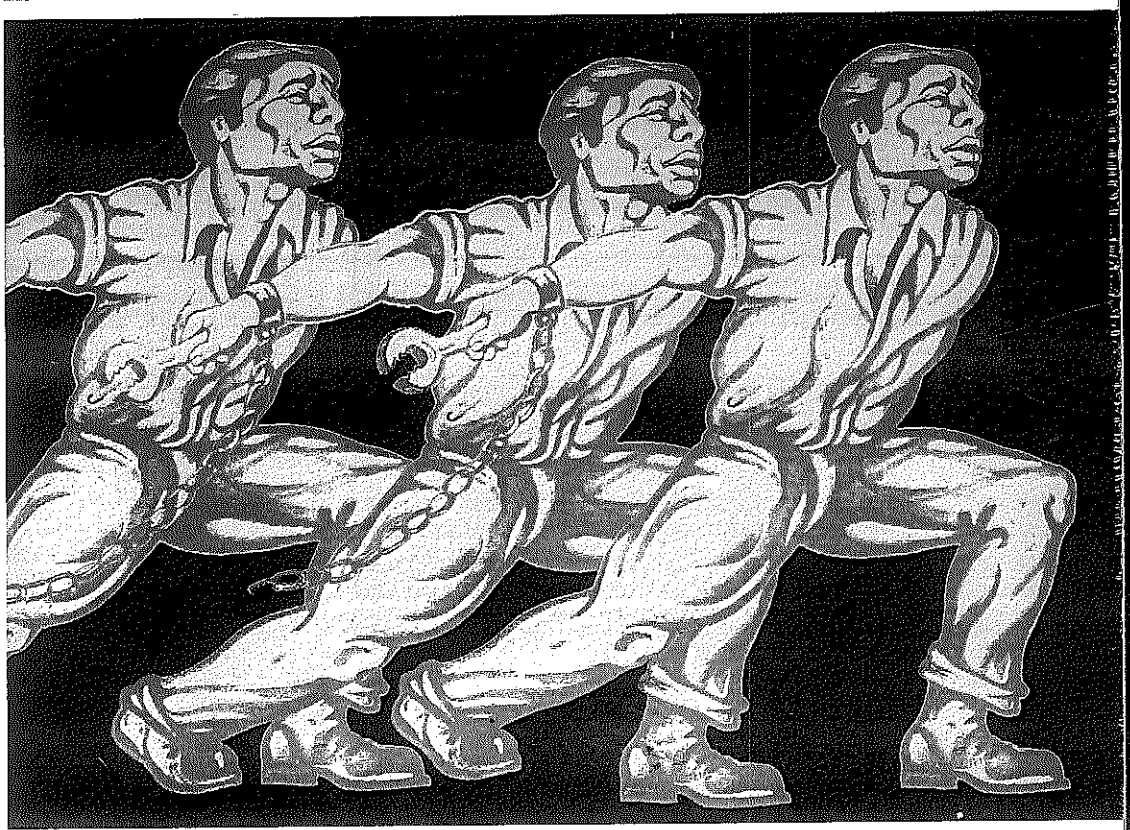
Mario Barrera

Race and Class in the Southwest

A Theory of Racial Inequality



that have taken place with the members of the Chicano Political Economy Collective (CHIPEC) at Berkeley, a truly unique group: Tomás Almaguer, Luis Arroyo, Jorge Chapa, Patricia Chávez, Regino Chávez, Elena Flores, Guadalupe Fríaz, Hisauro Garza, Felipe Gonzales, Andrés Jiménez, David Montejano, and Larry Trujillo.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

AT THE CONCLUSION of the Mexican American War in 1848, the United States added a vast and potentially rich territory to its possessions. This territory, while by no means densely settled, was certainly not unpopulated. In addition to numerous Native American groups, the area that is now called the Southwest contained a number of former Mexican citizens who, in terms of their origin, were part Indian, part Spanish, and part African. Separated by vast reaches of terrain and internally divided by class distinctions, this Spanish-speaking population nevertheless had a certain common identity which has persisted up to the present day. This group has responded at different times and in different places to various designations. Mexican American, Mexican, Latin American, Hispano, and Latino are some of the more common variations, Chicano being the most recent. Neither the variety of labels, however, nor the undeniable heterogeneity of this group should conceal the very real sense of a common origin and a common fate. The concept of "La Raza," probably the most generally accepted self-designation (and properly understood as "the people" rather than "the race") best expresses this feeling of unity.

While one major source of this group identity is a cultural heritage with certain core common elements, another and very important source has been the collective perception of injustice based on a fundamental and persistent condition of group inequality with respect to the "Anglos" in American society (the term "Anglos" as used by Chicanos refers to all Americans not members of a racial minority, and not just to those who trace their origin to the British Isles). The perception of injustice has been the motive for innumerable planned as well as spontaneous political activities on the part of Chicanos, from guerrilla warfare in the last century to agricultural workers' strikes, community control movements, party-building, and urban uprisings in the present one. The condition of inequality which underlies the perceptions of injustice has been the subject of innumerable government and academic studies, which have, however, made little dent in the problem.

In recent years these interlinked phenomena of inequality and group identity have taken on a new urgency because of changing demographic patterns in the Southwest. Whereas in the past most Chicano political activi-

ties have been contained because of the minority status of this group, the combination of a high birthrate and a continued high rate of immigration from Mexico now threatens, or promises, to bring about a Chicano majority in several states in the not too distant future. These trends have raised the specter of a "Chicano Quebec" in the Southwest in the minds of many observers.

The question of Chicano inequality, of course, is one aspect of the broader question of racial inequality in the United States. How are we to understand the causes of this condition, perhaps the most profound and divisive social problem that this country has had to face? Briefly, three kinds of answers have been provided by analysts of inequality: (1) they're to blame, (2) we're to blame, (3) the system is to blame. In more formal terminology, these three types of explanations may be called deficiency theories, bias theories, and structural discrimination theories.

Deficiency theories hold that racial minorities are poor and powerless because of some deficiency in the group itself. The classic racist theories, for example, advance the argument that non-White racial groups are characterized by biological deficiencies, such as inferior intelligence. More modern deficiency theories name the family or the culture as the culprit.

Bias theories typically place the responsibility for inequality on racial prejudice. Gunnar Myrdal, in his *An American Dilemma,* developed a prototype of this theory. He felt that prejudice produced discrimination, that discrimination kept minorities subordinate, and that a vicious circle was set up when the perception of subordination by subsequent generations reinforced the stereotype of minority unworthiness that had created the situation in the first place. The Kerner Commission and its condemnation of "White racism" is a recent example of this type of theory in the wake of the racial unrest of the mid-1960s.

A third type of racial inequality theory focuses on *structural discrimination*. Like bias theory, it places an emphasis on prejudice and discrimination, but with some major differences. Structural theory stresses *institutionalized* patterns of discrimination based on individuals' prejudiced attitudes. Examples of such institutionalized discrimination are dual labor markets (discussed more fully in later chapters) and school segregation and tracking. Political gerrymandering and other forms of systematic political manipulation are other examples.

While I favor a variety of structural discrimination theory called colonial theory, this tradition shares with the others a neglect of the class dimension in American society. From my reading of Southwestern economic history (presented below in chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5), an understanding of racial inequality is incomplete without taking into account class dynamics. In the concluding chapter, therefore, I make the attempt to integrate this with other elements in order to produce what I hope will be a new, improved structural theory.

ON HISTORY AND THEORY

The approach that I have followed is that of an extended historical and interdisciplinary case study. Unfortunately, American scholarship tends to suffer from a division between history and theoretical social science. The kind of approach that was followed by such nineteenth-century writers as Karl Marx and Max Weber is studied in the universities but never followed, as far as combining historical materials with a systematic theoretical framework. One does not need to be as ambitious as Marx and Weber to take up this kind of approach and to attempt a work which is more integrative than fragmented.

A historical approach allows us to see the persistence of patterns as well as changes over time. The changing historical conditions provide a kind of natural variation that allows us to see which factors make a difference in racial inequality and which do not. Naturally occurring historical variation can provide what might be seen as "crucial experiments" that tend to verify one kind of theoretical explanation over others. To give one example, taken from the following material: if wartime labor shortages in the United States provide racial minorities with opportunities for occupational mobility, and if minorities take advantage of those opportunities and perform satisfactorily in their new roles, theories that explain occupational inequality on the basis of cultural or other deficiencies, rather than on the structure of opportunities, tend to be undermined. While no one instance is decisive, a number of cases which point in a consistent direction eventually add up to persuasive evidence for one theory.

A historical approach also allows us to see commonalities in the experience of different groups. For example, it appears that Chicanos in the second half of the nineteenth century were concentrated in certain occupations in which Blacks were also concentrated in other parts of the country, for example, agriculture, railroads, lumber. It also appears that both groups suffered downward mobility during the same period. That these patterns could be repeated in different sections of the country for different racial groups seems to indicate that the sources of the patterns lay not in regional characteristics or in factors peculiar to a racial group, but in broader national characteristics, a type of explanation consistent with structural theory.

Historical investigation can also clarify chains of causation which are not obvious through studies confined to one time period. For example, studies which attribute occupational stratification to educational deficiencies among racial minorities are seriously misleading in that they do not take into account the historical conditions under which the pattern of segregated and inferior schooling for minorities was established. If it can be shown that such patterns were deliberately instituted and that the interests of certain groups, such as agricultural and industrial employers, were involved in their establishment, a very different light is thrown on the pattern of racial inequality.

The study that follows is part of a broad school of Chicano scholarship that has emerged in the last few years. Under the stimulus of the social activism of the 1960s and early 1970s, a number of relatively young Chicano scholars have begun systematic research into several areas. While there had been significant earlier studies, they remained the work of isolated scholars pursuing particular research topics. Only in the last few years has there emerged what might be termed a generation of Chicano scholars, many of whom are dealing with a set of interrelated topics such as labor, economics, community institutions, social relations, and politics. Numerous articles and dissertations on these topics have now been completed, and I have drawn heavily on them in the present study. One of the hopeful signs in this research is that considerable exchange has taken place between researchers trained in history and in the social sciences.

TERMINOLOGY

The term "Chicano" is used here in the demographic sense rather than in regard to conscious political identification. It refers to persons of Mexican origin who reside permanently in the United States and thus is synonymous with "Mexican American." The term "Mexican" or "Mexicano" when used to refer to persons in the Southwest, means persons from Mexico who are in the United States temporarily or on an irregular status. Given legal and social complexities, there is no clear dividing line between Chicanos and Mexicanos. They live in the same communities and generally do the same kind of work. Unless otherwise specified, "Chicano" will often refer to both groups. In the past, many writers have used "Mexican" to refer to both groups.

The term "Anglo" will refer to all Caucasian residents of the United States. This is the common meaning of the term as used in the Southwest, illogical as that may seem to some.

Racial and ethnic terms are often mixed together in discussions of discrimination, and the results can be confusing. I use "ethnic" to describe cultural factors such as language, customs, or religion where these characteristics are used to identify a group or to serve as the basis of group identity. "Race" refers to physical characteristics, such as skin color, when these characteristics are used in a similar manner. Both sets of characteristics are, of course, subject to social definition, and have different meanings in different settings. The term "minority" refers to a racial minority. Chicanos are a minority group which is defined partly on the basis of racial characteristics and partly on the basis of ethnic characteristics.

ORGANIZATION

In chapter 2 I describe the circumstances that gave rise to the unequal position of Chicanos. The political penetration of the United States into the area now referred to as the Southwest was preceded by economic penetration, and economic motives were central to that conquest. Indeed, I argue that the conquest of the Southwest can only be understood as an expression of a dynamic and expansive American capitalism, itself part of a broader historical current that propelled European societies into what is now called the Third World. The bulk of the writings on the Mexican American War has seriously misplaced the emphasis in dealing with motivation or has dealt with it in terms of vague phrases such as "Manifest Destiny," without looking for an underlying structure of interests. I deal with the motivations behind the war in detail because I consider that the interests represented in that military conquest have figured importantly in all the subsequent history of Chicanos. In the second section of the chapter I indicate one of these continuities by describing the displacement of Chicanos from the land, which occurred after the war. From the historical literature it seems clear that the interests that primarily benefited from this land transfer were not those of the average American citizen, moving into that area, but those of the land speculators, developers, and large companies that rapidly came to dominate the economy of the Southwest.

Chapter 3 deals with the establishment of a subordinate labor force in the Southwest, which included but was by no means limited to Chicanos and Mexicanos. Here I introduce the concept of a colonial labor force by listing five ways in which racial minorities were treated unequally in the work force. The structure of this labor force was shaped by large employers in the Southwest, especially the mining companies, transcontinental railroads, and large agricultural concerns that employed the bulk of the racial minorities. This chapter is the key link in the structure of the book. It describes how the shaping of the Chicano work force, and thus the role of Chicanos in the economy, was influenced by the displacement from the land, which in turn was an expression of the constellation of forces that had produced the Mexican American War. At the same time, the formation of a racially subordinate labor force in the nineteenth century provided the structure and the baseline which has influenced the entire twentieth-century experience of the Chicano.

In chapter 4 I describe the changes in the situation of the Chicano in the first three decades of the present century. The Chicano population expanded greatly as a result of large waves of immigration from Mexico, but the immigrants found themselves fitted into the economic and social structure that had been developed earlier. The Chicano presence in the urban areas also expanded during this period, but the milieu provided only a variation of the unequal economic status to which Chicanos and other minorities had been

relegated. Since there is more literature for this period, it is possible to give a fuller description of the small but significant group of Chicano white-collar workers and "middle class" elements that were present in the cities.

