The Development of Indians, Mexicans, and Anglos

And the Intersectionality of Race

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## Introduction

Meeks describes the interactions of Mexicans, Indians, and Anglos with the border and each other. He explains how these interactions incite discrimination and affect the ethnic groups being discriminated against. He also discusses the roles that each ethnic group plays in the multicultural regional community, the political economy and the nation state.

We will discuss these major points of interest and attempt to define how and why the discrimination takes place, and why these roles are important in today’s society.

## Indians

Meeks explains that the Indian interactions with the border greatly affect the land allocations, and their economic contributes in relation to working wage and non-wage jobs. He focuses on the Tohono O’odham and their differences from the Yaqui. He explains that the O’odham historically did not seek out low paying wage jobs but instead petitioned the government for land in order to maintain their honest way of life and keep the prospects of the land for themselves. In the processes, certain borders were formed around the O’odham and other tribes. These borders became concrete when petitions were made to obtain a water supply from the surrounding rivers.

An ethnic border was formed between the O’odham and the Yaquis when it was the O’odham who were considered Native American Indians and the Yaquis were not. Certain stereo-types have formed because of these borders.

The O’odham Native Americans also contribute to the Political Economy. They are active in politics as evidence by the amount of territory they have claimed along various rivers. These rivers are important in supporting their own social economy on the reservations. Their activity also affects the allocation of land to other tribes. As Meeks discusses, they are not primarily active in seeking out wage jobs in exchange for cheap labor. This affects people’s view of this particular race.

Yaquis on the other hand, have been observed to seek out low paying wage jobs and as a result they are sometimes looked down upon by the other Native American Tribes. Both tribes have also influence the political state by becoming more opposed to assimilating from rebelling the governments advances in trying to assimilate them using education as a cornerstone.

## Mexicans

Mexicans have played a unique role in the development of the border. In the early 1900s and before, they crossed the border back and forth in their journey to find work. Usually, they would come into Arizona during harvesting season and then return to their families when their work was done. This has pushed the Mexican American society to be cautious in their treatment of later Mexican immigrants because of their self interest to become full US Citizens.

Mexican nationals and Mexican Americans have primarily affected the political economy in that they often seek out the low-paying wage jobs. They earn money and then export their earnings to their families at home in Mexico. However, in the later 1900s they would call for their families to move to the US. Although, there are some exceptions where the Mexican nationals would plan on returning to Mexico permanently, and simply wanted to avoid the civic wars and find work.

Mexican and Mexican American influences on the nation and state include passing laws to restrict immigration in order to legitimize their own residency in the US. They have also been subjected to a unique discrimination; interracial marriages, like the Native Americans. In the case of Mexicans however, they achieved being considered Caucasian and therefore had the opportunity to gain more rights in the political nation. It was enforced by the state of Arizona in the early 1900s that there would be no marriage between Native Americans (as well as other ethnicities) and Caucasians. But, because Mexicans were at the time considered Caucasian, they could develop marriages with whites; but not Native Americans. This was all because of an attempt to indirectly segregate and keeps the ethnicities pure so that the acting political interests could differentiate between the different ethnicities, and ultimately, discriminate against them.

## Anglos

Anglos in America greatly affected the political economy by forming many unions intended to exclude certain ethnicities migrating from Mexico and Europe. In particular, the Anglo based unions excluded Mexicans and Spaniards alike. They also discriminated against the Italians because the ethnicities were classified somewhere between white American and an inferior race.

White Americans constantly protested wages and working conditions. Meeks discusses their ideal that they should be making higher wages then the Mexicans and Italians because they had entire families to support, while, in most cases, the Mexican and Italians worked in America while their families remained in their home countries. This myth continued even after many families migrated to America to meet their husbands.

They protested the state government to force mining companies to repair equipment and the mine in order to make it safe. The Mexican and Spaniard workers soon joined in on these protests. But when they started protesting higher wages for white workers, drastic measures were taken to disassemble the non-Anglo participants in the unions. Meeks discusses a particular protest from non-whites which resulted in whites and Euro-Americans deporting twelve hundred non-Anglo workers to New Mexico.

