have created, and not necessarily the world that did evolve.

**Table 1: Numbers of Non-Christians Settled on Selected Chiquitos Missions, in Selected Years**

Year	San Javier	Concepción	San Rafael	San Miguel	Santiago
1711					
1717	24		16		
1718			691		
1730		142	9		
1731	142	189	92	92	
1732				50	
1733			176		
1735				282	
1738	24				
1739		45		200	
1743				230	
1758					31
1759					19
1760	100				
1761					53
1762	322				
1763	45				

Source: Tomicha Charupa, R. (2002). *La primera evangelización en las reducciones de Chiquitos, Bolivia (1691-1767)*. Cochabamba: Editorial Verbo Divino. Pp: 544-547, 550-551, 553-555.

**Table 2: Vital Statistics of the Population of San Francisco Xavier Mission, in Selected Years**

Year	Families (Kids)	Adults	Pop	Párulos CBR*@	Baptisms			
					CDR**	AFS#		
1735	605	2345	109		94	46.8*	40.3*	3.9
1738			114	49				
1739	560	2364	112		191	45.4*	78.2*	4.2
1740	564	2481	120	2	65	50.8	27.5	4.4
1741			130					
1742	558	2378	134	3	100	57.2*	42.7*	4.3
1743	546	2416	131		138	55.1	58.0	4.4
1744	556	2403	127		140	52.6	58.0	4.3
1745	552	2293	115		138	47.9	57.4	4.2
1746	582	2314	125		71	54.5	31.0	4.0
1747	612	2435	115		144	49.7	62.2	4.0
1748	620	2497	153		91	62.8	37.4	4.0
1749	622	2480	115		130	46.1	52.1	4.0
1750	633	2550	156		86	62.9	34.7	4.0
1751			72			28.2		
1752		2323	72					
1753			216					
1754			156					
1755	606	2578	158		92	62.9*	36.6*	4.3
1756	615	2639	165		104	64.0	40.3	4.3
1757	631	2728	156		57	59.1	21.6	4.3
1758	642	2799	154		83	56.5	30.4	4.4
1759			170					
1760	656	2978	171		101	58.8*	34.7*	4.5
1761	666	3065	191		104	64.1	34.9	4.6
1762			158			51.6		
1763			194					
1764	703	3256	176		113	55.1*	35.4*	4.6
1765	728	3302	198		142	60.8	43.6	4.5
1766			164			49.7		
1767		3201	173	2				
1768			147			45.9		

\*Estimated. @crude birth rate; \*\* crude death rate; # average family size. Sources: "Catálogo de la Numeración Anual de las Misiones de los Chiquitos", various years, Archivo General de la Nación, Buenos Aires, Biblioteca Nacional, 6127/14 and 6467/101. San Javier Parish Archive, San Javier, Bolivia.



**Table 3: Vital Rates of the Population of Corpus Christi Mission, in Selected Years**

Year	Population	Families	Baptisms	Burials	CBR* <sup>@</sup>	CDR**	AFS#
1702	2184	520	154	91	72.6*	42.9*	4.2
1724	3584	799	218	132	62.3*	37.7*	4.5
1733	4008	824	189	585	42.9*	132.8*	4.9
1736	2190	436	78	256	43.4	142.4	5.0
1739	2667	630	183	72	73.6	28.9	4.2
1740	2808	696	185	67	69.4	25.1	4.0
1741	2922	725	273	156	97.2	55.6	4.0
1744	3241	830	246	118	79.0*	37.9*	3.9
1745	3364	837	253	110	78.1	33.9	4.0
1746	3488	847	274	168	81.5	49.9	4.1
1747	3619	860	264	115	75.7	33.0	4.2
1753	4588	881	305	177	68.4*	39.7*	5.2
1756	4773	974	298	152	64.4*	32.9*	4.9
1759	4753	1043	251	249	52.8*	52.4*	4.6
1762	5149	1136	213	215	43.8	44.2	4.5
1763	4771	1185	294	261	57.1	50.7	4.0
1764	4280	1035	250	643	52.4	134.8	4.1
1765	4342	1069	318	203	74.3	47.4	4.1
1767	4587	1205	330	212	73.8*	47.4*	3.8
1798	2344	537	112	169	46.7*	70.4*	4.

\* Estimated.  
<sup>@</sup>crude birth rate; \*\* crude death rate; # average family size.  
 Source: Jackson 2007..

**Table 4: Population of Corpus Christi by Cacicazgo in 1759**

Cacicazgo	Population	Cacicazgo	Population
Aburo	225	Pice	46
Caribo	107	Caitu	104
Cayobi	64	Putupi	128
Araira	60	Tamopa	224
Ybape	105	Chate	101
Depicho	105	Guvici	31
Cayubi	143	Natimu	91
Yacare	218	Piyu	93
Pindobi	346	Guaraci	44
Guiraya	72	Guavaray	134
Ocariti	68	Abairuyu	65
Aretu	108	Chopay	105
Amoaragara	139	Ara	16
Ayuruyu	47	Guatape	186
Guarapipo	64	Vic	176
Peruyu	64	Tayeo	113
Micaela Oquendo	67	Moacati	68
Santiago Apuaiy	72	Yaguarendi	114
Rafael Albaite	74	Cotingua*	37
Papa	241	Pinchana#	58
Miranda	137	Don Dias@	21
Aracay	25		

\* Identified as Guananes-1728; # Identified as Guananes-1730; @ Identified as Guananes-1758.  
 Source: Matricula deste Pueblo del Corpus Christi, Archivo General de la Nación, Buenos Aires, Sala 9-17-3-6.t

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