Chapter 5 covers the contemporary period, from the Great Depression to the present. Chicanos during this period have suffered considerable economic buffeting because of changes in the labor market. During periods of economic prosperity and labor shortage, such as the Second World War and the Korean War, Chicanos have been able to gain a better foothold in urban industrial occupations. During periods of economic downturn and labor surplus, such as the Depression, after the Korean War, and in the 1970s, efforts have been made to reduce social and economic strains by deporting or repatriating part of the combined and intermixed Chicano and Mexican population to Mexico. At the same time, the greater interpenetration of polity and economy since the Depression has acted in various ways to provide a very gradual economic upgrading of Chicano workers and thus a mild lessening of economic inequality. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the possible emergence of a sector of the Chicano population which is permanently marginal, in that its labor is no longer necessary to the economy.

Chapter 6, the first of two theoretical chapters, deals with the role of the state in creating and perpetuating the unequal situation of Chicanos. I review several different concepts of the role of the state in situations of class conflict: the pluralist, power elite, Marxist instrumentalist, and Marxist structuralist. The Marxist structuralist version appears to account better for the role the state has played with respect to such aspects of Chicano history as the expropriation of the land and the regulation of the labor supply in the Southwest.

The concluding chapter (7) summarizes the argument and provides a more formal presentation of the theory which underlies the book, and which is introduced in chapters 3 and 4. The theories of racial inequality that were mentioned above are described in more detail, and the strengths and limitations of each are discussed. The concept of colonialism is examined in some detail. I also review certain aspects of Marxist writing on race and class structure to evaluate what this tradition has to offer for the analysis of racial inequality. Certain elements of Marxist analysis are then combined with colonial concepts to arrive at a theory of racial inequality in the United States.

The appendix ("The Case of International Harvester") consists of information on the racial minority labor practices of a major industrial employer, International Harvester. This is a case study at the microeconomic level of the class and racial dynamics that are discussed at a more general level in the rest of the work.

CHAPTER 2

The Nineteenth Century, Part I: Conquest and Dispossession

Westward the course of Empire wends its Way.

—slogan favored by
William Blackmore,
British land speculator
in the Southwest

IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY the area that is now the Southwest was incorporated into the United States through a war of conquest. With the Southwest came a population of former Mexican citizens who were now granted American citizenship by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. These were the original Chicanos. During the remainder of the century a social and economic structure crystallized in the Southwest in which Chicanos and other racial minorities were established in a subordinate status. It is into this structure that succeeding generations of Chicanos have been fitted during the twentieth century, with some modifications.

There were certain key developments affecting the Chicano's social and economic status in the nineteenth century. The first of these was the Mexican American War. In considering this topic, my main concern has been with the identification of the interests that motivated that war, since such an analysis has an important bearing on subsequent developments. The second key factor was the displacement of Chicanos from the land in the various areas of the Southwest. The third was the emergence of a labor system in which Chicanos and other minorities constituted a clearly subordinate segment, which I call a colonial labor force. It is my contention that the processes affecting the land and labor showed important continuities with the interests underlying the Mexican American War. A consideration of all three developments reveals an intricate interplay between class and race factors in the Southwest.

This chapter deals with the first two of these three topics, the war and the land. The next chapter outlines the development of the colonial labor system.

EVENTS UP TO 1848

The Spanish settlements in the area that is now the Southwest date from the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The earliest settlements were in the area now known as New Mexico, where Santa Fe was founded in 1609. Over the next 200 years there were additional settlements, and by the early nineteenth century there were three main areas of concentration: the New Mexico territory, southern and southeastern Texas, and the California coast. With the independence of Mexico in 1821, these areas became part of the new Mexican republic. These territories were thinly populated and relatively isolated from each other and from the major centers of Mexican population. The bulk of the population was *mestizo*, a mixture of Mexican Indian, European, and African stocks, and the predominant economic activities were mining, ranching, and agriculture. Vast areas of the Southwest were still controlled by various Native American groups, such as the Apaches, Pueblos, Navajos and Comanches.

It was during the first half of the nineteenth century that regular contacts were made between merchants and traders of the United States and the people of northern Mexico. Regular trade between St. Louis and northern New Mexico was initiated with the blazing of the Santa Fe Trail in 1822, leading to a lively trade in furs, silver, and other goods. One result was the weakening of the economic ties between northern New Mexico and the rest of Mexico, as the area came more into the orbit of the Missouri merchants (Lamar, 1970, p. 48). By the 1840s there was a sizable number of American businessmen in the cities of Taos and Santa Fe, whose economic activities were paralleled by their efforts to increase their political influence. In addition to trading, Anglos in New Mexico engaged in land speculation.

In California, Yankee maritime traders had established a presence going back to the late eighteenth century, built around their interests in sea-otter furs and whaling. During the 1820s an important trade developed around the exchange of California cattle products (the hide-and-tallow trade) for manufactured goods from New England (Billington, 1974, p. 474). In 1830 an overland route was established from Santa Fe to California which became known as the Old Spanish Trail. In addition to the exchange of California primary products for American processed goods, the trail served as a conduit for commodities brought to the California coast from Asia. In a recent paper, Almaguer has emphasized the manner in which these developments linked California to the United States and the broader world-economy (Almaguer, 1977).

The penetration of Texas by settlers from the United States was more thorough than in the other areas of northern Mexico. Here the Spanish and later the Mexican governments had made vigorous attempts to populate the

area through a series of land grants, some of which had gone to Anglo colonizers. The most famous of these was the Austin Colony, but there were others. While the Mexican government realized to some extent the dangers of settling the area with non-Mexicans, there was considerable danger in allowing this territory to remain very thinly populated. In any case, by the 1830s only the area around and south of San Antonio could be said to be distinctly Mexican in character (Meinig, 1969, pp. 35ff.).

The main economic activities in the Texas area were subsistence agriculture and cattle raising, although, starting in the 1820s, cotton became increasingly important. Eastern Texas in particular had very close economic ties with Louisiana and looked much more to the United States than to Mexico as far as trade was concerned.

It was in Texas, of course, that the first major political development took place that foreshadowed the incorporation of northern Mexico into the United States. There was a history of unrest and tension between the Anglo settlers in Texas and the Mexican government, as exemplified in the short-lived Fredonia Revolt in 1826. There was also a long-standing effort by the United States to purchase the Texas area from Mexico. As presidents, both John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson made offers to the Mexican government for the acquisition of Texas, and these overtures made Mexico suspicious of American intentions toward the area.

Mexican anxieties had also been aggravated by the continued influx of Anglo settlers (many of them "illegal aliens"), which resulted by 1830 in a ratio of some 25,000 Anglos to 4,000 Spanish-speaking Mexicans in that area (Meier and Rivera, 1972, p. 58). As a result, there had been sporadic attempts by Mexico to curb Anglo-American influence in Texas. In 1830, for example, the Mexican government passed a Colonization Law which prohibited the importation of more slaves into Texas and also attempted to cut off further Anglo settlement. Texas at this time was part of the state of Coahuila-Texas. The law was ineffective and was repealed in 1833, but it indicates the concern of Mexican officials over the situation.

Specific economic interests were clearly involved in the conflict. On the one hand, many of the Anglo settlers were interested in cotton cultivation and desired the free importation of slaves to work in the cotton fields. Mexico had abolished slavery, and its policy toward the movement of slaves into Texas was ambivalent but obviously negative. In addition, Anglos with commercial interests wanted to engage in free trade with the United States, and resented Mexican efforts to enforce the national customs laws (Meier and Rivera, 1972, p. 59).

The decisive revolt for an independent Texas came about during a period of considerable internal conflict within Mexico. Federalists and Centralists were contesting for national power, with the Centralists, led by Santa

Anna, gaining the upper hand. Resistance to the Centralist regime broke out in several provinces, and it was in this context that the conflict in Texas was converted into a revolt among the Anglo settlers against any form of Mexican authority over the area. With the success of the revolt, the Republic of Texas was established in 1836. During the course of the armed conflict the official position of the United States was neutrality, but considerable support for the separatist cause flowed into Texas unofficially.

The new authorities in Texas promptly sought to be annexed to the United States, but annexation was rejected by the United States because of complications over the issue of slavery. Texas would have come in as slave territory, and the entire issue thus became embroiled in the American sectional conflict as well as in the competition between the two major parties, the Democrats and the Whigs. Texas thus remained a republic until 1845, during which time the Anglo population greatly increased through immigration.

The subject of the annexation of Texas came up again in 1844, and when annexation was rejected by the Congress the issue became important in the presidential campaign of 1844. In this campaign the Democratic candidate, James K. Polk, ran on a strongly annexationist platform and defeated the more ambivalent Whig nominee, Henry Clay. With the results of the election known, the outgoing president, Tyler, managed to get a joint resolution through Congress providing for the addition of Texas to the union. This act led Mexico, which had never formally recognized the independence of Texas, to break off diplomatic relations with the United States. In this charged atmosphere it became increasingly clear that Polk had broader territorial ambitions.

Shortly after the annexation of Texas, an American emissary, Slidell, was sent to Mexico to settle the Texas matter, but also to attempt to purchase the areas of New Mexico and California. With the failure of the Slidell Mission, the stage was set for the outbreak of hostilities. Polk had ordered American troops into Texas, and these had advanced to the Rio Grande, although the southern area between the Nueces River and the Rio Grande had always been a contested area between Texas and Mexico, in which there were no Texas settlements. In April 1846 the United States blockaded the mouth of the Rio Grande, which historian Glenn Price points out constituted an act of war even if the river had been the agreed-upon international boundary (Price, 1967, p. 153). In that same month an armed clash between Mexico and American troops along the river provided the incident which quickly led the United States to declare war against Mexico. Polk's war message to Congress was based on the claim that Mexican troops had invaded the territory of the United States and attacked American forces. But Price argues that Polk had concluded that his territorial aims could not be achieved peacefully, and that

he had thus engaged in a series of actions designed to provoke an incident that could be used to stir up popular support for war.

The Mexican American War which resulted from these events lasted from 1846 to 1848, and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, signed in the latter year, added a vast territory to the United States. Mexico lost one-third of its territory and the United States gained an area that was to become the states of California, New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, Utah, and part of Colorado, as well as all of Texas. The former citizens of Mexico who remained in this area became American citizens and constituted the original Chicanos. In light of the preceding discussion, their incorporation into the United States must be seen as the product of an imperial war.

The interests that underlay the conquest of the Southwest have been a subject of considerable debate among historians, and a number of motivations have been put forth which need to be reviewed and assessed. One interpretation that has enjoyed considerable popularity is that Southern slaveowners were instrumental in instigating the conflict. According to this argument, they stood to gain in that the Southwest would provide room for expansion of cotton agriculture. Also, the addition of more slave states would aid the Southern planters in their conflict with Northern industrialists for control of the government (see Rhodes, 1907, p. 79). That political considerations led many in the South to push for the annexation of Texas is admitted even by those who play down the Southern conspiracy thesis (for example, see Boucher, 1921, p. 22). The economic argument also makes sense, in that cotton agriculture, as it was practiced at the time, tended to exhaust the land rapidly, and there was a continuous move westward from the old cotton states in search of more land suitable for plantations. The fact that most Southern planters were Democrats and that the national administration was Democratic also seems to add weight to this thesis.

However, the limitations of the argument need to be carefully noted. In the first place, there seems to be a consensus among historians that Polk did not act as a sectional president, in spite of his Southern origins. Rather, his thinking seems to have run primarily along national lines. In addition, it was already clear at the time of the Mexican American War that most of the Southwest was not suitable for cotton agriculture. Southerners, clearly, had little to gain from seeing more free territory enter the Union, and it was this consideration that led them to oppose the trend toward the annexation of all of Mexico that developed once the Mexican American War was under way (Fuller, 1969). Thus, while it seems clear that Southerners were active in pushing the demand for Texas, their interests do not explain the acquisition by the United States of the rest of the Southwest as well.

A second explanation for the expansion of the United States into the

Southwest has been couched in terms of Manifest Destiny. This explanation is the most widely held among historians, including Mexican American historians. According to this explanation, Anglo-Americans were possessed of a vision of history in which they were divinely chosen to populate the North American continent and to bring the blessings of democracy and progress to this area. Their expansion into the Southwest was simply an expression of this conviction.

While it is true that there was strong popular support for expansionism in the United States, especially in the West and in some portions of the Northeast, various considerations severely limit the usefulness of Manifest Destiny as a fundamental motive for expansion into the Southwest. It may be more accurate to say that the fervor behind the idea of Manifest Destiny was the product of a campaign of ideological manipulation. Such a hypothesis is reinforced by the timing of the phenomenon:

> The date at which the doctrine emerged as a force to be reckoned with in politics is important to ascertain. . . . It can be ascertained only approximately, for many facets were present in this complex phenomenon and some of them came into prominence sooner than others. Some editorial voices proclaiming the full doctrine were heard already during the campaign of 1844. They were voices crying in the wilderness. The date when the full chorus proclaimed the doctrine came after the election, as late even as the closing months of the Tyler administration. It came after the annexation of Texas had emerged as a good prospect in politics. [Merk, 1963, p. 41]

The suddenness with which the doctrine emerged and spread inevitably arouses suspicions, as does the fact that the annexation of Texas was a contested political issue and that one of the major parties, the Democratic party, was strongly identified with the issue. As Merk points out, "In party affiliation, journals of Manifest Destiny views were Democratic. Organs of the Polk administration were strongly represented among them" (Merk, 1963, p. 35). From Merk's account, there was a large-scale selling effort by many newspapers for the doctrine.