## Intersectionality Of Race

With each ethnicity Meeks discusses, they are subjected to a certain amount of assimilation, discrimination, and cultural hegemony. In the case of the Native American, the region they are from, their religion (particularly their conversion to primarily Presbyterian), and their class has affected how their race is defined by themselves, and people of other ethnicities.

Native Americans were viewed as hard, humble workers. They rejected assimilation because of the advances for assimilation made by the state government. Many of these advances attempted to designate certain jobs to the men and women. Men were expected to work on farms and in mines, and the women were recruited to work as house servants. But, as history went on, women began to reject that designation and decided to pursue other jobs and other means of supporting their own families. The men, in many cases, returned to the reservation after their education. These groups of Native Americans strived and eventually achieved a middle class. This helped them accomplish a much larger role in politics on bother the state and national level.

Mexican nationals and Mexican Americans were largely viewed as the hard labor working class. They came from a Catholic and Presbyterian background. Because they left their families in their home country they were viewed as “people who moved around”. And therefore, did not deserve the wages of American Citizens.

Mexican Americans tried to change this view by affecting the border immigration laws and using the proper channels to being recognized as full American Citizens in the state and national government. They also participated in the strikes and protests for wages and working conditions, but were not able to secure their right to unionize until much later.

Anglos influenced the political economy and even motivated the O’odham Native Americans to join in their protest for wages and the right to unionize, changing the public’s stereo-typical view of Native Americans being passive, plaint, and dependent. This is an example of how the white American affected, not only their own progression of class, but assisted in the egalitarianism of the Native American.

The white American for a while earned higher wages because they justified it with a need to support a family. Other ethnicities including Mexicans sought to challenge this view. They fought for equality and the right to earn the same wage as the white man. This ties together race, gender, and class differences and affected the making of the acting minorities.

Because of failures at challenging the racist class hierarchy, the Euro-Americans gained a large acceptance from the Anglos as white workers. These events primarily affect the class of Anglo-Americans and the other white Euro-Americans. The gap between wages and class was becoming narrower.

The white and now unionizing class on Anglo-Americans and Euro-Americans viewed the spikes in Mexican immigration threatening to their job market. The Mexicans were assumed to not desire US citizenship and therefore should have restricted rights to unionize and remain in the country.

White Americans maintained the discrimination that Mexicans were unwanted and stole labor jobs from US citizens. This impacted the Mexican struggle for class equality.

## Conclusion

Meeks has clearly shown that all ethnicities discussed are guilty of and victim of discrimination against class, religion, region, and gender. In the case of Native Americans, the women and men were forced into educational institutions and then designated certain jobs in the political economy. Men were expected to assimilate and work for wages, but instead ended up raising farms and petitioning for territorial rights. And the women were expected to serve as homemakers, but ended up doing labor and using other skills to provide for their own families.

In the case of Mexicans, they were expected to be cheap, seasonal workers. However, they had a great impact on the advancement of Euro-Americans, but struggled to advance their own race in US society; even though they attained an original acceptance by being considered Caucasian. Mexican Americans established Friendly House to advance the role of Mexican nationals in the political society. Their goal of self improvement and neutralism helped the Mexican nationals gain acceptance.

White Americans played a significant role in the advancement of wages and working conditions. In their struggles, they sort of automatically assimilated the Euro-Americans. Although, they fought alongside Mexican and Native American ethnicities, they quickly retaliated when more obviously colored groups tried to gain equality to the white man. Their role in unionizing the labor industry eventually laid the foundation for the social and political advancements of all labor workers, including Mexican nationals.

There is a theme that is hinted at throughout the book, but never formally addressed. That is a sense of pride. Despite the struggles and discrimination that certain ethnicities are subjected to, national, and cultural pride remains a constant. For example, the Tohono O’odham continued to strive for ethnic recognition and independence as well as the right to own and harvest their own land despite the suboptimal climate of the desert in Arizona. In other words, they could have easily traded their land and assimilated and eventually dispersed in to other more fertile agricultural areas, but instead fought for what they believed to be their right as inhabitants of the US. Because of their pride they were able to maintain their cultural differences and preferred way of living.