A second major objection to Manifest Destiny as a fundamental explanation is that the doctrine was too vague and diffuse to serve as an adequate explanation of the expansion. It does not explain why certain areas were taken over and others were not. As Merk points out, "In some minds it meant expansion over the region to the Pacific; in others, over the North American continent; in others, over the hemisphere" (Merk, 1963, p. 24). Historian Norman Graebner puts it this way:

> Manifest destiny persists as a popular term in American historical literature to explain the expansion of the United States to continent-wide dimensions in the 1840's. Like most broad generalizations, it does not bear close scrutiny. . . . The concept of manifest destiny, as a democratic expression, represented an expanding, not a confining or limiting, force. As an ideal, it was not easily defined in terms of precise territorial limits. . . . Some suggested that American laws be extended to include the downtrodden peons of South America. . . . In their enthusiasm to extend the "area of freedom," many even looked beyond the continental limits to Cuba, the Sandwich Islands, the far-flung regions of the Pacific, and even to the Old World itself. This was a magnificent vision for a democratic purpose, but it hardly explains the sweep of the United States across the continent. [Graebner, 1955, pp. 217–18]

As others have pointed out, the concept of Manifest Destiny fit in very well with the All-of-Mexico movement, but all of Mexico was not taken.

Another objection to this type of explanation can be raised in terms of a general theory of history. Materialist theories in particular argue (and I would agree) that political movements are motivated fundamentally by interests rather than disembodied ideas. Ideas and concepts which "catch on" enter into political debate largely as expressions or justifications of specific interests, rather than as free-floating concepts and doctrines. In the case at hand, elites in the form of politicians and journalists played a major part in popularizing the doctrine, and the role of interests does not appear to be too difficult to identify.

In summary, then, Manifest Destiny was essentially a manipulated appeal and an attempt to secure broad popular support for an expansionist policy of particular benefit to certain political and economic interests. The specific nature of those interests will become clearer as we examine other explanations.

Some writers have argued that the incorporation of the Southwest into the United States should be understood in terms of economic and commercial interests of various types. To assess this argument we have to look at the three major areas of the Southwest: Texas, California, and New Mexico (which at that time included what is now Arizona). In the case of Texas (described above) there was clearly a desire on the part of cotton-growing interests in expanding into that area. California, however, appears to be the key to understanding commercial interests in expansion. The interest in California was particularly keen among the merchant and manufacturing interests of the American Northeast, generally represented in the Whig party. According to Robert Cleland,

> A second reason for the belief that the annexation of California was not a slavery measure is the fact that the movement found its strongest popular favor in the north. Most of the contemporary newspaper and magazine articles which advocated the acquisition of this portion of

> Mexican territory first appeared in New York or New England. [Cleland, 1914–15, p. 250]

Cleland also notes an 1846 article in the *American Review* (''Text Book of the Whig Party'') detailing the rich resources of California and urging its immediate annexation, provided it could be done peacefully. He goes on to state:

> Yet the interest with which the commercial states of the north regarded the future of California was unquestionably greater than that of any other section of the country, with the possible exception of the extreme west. For it was natural that those who had important trade relations not merely with California, but with India, China, and the Sandwich Islands, beside extensive whale fisheries, should of all others desire most eagerly a harbor and territory on the Pacific. [Cleland, 1914–51, p. 251]

The thesis that ports on the Pacific were the most important factor in explaining the conquest of the Southwest has been extensively developed by Norman Graebner. According to him,

> The essential fact [is] that the expansion of the United States was a unified, purposeful, precise movement that was ever limited to specific maritime objectives. It was the Pacific Ocean that determined the territorial goals of all American presidents from John Quincy Adams to Polk. From the beginning, travelers, traders, and officials who concerned themselves with the coastal regions had their eyes trained on ports. The goal of American policy was to control the great harbors of San Francisco, San Diego, and Juan de Fuca Strait. With their acquisition, expansion on the coastline ceased. [Graebner, 1955, pp. v–vi]

Two of these three Pacific ports were in the California territory. The other was in the Oregon territory, which the United States acquired at about the same time after a contest with Great Britain. San Diego at that time was the center of the hide trade. San Francisco was also involved in that trade, and was seen as a major future trade link with Asia. In his message to Congress in December 1847, Polk declared that the California ports ''would afford shelter for our navy, for our numerous whale ships, and other merchant vessels employed in the Pacific ocean, [and] would in a short period become the marts of an extensive and profitable commerce with China, and other countries of the East'' (quoted in Graebner, 1955, p. 225).

American interest in New Mexico can also be interpreted in economic terms. For one thing, the New Mexico area served as an overland route between California on the one hand and Texas and the American Midwest on the other. Significant trade routes crossed this territory and had been in existence for some time. Santa Fe served as the overland link between California and St. Louis in a trade route that followed the Old Spanish Trail. Over this

route passed manufactured goods, silver, livestock, and commodities from Asia (Billington, 1974, p. 477). Howard Lamar, in speaking of the New Mexico conquest, puts the matter this way:

> It was not an expression of land hunger or slavery extension; and it was only partly prompted by that vaguer expansionist sentiment called Manifest Destiny. Rather, American conquest meant regularizing and securing rich trade and safe transportation routes for a previously erratic, uncertain enterprise. It was, in short, a conquest of merchants who worried little about extending the glories of free government to their captive customers. [Lamar, 1970, p. 63]

The evidence thus seems clearly to support the argument that the American intrusion into the Southwest was motivated by several important economic considerations, perhaps most importantly in California. One objection that has been raised to this thesis has to do with the role of the Whigs in the national debate with regard to American expansionism during that period. While both Whigs and Democrats represented commercial interests, the Whigs were preeminently the party of Northeastern merchants and manufacturers, and they were for the most part vociferous critics of Polk and the conduct of the Mexican American War. From this fact some critics have argued against the kind of emphasis Graebner and Cleland have given to California and its ports as a motivation for the war. According to these critics, if that thesis was correct the Whigs should have been enthusiastic supporters of the war, since they represented economic interests that stood to benefit from it (see Zwelling, 1970).

There are several answers to this criticism. Whigs were not opposed to the acquisition of California, but they apparently felt that it could be done without necessarily resorting to war (Merk, 1963, p. 39). Whigs were also critical of the war for other reasons. They were not enthusiastic about the acquisition of Texas because of the slavery question and their fears of creating splits within their party and within the nation (ibid., p. 153). It should also be kept in mind that the war provided an issue which the Whigs were trying to turn to partisan advantage (Graebner, 1955, pp. 171–72, 188). At any rate, as Graebner has pointed out, Whig congressmen continued to vote financial support for the war while trying to make political hay by criticizing Polk's conduct of it. That this was a sound political strategy was indicated by their political gains in the elections of 1848.

Another interpretation of the Mexican American War that is sometimes found in the historical literature has to do with the pioneer movement. According to this view, the Anglo pioneers who had moved into the northern provinces of Mexico constituted an important force behind the American annexation of this area, acting as a kind of latter-day Trojan Horse. In assessing this

argument, it seems fair to say that Anglo settlers played an important role in Texas, but were not a major force elsewhere. These settlers had of course been the prime movers behind the splitting of Texas from Mexico and the establishment of the Texas Republic, and this paved the way for the incorporation of Texas into the United States. However, there was only a sprinkling of Anglo settlers in California and the New Mexico area, and they did not play a central role in the Mexican American War.

Yet another factor that entered into the American move into the Southwest was the role played by foreign countries, especially England. England, seeing the United States as a potentially formidable competitor economically and politically, was doing what it could to limit American influence on the North American continent and to increase its own. While contesting the Oregon territory with the United States, England was attempting to prevent the annexation of Texas and was supporting the Mexican government in its efforts to hold on to the rest of its northern provinces. England apparently considered that an independent Texas would constitute a receptive market for British goods, as well as an ally in limiting American growth and power. At the same time, England was interested in exercising as much control as possible over the Pacific coast and its ports, although it was in no position to think of taking over California. The maneuvers and ambitions of Britain were well known in Washington, and were undoubtedly a source of anxiety to national policymakers. In attempting to assess the role this factor played, however, it may be best to quote a historian's opinion:

> The degree to which Polk's moves to acquire California were influenced by concern over British designs can be—and have been—easily exaggerated, for he was wise enough to realize that the jingoistic ambitions of a few English empire-builders did not constitute official policy. He was also aware, however, that those ambitions provided him an effective tool to manipulate American opinion toward favoring peaceful annexation, and Polk used that tool well. [Billington, 1974, p. 485]

Another dimension to American expansion into the Southwest is curiously missing or seriously underemphasized by historians. In the various interpretations that have been written there is rarely a discussion of the dynamics and level of development of the American economy as a whole during this period. It may be that a closer examination of this dimension will further clarify the motivations behind the Mexican American War.

The American economy during the first half of the nineteenth century was marked by a distinct regional pattern. The South, which had been a diversified agricultural area, was becoming more and more specialized as a cotton-growing region. The West was primarily a grower of foodstuffs. The Northeast, an area of incipient manufacturing, also provided important services in shipping and trade. According to the classic account by Douglass C. North (North, 1966), prior to the 1830s it was not clear that the United States would be able to develop into a major industrial country. The internal market was not highly developed, and the export sector was less than dynamic. The urban areas were relatively small, and the West was relatively isolated from the Northeast by natural geographic barriers. Starting around 1830, however, there was a major expansion in the value of the goods the United States was able to export. The earnings derived from exports then became the key factor in the economic development of the country, and particularly in manufacturing and regional integration. Of the various components that went into the export trade, cotton was by far the leading element.

The effects of this growth in exporting were many and interrelated. With growth in the demand for cotton, more land in the South was devoted to that crop, and the search for land suitable for cotton cultivation was intensified. However, a great deal of the cotton earnings flowed to the Northeast, since that region provided the services to finance, transport, and market the South's cotton. Some of these resources went into the establishment of a textile industry in the Northeast, and this in turn led to the development of an industry that produced machinery, first for the textile industry and then more generally. With the growth of urban industrial centers, the demand for Western-grown foods increased, and this stimulated the economy of the West and accelerated the development of transportation links between the Northeast and the West. As North notes, "it was industrialization in the Northeast and the opening up of the West and Far West which was primarily responsible for the growth of the 1840's and 1850's" (North, 1966, p. 71).

From this perspective, some of the interests and motivations reviewed above take on added significance. The boom in the demand for cotton and the key role this played in the economy of the entire country help explain the strong interest in Texas. The interest of the Southern ruling class in that area was also stimulated by the economic and population gains being made in the Northeast and West, since this tended to undercut their relative power at the national level. The booming economy of that period also heightened the interest of Northeastern commercial elites in California, with its ports and its potential role in future trade with Asia. The New Mexico territory, with its natural resources and its trade routes, also took on added significance. At the same time, the fact that the United States was more and more becoming an economic competitor helps explain England's concern with limiting American territorial growth, and made the United States even more eager to establish the base for its future role as a major world power.

The other side of the coin is that the economic and technological growth of the period made it possible for the United States to act on its ambitions. As Frederick Merk puts it,

> The steam engine had come into its own in river, ocean, and land travel. From distant territories to the center of government travel time by water had been sensationally reduced. On land railroads had proved themselves practical. But even more remarkable than the actual achievements of these agencies in contracting space was the stimulus given to the expansion of thought. In the mid-1840's projects to build transcontinental railroads to the Pacific by northern, central, and southern routes were on the lips of all. [Merk, 1963, pp. 51–52]

In summary, then, a variety of interests can be seen to have played a role in the American penetration into the Southwest, some of major importance and some distinctly secondary. But at the heart of the phenomenon were a number of economic interests closely tied to the dynamic expansion of American capitalism from the 1830s on. These interests included those of Southern agricultural capitalists, based on the plantation system, but more importantly those of the Northern industrialists and men of commerce who were on the ascendance nationally.

THE LAND

With the termination of the Mexican American War, a process of transferring Southwestern land from Mexican American to Anglo hands was set in motion—in spite of provisions in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo guaranteeing the new citizens the security of their property. The pace of dispossession varied from area to area because of a variety of factors, but the general trend was everywhere consistent. Still, it would be an oversimplification to deal with this topic in strictly ethnic or racial terms. Class factors strongly influenced the process, as I emphasize in the following account. Given the uneven pace of land transfer, it is necessary to look at developments by geographic area.

California

In 1851 the U.S. Congress passed a Land Law that established a commission to review the validity of claims to the land in California based on grants made during the Spanish and Mexican periods. Attention has usually focused on the resulting adversary process, and the conflict over the land has been perceived as pitting the native Spanish-speaking Californios, as the land-grant claimants, against Anglo settlers who were often squatters on the land. While this was an important part of what was going on, several complicating factors need to be added to the picture.

On the Californio side, account needs to be taken of the fact that landownership in California had been highly unequal. Much of the desirable California land was held in the form of land grants that had been made by the

Spanish and Mexican governments. Among the Californios was a small class of large landowners and a much larger group of people who lived on a more modest scale. Among these were agricultural laborers, small farmers, servants, artisans, and small merchants. Laborers were the majority and were very poor. Thus all Californios did not have the same immediate stake in the question of who should control the land. According to Leonard Pitt, reports in 1849 showed that 200 California families owned 14 million acres (Pitt, 1970, p. 86).

There are complications as well on the Anglo side. In the first place, not all of the land grants had been made to Californios. There was a group of Anglos who had been recipients of grants prior to the Mexican American War. Among them were such well-known figures as Abel Stearns and John C. Fremont. Many of the Anglo landholders of this period were in the central valley of California, but several of the most important were in southern California (Robinson, 1948, pp. 63–64). Many of these men blended into Californio culture and had intermarried with Californios.

Another complicating factor arises from the fact of land transference through mechanisms that had little to do with the Land Commission. According to Paul Gates, "before 1851, 42 percent of the claims were in the hands of non-Mexicans and in the years thereafter an increasing number were lost to the hard-driving, better-financed Americans who began to develop their grants" (Gates, 1975, p. 159). Richard Morefield comments on this situation as follows:

> The process [of land transfer] had begun as soon as the first foreigner had set foot in California. . . . A breakdown of the figures gives an idea of how much of the land had already passed from [Californio] control. Of the 813 cases presented to the Commission, 521 were confirmed by the time the Commission adjourned in 1856; this number was raised to 604 by successful appeals to the courts. Of these 604 cases only 330 were confirmed to Californians of Mexican descent. [Morefield, 1971, p. 26]

This transfer was not being made to small Anglo settlers, as Gates makes clear:

> When sales were made, it was to new men with financial backing who were able to develop some portions of their purchases, even to lay out towns and cities on them. Thus, the early non-Mexican owners of great ranchos such as Thomas O. Larkin, John Bidwell, William A. Dana, Nicholas Den, W. E. P. Hartness, and Abel Stearns were joined by a group of new millionaires whose wealth had been or was being made in banking, shipping, the cattle trade, mining, and railroads. This new group became owners of numerous ranchos or parts of ranchos running into hundreds of thousands of acres. [Gates, 1975, p. 159]

Thus while it was true that Californios were being displaced from the land, many Californios owned no land from which to be displaced. While it was true that Anglos were taking over the land, some had been there earlier, and the new masters of the land were increasingly likely to be men of means rather than the average Anglo newcomer.

The process of displacing the Californios from the land was more rapid in northern than in southern California. The reason for this is that the Gold Rush in northern California attracted large numbers of Anglos into that area during and after 1848. With the influx of Anglos, land values in northern California skyrocketed (Gates, 1962, p. 100). Pitt and others have discussed various factors that facilitated the transfer of land. One was that the requirements for proof of ownership under American law were different and more stringent than under Mexican law. The Land Law of 1851 put the burden of proof squarely on the shoulders of the land-grant claimants. In addition, unfamiliarity with American law and the English language put many of the claimants at the mercy of Anglo laywers, many of whom had designs on the land (Pitt, 1970, pp. 91, 97; Cleland, 1951, p. 39). Gates notes that "a fairly common practice was for lawyers prosecuting claims to charge a contingent fee of one quarter of the land if successful" (Gates, 1958, p. 235). The shortage of capital often forced the claimants to pay their lawyers entirely in land. The high legal fees and other costs led many landowners to borrow money at high interest rates, so that even if they won their case they frequently had to sell their land to meet their debts (Pitt, 1970, p. 1001; Cleland, 1951, p. 40; Robinson, 1948, p. 106). In addition, land claimants in northern California were faced with a particularly strong surge of squatters on their land. These settlers formed associations to exert political pressure on behalf of their interests. Not infrequently, they exercised intimidation and coercion on the grant claimants (Pitt, 1970, pp. 95ff.).

> In the north of California . . . the basis of landownership had changed drastically by 1856. Through armed struggle, legislation, litigation, financial manipulation, outright purchase, and innumerable other tactics, Yankees had obtained a good deal of interest in the land. The transfer of property destroyed the irenic vision provided by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which guaranteed the Californios the "free enjoyment of their liberty and property"—an obligation that did not worry many Yankees. [Ibid., p. 103]

The process operated at a slower pace in southern California, largely because the northern area was more dynamic economically in the first two decades following the Mexican American War. In the south there were few newcomers to speed the transfer of land. Other factors, however, intervened. The Gold Rush and population increase in the north stimulated the cattle

industry of the south, which boomed in the early 1850s. But the boom was short-lived. By 1856 the cattle industry had peaked and started to decline (Cleland, 1951, p. 110). Overexpansion and poor investment practices had undermined the stability of the cattle ranches, and a severe drought in the 1860s brought about the downfall of many Californio rancheros (ibid., pp. 130ff.).

> Before the catastrophe, practically all land parcels worth more than $10,000 had still been in the hands of old families; by 1870, these families held barely one-quarter. A mean and brassy sky thus did in the south of California what lawyers and squatters had accomplished in the north—the forced breakup of baronial holdings, their transfer to new owners, and the rise of a way of life other than ranching. [Pitt, 1970, p. 248]

The finishing touches were added by the events associated with the coming of the railroads of southern California in the late 1870s and early 1880s. With the railroads came a monumental land boom that largely completed the erosion of the California-held lands. The immigration of large numbers of Anglos reduced the Californios in the southern part of the state to a small minority, as it had earlier in the north. Combined with the other factors cited above, the economic expansion of the 1880s reduced the Californios' holdings to a small fraction of their former possessions.

The situation of the Californios in San Diego County has been described by García (1975a) and Hughes (1975). Hughes stresses the role of legal fees and associated court costs in eroding the financial position of San Diego landowners. Land taxes also played an important role here, as in other parts of southern California.

> Since state laws exempted much of the northern mining industry, the brunt of the property tax fell on the large property owners of southern California who were primarily Californios. Most of the state's population resided in the North and worked in the mines or in related occupations. Their representatives dominated state government and attempted to use taxation to break up the large land holdings. [Hughes, 1975, p. 18]

In the Santa Barbara area, important changes in landownership took place during the 1860s, according to a study by Camarillo (1975a, 1975b). The downturn in the fortunes of the pastoral economy seems to have played an important role here as well. A comparison of censuses taken in 1860 and 1870 shows a dramatic decline in the number of Spanish-surname rancheros and farmers in the Santa Barbara area during that period (Camarillo, 1975a, p. 6).

In summary, a number of factors had gone into the process that resulted in dispossession from the land of the Californio elite and some small farmers.

Among these were:

- Imposition of a different legal system with different standards of proof of ownership
- Placing the burden of proof on the land-grant claimant to demonstrate that the claim was legitimate
- Legal chicanery by Anglo lawyers dealing with culturally different clients
- Manipulations of the tax system on land
- High legal fees and court costs, combined with a shortage of capital and the necessity to borrow money at high interest rates (see Cleland, 1951, p. 114; Pitt, 1970, p. 100)
- Coercion and intimidation (e.g., on the part of squatters)
- Anti-Californio biases by elected and appointed government officials
- Natural calamities, such as drought
- Overextension of the cattle industry following the boom of the 1850s

All this is not to say that legitimate transfers of land through proper sales at fair prices did not take place. Nevertheless, a distinct discriminatory aspect was present, not only in the attitudes of individuals but in the effects of the institutional mechanisms that were set up to deal with the problem. While "institutional racism" is a relatively recent concept, it should be applied to the situation in California with respect to the land in the nineteenth century.

At the same time, the conflict between the interests of the Californio landowners and the Anglo newcomers should not obscure the fact that racial divisions were only part of the story. As mentioned earlier, Anglos found themselves on both sides of the conflicts over land, as many land-grant claimants were Anglos. In addition, there appears to have been a considerable amount of intra-Anglo class conflict over the land. Paul Gates has documented the process from 1860 to 1900 through which agricultural capitalists accumulated large holdings at the expense of small settlers.

> Statistics of the number of new farms being created in California between 1860 and 1900—55,826—offer little support for the notion that the great ranchos were being subdivided into many small farms. During this period 147,000 homestead and preemption applications were filed. These might have led to small farms but did not for, as is seen later, many were filed by men acting as dummies for large engrossers. . . . Prominent Californians seemed determined to bring about the greatest possible concentration of land in large ownerships and bent their energies to shape state and federal legislation to contribute to that end while paying lip service to the small-family-farm concept. From the election of John C. Fremont as its first senator in 1850 . . . the state was represented in Washington by men closely identified with the great landowners and railroad tycoons. . . .

> Much unhappiness was expressed at the speed with which the 500,000 acres were grabbed up by capitalists who were accused of making their entries on lands being improved by settlers who were waiting for the enactment of a free homestead measure. . . . Meetings of squatters were held at which "raging excitement" was expressed at the land speculators who had entered land on which settlers had commenced their homestead. [Gates, 1975, pp. 160–61, 163]

Or as Pitt puts it:

> No set pattern emerges in these land transformations, but the eroded claims of the original claimants washed away steadily and flowed into the hands of the newcomers—financiers, railroad developers, town promoters, cooperative colonizers, and irrigation companies. [Pitt, 1970, p. 275]

In the long run, then, the main beneficiaries of the displacement of Californios from the land were those who had the financial resources and the political clout to reconcentrate the land in their own hands. The benefits were disproportionately appropriated by the same class of Anglo capitalists, speculators, and financiers whose interests had most strongly motivated the Mexican American War.

New Mexico

During the nineteenth century the bulk of the Chicano population of the Southwest was concentrated in New Mexico. Here, as in California, settlement of the land had taken place through Spanish and Mexican grants. In the southern part of the state, the common pattern was haciendas established by grantees who became patrons and brought in settlers to do the work. The haciendas were largely self-sufficient and were usually organized around a system of debt peonage. The haciendas grew their own food and were also engaged in pastoral activities. Sheep were the main export. Trade was carried on largely with Mexico, until the Santa Fe Trail was opened and American economic penetration of the area began.

The northern part of the state was characterized by "communal" villages which were organized on the basis of grants that had been given to the community as a whole. Here homesteads and farming lands were owned privately, whereas grazing and other land was owned in common and grazing and water rights were assigned by community councils (Zeleny, 1944, p. 68). Economic life revolved around subsistence agriculture and sheep raising. There was little manufacturing in the area. Northern New Mexico was more densely settled by Hispanos than the southern area.

The pace of Anglo economic penetration in New Mexico was more like that of southern than northern California, and the tempo of land transfer was

correspondingly slow, although steady. In the mid-nineteenth century the economic penetration took the form of movement into agriculture and expansion of the commercial sector.

Initially, the Anglo conquest of New Mexico resulted in a limited expansion of the area occupied by the Spanish-speaking New Mexicans, or Hispanos. The reason for this is that the American military presence served to decimate the nomadic Indians who had previously resisted encroachments on their territory (Meinig, 1971, p. 32). The Hispano expansion, however, was halted in the 1870s as Anglo cattlemen and farmers increasingly moved into the area. As Meinig puts it:

> The Hispano hold upon much of their newly acquired country was necessarily thin, discontinuous, and at times no more than seasonal. The vanguard of their herders was often repelled and confined to the poorer lands, the outermost of their settlements were often soon enclaved within Anglo cattle country. The actual stabilization of the patterns of the two peoples was a long and complicated process which resulted neither in simple areal boundaries nor simple contrasts in activities (increasingly, Hispano shepherds tended Anglo-owned flocks), but it was a process which relentlessly strengthened the dominance of the one over the other. [Ibid., pp. 34–35]

As in southern California, the coming of the transcontinental railroads had a significant impact in New Mexico. New Mexico was fully connected with the transcontinental system in the late 1870s and early 1880s, and with the transportation system came an economic boom and an influx of Anglos. "The notion of migration to New Mexico was boosted by promoters of development of the West and by financial interests in the East which stood to profit by such migration" (Zeleny, 1944, p. 143). The 1880s saw a rapid increase in the number of Anglo-owned cattle companies (Westphall, 1965, p. 56). With the economic boom and the movement of Anglos into the state, the pressure on the land increased. From that point on, the process of land transfer accelerated. According to Zeleny, the process went faster in the southern part of the state, where the hacienda pattern had been dominant. Presumably, the denser Hispano population in the north and the pattern of communal holdings acted to retard the transfer to some extent (Zeleny, 1944, pp. 186–87).

Clark Knowlton has provided a detailed list of the mechanisms by which the transfer of land took place in the New Mexico area. In general, the processes were much like those in California. Only two or three aspects of the transfer process warrant a more extended discussion, and one of them has to do with the impact of land taxes. Knowlton notes that under the Mexican system the land had been free of taxation—taxes were levied on the products of the land rather than on the land itself. "In an area where the income from agriculture fluctuates irregularly according to climatic conditions, a fixed land

tax in bad years places heavy burdens upon farmers and ranchers. A small Spanish-American subsistence farmer living in the villages was singularly unprepared to adjust to a fixed land-tax system. Cultivating his land to feed his family, he seldom ever possessed enough actual cash to pay taxes requiring money payments" (Knowlton, 1967, p. 7). According to New Mexico law, anyone can pay delinquent taxes on land and receive a title to that land. "Probably no other Anglo-American measure has had a harsher impact upon Spanish-American property than the fixed land tax" (ibid.). Knowlton argues that the county land tax was also subject to extensive fraud and manipulation, to the detriment of the Hispano population. McWilliams notes the same phenomenon:

> In many cases, the Spanish-Americans could not pay land taxes of $1.50 an acre, or more, levied against grazing lands. Anglo-Americans would then buy up the lands at tax sales and promptly have the land tax reduced to thirty or forty cents an acre. [McWilliams, 1968, p. 77]

In many cases it appears that the new owners of the land engaged in an unwarranted enlargement of the grant boundaries.

> A number of grants have had their boundaries stretched and areas marvelously expanded. But this has been done mostly by Yankee and English purchasers and not by the original Mexican owners. Where boundaries were made by natural landmarks, such as a "white rock," a "red hill," or a "lone tree," another rock, hill or tree of like description could always be found a league or two farther off, and claimed to be the original landmark described in the grant documents. [Wilbur F. Stone, associate justice of the Court of Private Land Claims, cited in Westphall, 1973, p. 36]

In New Mexico, also, the role of the government and its use of land became an important factor—increasingly so toward the end of the century. Without compensation, the National Forest Service has taken millions of acres from the northern villages for the creation of national forests. Hispanos must now pay grazing fees on land that once belonged to the villages (Knowlton, 1967, p. 10).

> The creation of forest reserves by the Federal Government has likewise withdrawn large portions of the public domain from free grazing lands of the Spanish-Americans. The Santa Fe National Forest was created in 1892, and the Cibola and Carson National Forests were established in 1906 . . . they combined with other factors in confining the Spanish-Americans to a smaller and smaller land base. Grants made by the government to railroads during the period of their construction also withdrew substantial portions of the public domain from the free use of the old residents. [Zeleny, 1944, p. 171]

Malcolm Ebright has described the process in relation to the San Joaquin del Rio de Chama grant in northern New Mexico, originally made in 1808 to a group of Mexican families:

> There was never any serious question regarding the validity of the grant nor of the nature of the grant as one made to a community. The only real question which the U.S. officials who were responsible for its adjudication asked was, how big was it. In 1861 when approximately 400 of the grantees and their heirs petitioned for confirmation of the grant, its size was estimated at 184,320 acres. But when surveyed in 1878 it turned out to contain 472,736 acres. It appears that the rejection of 471,314 acres of the grant, most of which eventually wound up in the Santa Fe National Forest, was based on the simple fact that the grant was too big and would unreasonably deplete the U.S. public domain. [Ebright, 1976, p. 3]

Of course, even if a different determination had been made by the court, there was no guarantee that the land would remain under the control of the villagers, given the various processes that were acting to concentrate the land in the hands of large companies and land speculators.

It was not until 1891 that a Court of Private Land Claims was established for New Mexico. Prior to that time, conflicts over claims were handled by the state surveyor general, subject to congressional confirmation. The Court of Private Land Claims was empowered to deal with all Spanish and Mexican land claims in the areas of New Mexico, Colorado, and Arizona. Because of the biases of the rules and procedures the court was to follow, similar to those of the California Land Commission, the results were highly disadvantageous to the Hispanos.

> The court [of Private Land Claims] was set up with five judges selected from other parts of the United States, a United States Attorney, and other court officials. The members of the court were Anglo-American legal officials with little knowledge of Spanish and Mexican law and no knowledge of Spanish-American land-owning customs. Court decisions were based upon a rigid interpretation of Anglo legal precepts. [Knowlton, 1967, p. 6]

> In the years from 1891 until 1904, when the Court was disbanded, decisions were made settling the currently urgent land claims. In this time about two-thirds of the claims examined were rejected; the court confirmed the grants to 2,051,526 acres, and rejected claims to 33;439,493 acres. . . . The stipulation that no grant be confirmed unless there was strict legal authority in the granting powers was the basis for the rejection of many claims. . . . The decisive action taken by the court in its years of activity actually relegated the Spanish-Americans to a position of greater disadvantage than they had occupied prior to its establishment. . . . The conflicts over land were turned over to a supposedly impersonal third party, the Court, which technically fulfilled the Anglo-American conception of "justice" but at the same time proceeded to fix the Spanish-American in a position of subordination. [Zeleny, 1944, pp. 166–67]

The result was that eventually Anglos came to own four-fifths of the former grant areas (Brayer, 1974, p. 19; Meier and Rivera, 1972, p. 107). The loss of the community lands, from an original 2 million acres to 300,000 by 1930, was a major blow to the economic viability of the villages (Harper, Córdova, and Oberg, 1943, p. 62).

> The emphasis in the litigation decisions was clearly on ascertaining if there was legal authority in the original granting process. Although this may seem a proper norm of justice, it must be emphasized it was a norm of Anglo justice being applied to the *traditional legal process of another* sovereign state (either Spain or Mexico) which functioned in a different cultural and legal framework. Moreover, it applied current norms to a previous circumstance, which to the Mexican Americans could reasonably be considered an ex post facto application. It can certainly be argued that the determination of legitimacy in the granting process was an important aspect of the legal question, but the overriding importance placed on this single norm, relative to the reasonableness of the acceptance of the original grantors and the appropriate communities or individuals of the legality of the grants by their traditional expressions of legality (occupation and use) and the long time lag between the grants and their validity determination seems a clear bias against the Mexican Americans. [Jim Johnson, 1975, memo prepared for this study]

A number of the grants in New Mexico had been made under terms in which the members of the local community were to use the land under the condition of usufruct. "It is the nature of usufruct that it is a perpetual right attached to the land, a right effective not only against the owner of the land, but also against all others. Usufruct can be owned in common, but the owners do not possess the land; they possess the right to use it" (Rock, 1976, p. 54). The right is intended to be perpetual, as long as the grantees live up to their obligations to maintain the land. This right was supposed to be protected by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, but the courts of New Mexico have refused to depart from a rigid adherence to Anglo legal norms in deciding land grant cases, and these norms do not include the right of usufruct (ibid., pp. 56–61).

At the same time, there is evidence that violence and intimidation played a considerable role in the economic changes that were taking place. "Hand in hand with the vast expropriation of lands went a wave of violence and terrorism which caused many Hispanos to leave the San Luis Valley.

Family histories in the San Juan Basin relate incidents of covert shootings and public lynchings over land and political control'' (Swadesh, 1974, p. 80; see also Ganaway, 1944, p. 102).

As in the case of California, dispossession from the land was largely effected through the ''normal workings'' of the institutions which were set up by Anglo society. The process illustrates the way in which institutional discrimination can operate in an apparently color-blind manner.

> The situation of the Spanish-Americans was made even more difficult by the establishment of only two federal land offices in New Mexico during much of the territorial period. . . . The very existence of these offices, let alone their functions, was unknown to the Spanish-American village population. On the other hand, the Americans, who lived in the larger urban centers of the Territory, possessed far better means of traveling and of communicating with each other and with the land offices. As political alliances were established, often with the personnel of the land office, they were able to note which land grants were registered and which were not and thus to take appropriate action to register many unregistered grants in their own names. [Knowlton, 1967, p. 6]

The overall result was a steady decline in the economic and political fortunes of the Hispanos, with the land playing a key role.

> The struggle between the Spanish-Americans and Anglo-Americans taking place in New Mexico during this period was one in which the defeat of the Spanish-Americans was pre-ordained because of certain critical advantages which the Anglo-Americans possessed. In the struggle economic and political factors were inter-related in such a manner as to produce a shift in power from the hands of the numerically preponderant Spanish-American group to those of the invading Anglos. (Zeleny, 1944, p. 159]

> The accommodation which was effected in the economic sphere through land displacement and competition resulted essentially in a relationship of superordination and subordination between the two competing ethnic groups. [Ibid., p. 196]

The loss of lands by the Hispanos is only one aspect of the situation, however. If anything, the class dimension to the economic penetration and transfer of land in New Mexico was even more apparent than in other parts of the Southwest. Zeleny notes that

> New Mexico did not at first attract many of the regular settler class, but rather was a field for exploitation by American commercial enterprise and American and European capital. [Ibid., p. 159]

The activities of the Santa Fe Ring and its various component rings in the nineteenth century exemplify this class dimension. The ring consisted of a

group of Anglo merchants, lawyers, bankers, politicians, and ranchers who dominated the territory during the last two decades of the century. With headquarters in Santa Fe, they exercised great influence in the territorial and national capitals. While engaged in every facet of commercial and political life, the biggest impact of the ring was probably in manipulating the land and concentrating it in their hands through a variety of sharp practices (Larson, 1968, pp. 137ff.; see also Lamar, 1970, chap. 6).

Frances Swadesh has provided us with a description of the manner in which Thomas Catron, one of the leaders of the ring, gained control of the large Tierra Amarilla grant. According to this account, his methods included the manufacture of evidence, collecting large legal fees in the form of land, and defrauding the original grant claimants (Swadesh, 1974, pp. 84–85). By the 1880s, he was one of the largest landowners in the United States, with the Tierra Amarilla grant alone totaling some 600,000 acres. In the process of developing this area, Hispano communities were disrupted and much of the land was ''clean cut'' by lumber companies (ibid., pp. 88–89). Brayer's extended account of the activities of the British capitalist and speculator, William Blackmore, in gaining control over several grants in the northern New Mexico–southern Colorado area also highlights the class dimension in the transfer of land titles.

One of the more interesting aspects of this process stands out clearly in the Santa Fe Ring, which was able to exercise power effectively because of the alliance it forged with the wealthy Hispano elite, the *ricos* (McWilliams, 1948, p. 122; Knowlton, 1967, p. 5; Larson, 1968, p. 144). In effect, there was an interethnic class alliance, which, however, was dominated by the Anglos. Actually, such an alliance had long been in existence. Brayer has described the manner in which Cornelio Vigil and Ceran St. Vrain, prominent residents of Taos, combined to petition Governor Armijo for a substantial grant of land in 1843. The grant was made in that same year. Within two months, the two recipients of the grant had deeded a one-sixth interest to Armijo, to Donanciano Vigil (Armijo's territorial secretary), and to Charles Bent and Eugene Leitensdorfer, important merchants and traders (Brayer, 1974, pp. 127–29).

In another example, Guadalupe Miranda and Charles Beaubien were placed in possession of a large grant of northern New Mexico land in 1841 by Governor Armijo. The curate of Taos, Father Martínez, protested that much of the land belonged to the people of Taos and had long been used as common grazing land, but to no avail (Keleher, 1964, pp. 13–15).

The role of the ricos in the post–Mexican American War period was to provide their Anglo partners with political support through their influence with the Hispano population. In return, they hoped to be safeguarded to some extent in retaining control of their lands (Zeleny, 1944, p. 160). In the long

run, however, the bargain turned out badly for many of the ricos. Rodman Paul has given us an assessment of the effects of the alliance on the Hispano elite:

> Whether Hispanos really were the big gainers from the operations of either the Ring or the early business houses may be doubted. One suspects that their Anglo associates were too resourceful for that. And in any event, while some of the Hispano upper class were prospering, many of their cousins . . . were losing ownership of the land that had been the traditional basis of their power. So at best only a portion of even the favored class were better off at the end of the century than they had been in 1848. [Paul, 1971, p. 39]

Another aspect of the class dimension as it affected the land (already seen in California) was class conflict within the Anglo population. Keleher provides a vivid account of the formation on the Maxwell land grant of groups of Anglo settlers determined to wage a struggle against the promoters and capitalists who had gained control of the grant. In the end, their efforts were largely unsuccessful (Keleher, 1964, pp. 84–107). Westphall has documented the fraudulent manipulation of the land by land and cattle companies, along the same lines as the practices described by Gates for California (Westphall, 1965, pp. 64, 81, 100ff.).

In summary, it is possible to see in New Mexico, even more clearly than in California, the interrelated nature of ethnic and class factors in the dispossession of the land and its reconcentration in the hands of an Anglo-dominated economic and political elite.

Texas

Texas differs from the other areas of the Southwest in that here there was a pattern of extensive Anglo settlement of the land. A substantial amount of land had been granted to Anglos through the Mexican government's *empresario* grants, particularly in southeastern Texas.

Perhaps in part because of this, little has been written about the displacement of Mexicans and Chicanos from the land in this region. Yet this process appears to have started quite early. During the war that resulted in the independent Republic of Texas in 1836, Spanish-speaking residents were apparently driven out of certain areas, notably in Bexar County, where San Antonio is located (Meinig, 1969, p. 46). Joseph Nance adds that Texas Anglo raiders "forced the abandonment of many of the Mexican ranches between the Neuces and the Rio Grande" in the late 1830s (Nance, 1963, p. 547). Meinig notes that "east of Victoria nearly all of the few Hispanos who had not fled in 1836 were harassed and driven out in 1845 or shortly thereafter" (Meinig, 1969, p. 55).

The process continued after the termination of the Mexican American

War. Speaking of south central Texas, Meinig states that "by 1860 the Anglos had gotten control, by fair means or foul, of nearly every ranch worth having north of the Neuces" (Meinig, 1969, p. 54). As in other areas, force and fraud were not the only mechanisms used to facilitate the transfer of land. The Texas historian Fehrenbach describes the situation in this way, with an unconscious touch of irony:

> There is some truth that many Mexican landowners, especially the small ones, were robbed in south Texas by force, intimidation, or chicanery. But what is usually ignored is the fact that the hacendado class, as a class, was stripped of property perfectly legally, according to the highest traditions of U.S. law. [Fehrenbach, 1968, p. 510]

The Espíritu Santo grant in the Rio Grande Valley provides one example of a Chicano-held grant that was validated by the courts but in which the land was lost because of the prohibitive costs of the litigation (Acuña, 1972, pp. 43–44). "The imposition of American law infuriated most Mexican landowners. They had to defend their ancient titles in court, and they lost either way, either to their own lawyers or to the claimants" (Fehrenbach, 1968, p. 511). Acuña notes that an 1860 census showed that 263 Texans owned over $100,000 in real property, and that only two of these were Chicanos (Acuña, 1972, p. 44).

Paul Taylor has provided us with a more intensive look at the situation in the southern Gulf Coast county of Neuces. He states that by 1835 all of the county had been granted in large tracts to Mexicans, who used the area for cattle. By 1859 all but one of the grants had passed to Anglo hands (Taylor, 1971, p. 179). The process of transfer started in 1840, through sales. Taylor addresses himself to whether the sales could be considered fair and free:

> When the Mexicans first sold to Americans they were under stress to sell. They were not simply individual holders of property selling of their free will; they were selling *because they were Mexicans* who, in a time of chaos, could no longer occupy their land, and who saw the imminent American military and political domination. . . . It was under the pressure of these conditions that the grants passed to Americans, who as bargainers took advantage of them in varying degrees. (Ibid., pp. 182–83]

Taylor's insights into the psychological pressure on the Mexican landholders undoubtedly apply to other areas of the Southwest as well.

As in other parts of the Southwest, land transfer in Texas was strongly affected by the economy. The boom in cattle that followed the American Civil War led to greater pressure on the land, as did the economic development stimulated by the coming of the railroads. According to Meier and Rivera, "as a result of the cattle boom after the Civil War . . . the loss of land by

tejanos to Anglos was accelerated. In many cases these lands were acquired by forced sales for nonpayment of taxes, with Anglo speculators often obtaining tejano lands at only a few cents per acre'' (Meier and Rivera, 1972, pp. 93–94).

Again, the class factor in this process needs to be emphasized. In spite of the fact that there was strong antispeculator sentiment in Texas, speculating in land was a major economic factor even before the establishment of the Republic of Texas. Several important land speculation ventures began in the early 1830s, including those of the notorious Galveston Bay and Texas Land Company. Such famous names as General (later Texas President) Sam Houston and Jim Bowie were closely linked with these activities (Hogan, 1946, pp. 83–85). According to Fehrenbach, ''the land maps of virtually every central Texas county show that the best lands, with their precious water rights, passed into private ownership between ten and thirty years before these counties were settled by whites'' (Fehrenbach, 1968, p. 283). Alwyn Barr, in his study of late nineteenth-century Texas, makes references to west Texas county-based land rings, and quotes Texas land commissioner Charles Rogan to the effect that

> while the laws were enacted ostensibly for the benefit of the actual settler, he has derived but little benefit from them. The chief beneficiaries have been land agents, speculators and bonus hunters, and finally the ranch men. [Barr, 1971, p. 84]

According to Barr, Rogan's ''statement may well stand as a summary of Texas land policy for the last two decades of the nineteenth century'' (Ibid., p. 84).

LAND TRANSFER IN THE SOUTHWEST

Perhaps the key point that emerges from this review of the land situation in the nineteenth century is that the subordinate status of Chicanos in the Southwest put them in a particularly vulnerable economic position. Anglo capitalists and land speculators were best able to take advantage of this vulnerability to dispossess Chicanos of the land they had previously controlled. Certain factors, such as class status, population density, or geographic isolation, had an effect on the pace of dispossession, but eventually it affected all or nearly all Chicanos.

While it is true that Anglo settlers were also adversely affected by the increasing concentration of land in the hands of large Anglo landowners, there was an important difference in degree. As Brayer has pointed out for New Mexico, Anglo settlers were better able to defend their claims to the land than Chicanos (Brayer, 1949, pp. 119–20n.). In addition, as Keleher notes, in

most cases the Anglo settlers did not have the same long-standing claim to the land that most Chicanos had (Keleher, 1964, p. 23).

Anglo control of the political process appears to have been a key factor in all this (political control is explored further in chapter 6). Zeleny describes the situation in New Mexico:

> The land situation, and the control exercised by the Anglo-American officials in land decisions, were important factors in producing this shift in power. In the political field the Spanish-Americans, whose numerical superiority had given them an advantage in territorial politics, rapidly became the victims of corrupt American practices and machine politics. Politics in the territory were soon in the hands of a political combination . . . which succeeded in controlling appointments made through both the territorial and federal governments in New Mexico. [Zeleny, 1944, pp. 159–60]

The link between loss of political control and loss of the land has also been recognized by other writers. Swadesh points out that ''officials appointed by the federal government helped deprive the land grant heirs of their rights'' (Swadesh, 1974, p. 69), and Fehrenbach, writing of Texas, states that ''the law added injury to insult, because it failed to protect the Mexicans and actually was the chief instrument of their dispossession'' (Fehrenbach, 1968, p. 510).

Dispossession from the land, in turn, depleted the economic base of Chicanos and put them in an even less favorable position to exercise influence over the political process. In addition, it had other far-ranging consequences, including facilitating the emergence of a colonial labor system in the Southwest, based in large part on Chicano labor.

CHAPTER 3

The Nineteenth Century, Part II: The Establishment of a Colonial Labor System

For every empire built in Arizona upon a fortune in high grade ore, ten empires were built by men who discovered low grade ores and a fortune in Mexican labor.

—Joseph Park

THE THIRD MAJOR DEVELOPMENT that affected Chicanos in the nineteenth century was the emergence of a racially stratified labor force in the Southwest. To put this situation in proper perspective, however, it is necessary to have some idea of how the American economy as a whole was developing during this period and how the economy of the Southwest fit into the picture.

THE ECONOMY

The major transformation in the American economy during the second half of the century was its industrialization. By the 1890s the manufacturing sector had expanded to the point that the United States was the leading industrial power in the world. In the words of Carl Degler, during this period "a nation of small property owners . . . became a nation in which most men had little or no connection with the land, were largely without property, and worked for other men" (Degler, 1967, p. 2).

Several factors had gone into this transformation. Important technological developments had resulted in a spreading use of machinery. The energy resources of the country had been greatly expanded. Substantial amounts of developmental capital had poured in from Europe, adding to the capital that was accumulated domestically. In addition, the Civil War resulted in consolidation of the national power of the northern industrial and commercial class, and it used this power to implement policies conducive to industrialization.

Associated with this industrialization were several other important

trends that helped to transform the social and economic map of the country. Urbanization was an important process throughout the country, particularly during and after the 1880s. Transportation and communication networks were rapidly expanded, with railroads playing an especially important role in establishing national economic links and lowering the cost of moving commodities. Immigration, especially from Europe, contributed to the growth of cities and to the emerging industrial labor force. During the latter part of the century the sources of immigration shifted from western and northern Europe to southern, central, and eastern Europe.

The concentration of economic power was another major trend with far-reaching consequences. Prior to the 1870s the American economy had been characterized by a large number of smaller firms. After that period the trend was toward larger and larger corporations. Economic concentration also took the forms of trusts, holding companies, and mergers. By the end of the century many important segments of the economy were dominated by one or a few corporations or trusts. During this period a number of labor organizations were formed, and major strikes and other forms of labor unrest became commonplace. Union organizing efforts were usually met with repression and harassment, and unions were not officially recognized as bargaining agents in American industry.

While industry gradually came to dominate the American economy in the second half of the nineteenth century, agriculture was also a dynamic sector. During this period vast areas were brought under cultivation for the first time, and agricultural productivity was sharply increased through the mechanization of farm work. The country also greatly expanded its output of metals and raw materials. The expansion into the Southwest was a major factor in both of these processes.

In the Southwest as a whole, the major economic trends can be discussed under three headings: agriculture and ranching, railroads, and mining.

Ranching activities centered on cattle and sheep. Cattle had been central to the California economy prior to the Mexican American War, and there was a cattle boom during the early 1850s as a result of the Gold Rush and the rapid increase in the California population. The boom was soon over, and subsequent droughts dealt heavy blows to the pastoral economy. After the 1850s the importance of cattle in California steadily declined. Texas also saw a cattle boom in the 1850s, but cattle remained an important part of its economy throughout the century. Originally centered in the eastern part of the state, the cattle business moved into west Texas after 1870 (Spratt, 1955, p. 87). After 1870 the sheep industry also gained a foothold in Texas. It was during the '70s that extensive fencing took place, and the traditional open range quickly disappeared. "By the mid-1880's most of the rangeland had been fenced,

much of it had come under the control of large companies supplied with Eastern and foreign capital, and railroads had replaced the great cattle trails'' (Meinig, 1969, p. 70). In New Mexico, sheep had been the major pastoral activity during the Mexican period, and the sheep industry continued to expand after the American occupation, reaching a peak in the 1880s (Charles, 1940, p. 28). After 1860 the cattle companies, many from Texas, moved into New Mexico. The New Mexico sheep industry also spilled over into Colorado, and both there and in Arizona there was some development of ranching during and after the 1860s.

Agriculture eventually came to be far more important than ranching, and within the Southwest, Texas and California came to dominate agriculture. In both states wheat and other grains were extensively cultivated from the 1850s on. In California, fruits and vegetables took on major significance in the 1870s. In Texas, as Southern agriculturalists had foreseen before the Mexican American War, cotton assumed a leading role from the 1870s to the end of the century. By 1900 Texas cotton acreage surpassed the acreage devoted to grains, and the value of cotton greatly surpassed the value of grains (Spratt, 1955, p. 70). In other areas as well, agriculture made inroads, although the timing varied from area to area. In Arizona, for example, commercial agriculture largely dates from the 1870s.

Some general trends in agriculture during this period had a bearing on the employment of labor. Mechanization of agriculture reduced the need for labor in those crops which were most strongly affected, but this was not a uniform process. Grains, such as wheat, were among the crops most susceptible to mechanization; fruits and vegetables were not. As areas like California turned to growing these crops, their more intensive agriculture created a need for more farm labor. Cotton also required a great deal of labor. The trend toward commercial agriculture also had important implications. In the earlier part of the century, much of the farming was subsistence farming, in which the products were consumed by the farmers themselves. As the century wore on, commercial farming gained in importance. The fruit and vegetable industry in California was largely commercial, and the Texas cotton crop was entirely commercial. The trend, then, was toward specialized and commercial farming, in which subsistence farming was transformed into production for the market by large agricultural corporations. Whereas in subsistence farming the farmers had worked for themselves, in commercial farming agricultural laborers worked for wages.

It may also have been that the persistent trend during the latter part of the nineteenth century toward lower farm prices (Fite and Reese, 1973, p. 286) had an effect on agricultural labor practices, but, if so, these implications have not been brought out in the literature.

The impact of the transcontinental railroads on the American economy

was nowhere more pronounced than in the Southwest. From 1869 to 1893 five railroads established transcontinental connections, and some of these routes passed through the Southwest. Spratt notes that more than half of the railroad mileage constructed in Texas during the century was built between 1875 and 1885 (Spratt, 1955, p. 26). Railroads had an impact on labor in two distinct manners. On the one hand they were major employers of labor. While they were being built they employed large numbers of construction workers; after they were built they required labor to run the trains and maintain the tracks and equipment. On the other hand, railroads had a major impact on the economy of the region, and in this way indirectly affected the demand for labor. The development of mining and agriculture depended heavily on the transportation provided by the railroads, and as these sectors boomed the need for labor increased accordingly. Railroads had other significant ramifications. By triggering land booms, they hastened the displacement of Chicanos from the land (as has been described above). The displaced Chicanos often entered the labor market as a consequence and out of sheer necessity, generally in very disadvantaged positions.

The extraction of natural resources was the third major economic sector in the Southwest during the latter part of the nineteenth century. While this category includes the lumber industry, which became more important as the century wore on, most of the extractive activities revolved around mining. California had the first great gold rush after the Mexican American War, and mining continued to play a part there for many years. Arizona silver mining had been developed during the 1850s, but had been interrupted by Indians in the '60s. During the 1870s mining was resumed in that area, and copper became increasingly important. In New Mexico mining had been established much earlier by Hispanos, but there was a resurgence of silver mining in the 1870s. Gold was discovered in Colorado in 1859, and silver and lead in the '70s, and copper assumed great importance later in the century.

The early gold and silver operations had been worked on a small scale, as in the placer mining associated with the gold rushes. Before long, however, mechanized and large-scale mining had replaced the small-time operators. By 1860 the California mining scene was dominated by heavily capitalized hard-rock mining, and the Arizona mines were extensively mechanized in the 1870s (Nash, 1964, p. 30; Park, 1961, p. 149). With this shift in technology, the self-employed miner gave way to the wage worker.

The three sectors described above were the most dynamic in the economy of the Southwest during the latter part of the century (see figure 1). Manufacturing developed more slowly here than in some areas of the United States. The manufacturing that gained a foothold did so primarily in California and Texas. In Texas, for example, manufacturing did not make an impact

FIGURE 1

THE SECOND HALF OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY:
MAJOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS
IN THE SOUTHWEST (by State)

	California	*Arizona*	*New Mexico*	*Colorado*	*Texas*
	Gold mining (placer)				Grains (wheat, etc.)
1850s	Grains (wheat, etc.)	Mining (silver)	Sheep		Cattle
	Cattle				
	Gold mining (hard-rock)	Mining declines	Cattle	Gold mining	Cattle
1860s	Grains	Ranching	Sheep	Cattle	
	Cattle decline				
	Grains	Mining resumes (copper)	Cattle	Sheep	Sheep
			Sheep		Cattle (fencing)
1870s	Fruits and vegetables	Commercial farming	Mining (silver)	Mining (silver, lead)	Cotton
	Railroads	Railroads	Railroads	Railroads	Railroads
	Land boom		Sheep		Cattle
1880s	Industry		Lumber		Cotton
			Land values up		Industry
				Mining (copper)	Cotton
1890s					Lumber

until the last two decades of the century. In 1900 the industrial labor force of Texas comprised 1.6 percent of the state population, compared with 6 percent for the country as a whole (Spratt, 1955, p. 231). In Los Angeles, the number of industrial establishments increased from 1 in 1850 to over 170 in 1880, most involving small manufacturers (Griswold del Castillo, 1975, pp. 152, 155).

Urbanization was also having its impact in the Southwest, but at a slower pace than in the Northeast and Midwest. In Texas, the percentage of the population classified as urban increased from 5 to 17 percent from 1870 to 1900 (Spratt, 1955, p. 277). In California the process unfolded at a faster pace, particularly with the railroad-triggered boom of the 1880s. Many of California's urban communities trace their origins to that period. (Dumke, 1944). Many others, of course, had existed since the Spanish and Mexican eras, and experienced large increases in their populations.

Immigration into the Southwest was closely tied to all of these social and economic trends. Anglos, of course, flooded into the area, starting with

the great California Gold Rush. Within a short period the Chicano population in northern California became a small minority. In southern California, Chicanos remained a majority until the 1870s, but by 1880 they are estimated to have constituted only some 25 percent of the population there. By 1890 this figure was down to 10 percent. (Meier and Rivera, 1972, p. 86). The California population as a whole increased from 100,000 in 1850 to 560,000 in 1870 (Nash, 1964, p. 65). In Texas, of course, Mexicans were a minority by the time of the Mexican American War, and they continued to lose ground after the war. Arizona remained sparsely settled, with a population of only 125,000 in 1900, the majority Anglo (Billington, 1974, p. 629). Only in New Mexico and south Texas did Chicanos remain a majority in the face of this Anglo population movement. Some immigration from Mexico took place during this period, into such areas as southern California (Meier and Rivera, 1972, p. 88). There was also some back-and-forth movement across the border in certain areas, such as the southern Arizona mining region. For the most part, however, the major waves of Mexican immigration did not come until the early twentieth century.

Many of the Anglos who were moving into the area were not, strictly speaking, Anglo in the narrow sense of the term. Many were recent arrivals from non-English-speaking countries of Europe, such as the many German settlers in San Antonio and central Texas. As will be brought out below, however, the experience of European immigrants in the Southeast differed considerably from that of immigrants from areas now referred to as the Third World. The Chinese and Japanese workers who immigrated to the Southwest in the nineteenth century were another important part of the population influx from other countries. They tended to concentrate along the West Coast.

THE COLONIAL LABOR SYSTEM

Closely linked to the economic developments described above was the emergence in the nineteenth-century Southwest of a segmented labor force which I refer to as a colonial labor system. This is the definition I propose of such a system:

> A colonial labor system exists where the labor force is segmented along ethnic and/or racial lines, and one or more of the segments is systematically maintained in a subordinate position.

To be "subordinate" means to be disadvantaged with regard to the labor market or labor process in comparison with another group of workers. ("The labor market consists of those institutions which mediate, effect, or determine the purchase and sale of labor power; the labor process consists of the organization and conditioning of the activity of production it-

self. . . . Segmentation occurs when the labor market or labor process is divided into separate submarkets or subprocesses . . . distinguished by different characteristics, behavioral rules, and working conditions'' [Edwards, Reich, and Gordon, 1975, p. xi].) It should be made clear that ''segmentation'' is not absolute, and thus a colonial labor system is a matter of degree. Subordination can be greater or less, and the degree to which it is systematized can also vary.

It was by no means only Chicanos who were incorporated into the colonial labor system in the Southwest, although they are the only group that will be discussed in detail here. During the early stages of the formation of the labor system in the Southwest it was not uncommon to find Native Americans and Blacks experimented with as a subordinate work force. Apparently these experiments were not completely satisfactory, except for the use of Blacks on Texas plantations where the continuity with Southern institutions was very strong. In other parts of the Southwest, Asian labor took on major significance, especially in California. Lloyd Fisher notes that by 1880 the Chinese represented one-third of the agricultural labor force in California, and were the main source of seasonal and casual laborers (Fisher, 1953, p. 4). Chinese workers were also used in the mines, and were for a time the mainstay of the railroads in constructing their lines across the Southwest, always in the hardest and lowest-paying jobs. When Chinese immigration was banned by the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, Southwestern employers turned to the Japanese. The use of Japanese laborers in agriculture increased rapidly, until this source of labor was curtailed by the ''Gentlemen's Agreement'' with Japan in 1906. The large-scale importation of Mexican labor followed shortly thereafter.

There are five aspects of a colonial labor system that I have been able to identify, and they will be discussed under the following headings: labor repression, the dual wage system, occupational stratification, Chicanos as a reserve labor force, and the buffer role. In the discussion below I describe these aspects and review the evidence for their existence with respect to Chicanos in the nineteenth-century Southwest. Since there have been no systematic historical investigations of this topic, the evidence will necessarily be somewhat fragmentary.

Chicanos and Labor Repression

Robert Blauner has argued that the experience of racial minorities in the United States with various aspects of ''unfree labor'' (slavery, peonage) has been one of the key factors differentiating them from European immigrants (Blauner, 1972, chap. 2). More recently, David Montejano has applied the concept of ''labor repression'' to the experience of Chicano workers in Texas (Montejano, 1977). Basing his discussion on Barrington Moore's comparative analysis of the ways in which capitalism developed in different countries

(Moore, 1967), Montejano focuses on the use of non-market sanctions such as coercion and legal restrictions to limit the degree of freedom of Chicanos as compared to non-minority workers.

Such a system of labor repression clearly existed in the nineteenth-century Southwest, although it varied in degree of severity from place to place. One of the best examples of this practice was the system of debt peonage described by Joseph Park for the Arizona mines. The mines were well suited in some ways to this type of system since they were relatively isolated and the employers had substantial control over the workers. The key mechanism in this system was the company store. Miners had little choice but to buy the necessities of life at company stores, and by keeping the wages of Mexican and Chicano miners low enough and jacking the prices of goods high enough, the mine owners could keep them in a more or less perpetual state of debt and thus unable to leave (Park, 1961, pp. 56–60). This had the added advantage for the employers that they completely recovered the wages they paid these workers. The system was reinforced by the peonage laws which were in effect in New Mexico until 1867, but even after their repeal the system continued to operate in many places.

While not uncommon, the system did not become entrenched in the Arizona mining industry, apparently because it was not the most efficient in the long run. One factor is that the mines did not operate at the same level at all times. With their demand for labor fluctuating, there was little advantage to the mine owners in holding an idle labor force on the basis of their debts (ibid., p. 56).

According to Park, the system was not restricted to the mines, although it may have been more pronounced there. Apparently it was used in one form or another by Anglo employers on ranches, farms, and business establishments (ibid., pp. 64–65).

In another sense as well it could be said that Chicanos and other racial minorities have been subjected to a system of unfree labor:

> However mixed the motives of California employers, agricultural employment has been open to the Oriental, the Mexican, Filipino, and Negro, whereas much of industry has been closed to them. The result has been a form of segregation in which agricultural employers have clearly benefited from a labor force which has been relatively immobile [Fisher, 1953, p. 14]

This aspect of unfree labor has been more persistent over time than peonage.

The Dual Wage System

This practice consists of paying one wage to minority workers and another to nonminority workers who perform the same task. The frequent

characterization of minority labor as "cheap labor" often refers to this practice.

Some of the best documentation of this aspect of colonial labor is again from the Arizona mines. Raphael Pumpelly, in an extended travel account, described the situation at the Santa Rita silver mines in the early 1870s. According to him, Mexican miners received from $12 a month to $1 per day, depending on their job, plus a weekly ration of flour. "American" miners received from $30 to $70 per month, plus board (Pumpelly, 1871, p. 32). Joseph Park has plotted the "Anglo" wage and the "Mexican" wage in the Arizona mines from 1860 to 1910, and according to his figures the gap in absolute terms increased during this period, although there was a tendency for both wage rates to rise (Park, 1961, table 6, p. 245). The system was not confined to the mines but was apparently general throughout the Arizona territory:

> A two-class socio-economic system had evolved by the late nineteenth century, which, despite the resentment it provoked among the Mexican population, had at least proved workable. The two-scale wage system had become traditional, and though a widening gap developed between Anglo-American and Mexican wages, the latter showed enough increase to offer Mexican families the promise of better living standards in the future. [Ibid., pp. 243–44]

Another highlighted point in Park's work is that the citizenship status of the minority worker was of little consequence in determining his work status:

> It is not actually important to distinguish between various groups of Mexican ancestry, for whether they were Mexican-Americans, resident Mexican aliens who may have lived in Arizona most of their lives, or Mexican nationals who had recently arrived, they were all treated largely the same, paid the "Mexican" wage, and usually assigned to jobs considered by Anglo-Americans as "Mexicans'" work. [Ibid., p. viii]

Chicanos and Mexicans, as well as other Latinos, thus generally found themselves in the same boat with respect to the wage system and other aspects of economic life. In a recent study, Andres Jiménez has emphasized the manner in which the Arizona mining companies segregated the "Mexican" and Anglo workers into virtually separate communities in many cases, a separation which made it easier for the companies to practice their discriminatory policies while fostering social divisions among their workers (Jiménez, 1977, p. 24).

In the California mines the situation was much the same. Pitt notes that Chicano and Mexican miners were recruited by the southern California hard-rock mines because they could pay them a lower wage than Anglos (Pitt,

1970, p. 59). Speaking of the situation around 1880, Lingenfelter states that "although the Mexican miner could still find a job in the mines of New Mexico, Arizona, and parts of California, even there he had to settle for discriminatory wages of only 50¢ to $1.50 a day, whereas his less experienced gringo brothers drew from $2 to $3" (Lingenfelter, 1974, p. 6).

Texas agriculture was also the beneficiary of Chicano "cheap labor." As cotton cultivation spread into south Texas in the latter part of the century, Chicano and Mexican labor came increasingly to be used for this crop. Paul Taylor quotes the Galveston *News* to the effect that "in those parts of the state where cheap Mexican labor can be secured for chopping and picking cotton . . . this staple can unquestionably be raised at a profit even when it can be raised 'at a cost' (i.e., at a loss) in other parts" (Taylor, 1971, p. 105). While there is no direct reference here to the wages paid non-Chicano labor, the implication is clear that a dual wage standard existed.

That the racially based dual wage was persistent in agriculture can be inferred from the following reference to California around the turn of the century:

> A report of the California State Labor Commission challenged the California Fruit Growers Association view on the subject of the inadequacy of Caucasian farm labor. Commissioner W. V. Stafford informed the press that Oriental wages were consistently below Caucasian wages for the same jobs. [Jones, 1970, p. 31]

Occupational Stratification

The third and almost surely the most significant aspect of colonial labor refers to the practice of classifying certain kinds of jobs as suited for minorities and others as suited for nonminorities. The result is that minority workers are concentrated in the least desirable occupations. Since this practice is informal, as are the others, it is often not an absolute principle. Nevertheless, the pattern that results is usually the most striking aspect of a segmented labor force.

Evidence of racially stratified labor can be cited for virtually all the important economic sectors of the nineteenth-century Southwest (reference has already been made to the use of Mexican labor in Texas cotton cultivation). As long as cotton had been confined to eastern Texas, the major labor supply had been Black. As the cotton-growing areas expanded into southern, central, and western Texas in the 1880s and 1890s, Mexicans and Chicanos dominated the field labor in those new areas. In some places these developments resulted in the displacement of White tenant farmers by Mexican day laborers' migrating into the area (McWilliams, 1968, pp. 170–71). In south Texas the work was done by resident Chicanos (Taylor, 1971, pp. 105–6). Agricultural employers were eager to hire Chicano laborers, thus being as-

sured of an ample labor supply at low wages, as a Nueces County cotton planter testified in 1885:

> I have employed in cultivation almost entirely Mexican laborers, who I find work well, and readily learn to use our improved tools. Such labor is abundant along the Nueces river and can be secured at 75 cents a day, boarding themselves, and paying only for days of actual work. [Ibid., p. 81]

Joseph Park has described the situation in Arizona agriculture during the 1870s, illustrating the interaction between the dual wage structure and the stratification of occupations. Speaking of southeastern Arizona, he states that in this area

> all agricultural labor was done by Mexicans for fifteen dollars a month, plus the traditional ration of sixty pounds of flour, the wage having remained almost unchanged for two decades in this area. Due to the large number of Mexican workers available at this salary, there was no demand for Anglo-American laborers in agricultural work. [Park, 1961, p. 179]

Park also provides an insight into how some occupations came to be typed as subordinate occupations:

> This tendency toward a social division of occupations was becoming quite marked in areas of southern Arizona having a large Mexican population, and constitutes another distinction between this region and the intermountain zone, where the relatively lower number of Mexicans employed in mining, ranching and farming tended to free many types of common labor from the social stigma attached to them in southern Arizona. [Ibid., p. 180]

The tendency to classify some positions as suitable for Anglos and others as suitable only for minorities became even clearer as mechanization took place in the fields. With mechanization, many of the laborer positions were eliminated. New positions were created as operators of the new mechanical farm equipment, such as reapers and threshers, but these positions were filled with Anglos rather than Chicanos or other racial minorities (ibid., pp. 173–74).

A similar system of occupational classification by race prevailed in California agriculture. Testimony before a congressional committee outlined the situation shortly after the turn of the century in the California sugar industry:

> Of the total labor required in the industry, 10 per cent was factory labor and chiefly white-American, and 90 per cent was field labor which was practically 100 per cent foreign labor. In the northern California fields, the field labor was almost exclusively Japanese; in Southern California, it was $^1/_5$ Japanese and $^4/_5$ Mexican. [McWilliams, 1971, p. 87]

In ranching, Chicanos had a long history of working as cowboys on the cattle ranches and as sheepherders. After the American takeover, many of these workers continued in those occupations, with the difference that now there was an occupational distinction by race. On the Anglo-owned ranches the pattern was for the managers and overseers to be Anglos, while the average cowhand was Chicano (Taylor, 1971, p. 116; Meinig, 1969, p. 55). Both in New Mexico and Texas the *pastores,* or sheepherders, tended to be overwhelmingly Chicano (Taylor, 1971, p. 116; Charles, 1940, p. 29).

The railroads provided another sector with a marked racial division, or at least concentration, of labor. In the early years of railroad construction in the Southwest very extensive use was made of Chinese labor. During the 1880s, however, with this source of labor drying up, Chicanos and Mexicans came to dominate the categories of common labor on the rails, a situation that continued into the twentieth century. The Southern Pacific Railroad is particularly noted for its use of Chicano labor in the lowest-paid positions. By 1900 the Southern Pacific regularly employed some 4,500 Mexicans and Chicanos in California (McWilliams, 1968, pp. 168–69: Acuña, 1972, p. 93).

With their background in mining, it was natural for the Chicanos and Mexicans to be employed in this area. At the New Almaden mine in northern California (a producer of mercury used in the extraction of precious metals from its ores), it was estimated that five-eighths of the almost 2,000 miners were of Mexican background (McWilliams, 1968, p. 140). Mexican workers were found in mines from New Mexico to the California coast. In all locations, however, they were restricted to the hardest and most dangerous jobs (Pitt, 1970, p. 255). Meier and Rivera note the combination of dual wages and occupational stratification in New Mexico mines:

> A discriminatory dual wage system developed that favored Anglo miners by paying them at a higher rate than Mexican workers for the same type of work. Besides suffering from discriminatory wage practices, Mexican miners were restricted largely to menial and dangerous work, and they lived in segregated areas. [Meier and Rivera, 1972, p. 108]

As mining became mechanized, the pattern was for Anglos to operate the machinery while Chicanos did the manual labor (Park, 1961, pp. 151, 207; Morefield, 1971, p. 14).

All of the economic sectors described to this point—agriculture and ranching, railroads, and mining—were sectors in which the bulk of the work was done in non-urban areas. While those were the most dynamic sectors in the nineteenth-century Southwest, there was a steadily growing urban economy in which Chicanos were represented to some degree. There are few data

on this aspect of the Chicano work experience, but a few clues can be found as to the existence or nonexistence of a segmented labor force in the cities.

Camarillo has done one of the few studies on Chicano labor in an urban area, in this case Santa Barbara. According to him,

> The limited seasonal employment in pastoral-related jobs and the meager income from miscellaneous employment forced the male head of household into the manual labor market of the construction-building industry of the city. Prior to 1868 the building trade in Santa Barbara was largely dependent upon Chicano masons and other workers who were experienced in adobe construction. By 1872, however, adobe construction had become obsolete in the expanding brick and board construction of the growing Anglo city. For two decades Chicano workers remained outside the construction trades personnel which consisted of Anglo skilled workers and Chinese unskilled laborers. Prior to the early 1890's building contractors imported the needed labor, Chinese and others, for private and city contracts. As the source of Chinese labor decreased the contractors began to rely more on local labor. By mid-decade Chicanos were increasingly identified as the street graders, ditch diggers, and general manual laborers at construction sites. As recurrent high unemployment prevailed in Santa Barbara throughout the 1890's, Chicano workers filled the manual laboring positions once occupied by transient non-Chicano workers. From then on, Chicanos supplied the primary source of manual day labor. A program in 1895 to hire residents for local county road work marked the institutionalization of the Chicano worker as the chief source of manual labor. [Camarillo, 1975a, pp. 18–19]

A study of San Antonio also indicates a pattern of occupational stratification by race in the nineteenth century. According to this study, the percentage of unskilled workers in 1870 broke down as follows: Mexican Americans 61 percent, Blacks 67 percent, native Whites 24 percent, and European immigrants 21 percent (Barr, 1970, p. 398).

A more detailed study of Los Angeles from 1844 to 1880 also indicates a very high concentration of Chicanos in the lowest occupational categories. During this period we find that laborers (including agricultural laborers) constituted 73 percent of the Chicano work force in 1844, 55 percent in 1850, 70 percent in 1860, 70 percent in 1870, and 65 percent in 1880 (Griswold del Castillo, 1975, p. 153). This study does not present the overall occupational distribution for Los Angeles, but the proportion of Chicano laborers appears high and remains so during the period. Laborers were only 26 percent of California's work force in 1880 (ibid., p. 156). The study also notes that Chicanos were able to participate in the growth of new industrial occupations in the city only in a marginal way, especially after 1860 (ibid., p. 155).

Chicanos as a Reserve Labor Force

It can be argued that it is useful for employers in a wage-labor system to have a group of workers who function in some ways as a reserve labor pool. There are at least two functions that such a group can perform. On the one hand, it can give elasticity to the labor force, so that as the demand for labor increases the work force can be expanded, without having to compete for labor and thus drive up wages. Secondly, a group of unemployed workers can be used by employers as leverage in bargaining with or controlling their workers. If workers can be easily replaced, as in a strike situation, their power is greatly reduced.

From the historical record it appears that minority labor functioned as a reserve labor force in the nineteenth-century Southwest. As described above, the presence in Texas and northern Mexico of a large number of available workers who could be employed at low wages because they had little alternative was an important factor in the expansion of cotton cultivation from its east Texas base. Likewise, the presence of Hispano villagers in New Mexico who could no longer make a living on their reduced land holdings made it easier for other kinds of industries to secure the labor they needed to develop in that area. More importantly, however, the existence of such a reserve labor force made it possible to develop in the Southwest a type of commercial agriculture that was in great need of specifically *seasonal* labor. While this reserve labor force was not always exclusively made up of racial minorities, it became increasingly so as time went on.

In California, the growth of the fruit and vegetable agribusiness in the 1870s illustrates this process. According to McWilliams, "what has long been termed the 'farm labor problem' in California may be said to date from the introduction of intensive farming with the attendant requirements for an abundance of cheap, skilled, mobile, and temporary labor" (McWilliams, 1971, p. 65). As one California grower put it with reference to Chinese labor, "Any desired force can be obtained without delay on a few hours' notice, which is of the greatest importance in picking of small fruits" (Jones, 1970, p. 26). Referring to Mexican labor, another grower stated: "I don't know where they come from. They just keep coming, year after year. When the work is finished, I do not know where they go. That is the condition of our country" (McWilliams, 1971, p. 87). Camarillo notes that as local employment became more difficult for Chicanos to obtain in the Santa Barbara area during the 1870s, "the Chicano work force began a pattern which has characterized various sectors of the Chicano working class to the present day—part-time, seasonal-migration work" (Camarillo, 1975a, p. 12).

In the case of the second potential function of a minority reserve labor force, I have been unable to find a great deal of evidence for the nineteenth

century, although the practice was to become prevalent in the twentieth century. Park mentions the fact that mine operators around Globe, Arizona, used the availability of Mexican labor to exert a downward pressure on the wages of all miners in the 1890s, and that Mexican labor was also used to break miners' strikes around the turn of the century in Colorado and Arizona (Park, 1961, pp. 247, 249).

Minorities as Buffers

The final aspect of a colonial labor system is the use of minority workers as buffers or "shock absorbers" in times of economic dislocation. For example, in periods of high unemployment, minority workers can be laid off at a disproportionate rate. This is the essential concept behind the saying that minorities are "the last hired and the first fired." The advantage to the employer in such a system is that the impact of hard times is concentrated on the workers who are most vulnerable and least able to defend themselves, thereby lessening the discontent of the potentially more dangerous nonminority workers.

While Acuña claims that this practice was followed during difficult times in the Arizona mines (Acuña, 1972, p. 89), evidence is generally lacking for the nineteenth century. In all probability this is due more to the scarcity of detailed information on labor practices of the time than to the absence of the practice.

LAND AND LABOR

There was an important connection between the establishment of a colonial labor system and the displacement from the land that had preceded and partly overlapped it. In a way, what was going on in the Southwest was a variation on a theme closely associated with the coming of capitalism in many other areas. The changes which were brought about by the penetration of capitalistic enterprises into the area resulted in a displacement of the rural population from the land, or at the very least a considerable shrinkage of the land base on which the rural population depended. The displaced population was then available for employment in the new enterprises. While this theme has not generally been emphasized in the literature on the Southwest, the connection was clearly perceived by some writers. In a description of the development of the Middle Rio Grande Valley in New Mexico, we find the following passage:

> The laying of railroad tracks in the Middle Valley in the 1880's opened the area to industrial development: mining, lumbering, commercial agriculture and the building and maintenance of the railroads themselves demanded a labor supply. The other developments which were creating an inadequate land base for the Spanish-Americans provided a stimulus for many of them to leave their villages and to become wage-workers in new industries that were being built up. Some remained around the mining and lumbering camps as a permanent laboring class; others returned to their villages. [Harper, Córdova, and Oberg, 1943, p. 64]

DOWNWARD MOBILITY

In a sense, the displacement from the land can be seen as part of a broader movement of downward mobility for the Chicano population that took place after the Mexican American War. According to Camarillo's study of Santa Barbara, Chicanos in that area experienced a general phenomenon of downward economic mobility which was tied to the dislocation of the traditional economy (Camarillo, 1975b, chap. 4). The same was true for the Hispanos of northern New Mexico. Griswold's data for Los Angeles show a decline in the number of skilled Chicano workers after 1860, as the goods they produced came increasingly into competition with manufactured goods (Griswold del Castillo, 1975, pp. 154–55). As noted, Chicanos were not able to gain much foothold in the new occupations being created in the city. According to the same study, "there appears a dramatic decline in the overall property holdings of employed Chicanos during these years [1850–70]. As a whole, the Chicano community was becoming poorer since the average wealth of all occupational levels declined" (ibid., pp. 157–58). The author notes that a study of an Eastern city showed considerable upward property mobility among White workers during the same period (Griswold del Castillo, 1974, p. 97).

RACE AND ETHNICITY

The system of colonial labor appears to have been based on racial rather than ethnic distinctions. On the subordinate side were all the racial minorities in the Southwest at that time: Native Americans, Asians, Blacks, and Chicanos and other Latinos. On the other side were all the White groups, regardless of ethnicity. At the time, of course, there was quite a variety of White ethnic groups—Germans, French, Irish, Scandinavians, and so on. This is not to say that the division was neatly dichotomous—there are scattered references in historical works to distinctions among the racial minorities. In certain times and places, for example, it appears that Native Americans, Chinese, or Blacks occupied positions in the colonial labor system even lower than Chicanos. On the whole, however, these distinctions were minor and transient in nature; the main dividing line was drawn between the racial minorities and the Anglos, broadly defined. In the economic sectors described

above, for example, little or no distinction was made in the way the various White ethnic groups were treated as workers.

Another line of evidence points to the same conclusion. In a study of occupational mobility in San Antonio from 1870 to 1900, Alwyn Barr found that rates of upward and downward occupational mobility for European immigrants (mostly German) compared very favorably with those for native Whites, whereas Mexican Americans and Blacks were in distinctly disadvantaged positions (Barr, 1970, pp. 400–401).

THE ROLE OF EMPLOYER AND WORKER INTERESTS

The colonial labor system was created in the Southwest, as in other parts of the United States, because it served the interests of employers to do so. Some of the quotes below make it clear that agricultural employers knew very well what they were doing and why they were doing it. The crux of the matter was not discrimination based on racial prejudice, but discrimination based on rational calculation of interests. As Lloyd Fisher has put it:

> Agricultural employers . . . are not without racial prejudice; but with the saving prudence of sound business men, the prejudice is shrewdly calculated, reversing the conventional order of discrimination. Agricultural employers are on the whole somewhat more likely to prefer Oriental, Filipino, and Mexican labor to native white. [Fisher, 1953, p. 14]

The fact that Chicanos were colonized in mining, agriculture, and ranching—all areas in which they were traditionally knowledgeable—demonstrates that these labor patterns were not a result of lack of skills on the part of the colonized workers.

Employers had several interests at stake in the creation of this type of labor system; the most obvious was in keeping labor costs to a minimum. If a group of workers could be identified as a low-wage labor pool, the effect would be to lower the employer's expenditures for labor. Other interests, however, were probably as important. A racially segmented labor force allowed the employers greater control of the labor supply. A reserve labor force, for example, gave greater elasticity to the supply of labor. In addition, the system gave employers greater control of their workers in other ways. The reserve labor force was used as leverage to weaken the bargaining power of all workers. The use of minority workers as buffers served to pacify the nonminority workers in periods of excess labor. Perhaps most importantly, the fact of a segmented labor force created built-in divisions among the workers, and helped prevent the emergence of class consciousness among them. Conflicts and antagonisms tended to be directed against other workers, rather than against employers. At the heart of the system, then, lay the interests of employers as a class.

Anglo workers in the Southwest were not interested in the development of a colonial labor force. They saw it as being in their interests to *exclude* the minority workers, rather than to see them subordinated. Here again, the dominant motive does not seem to have been racial prejudice, but rational calculation of interests. Lingenfelter describes the situation in mining:

> Many of the mining superintendents purposely hired men from as wide a range of nationalities as possible in the hope that cultural and linguistic differences would make union organization more difficult. But despite national rivalries the hardrock miners generally worked side by side with remarkable harmony—so long as Chinese, Mexicans, and Blacks were excluded. [Lingenfelter, 1974, p. 7]

While this author is correct in his depiction of the miners' attitude, he leaves out an important consideration: the minority workers were not hired on an equal basis with the others. As long as the mine operators persisted in trying to hire minorities at a lower wage, thereby either displacing the Anglo miners or exerting downward pressure on their wages, the Anglo miners saw it in their interest to agitate for barring the minorities. The attitudes and actions of the workers, then, were conditioned by the actions of employers in creating a colonial labor system.

The attitudes of small farmers tended to coincide with those of the Anglo workers. Since they did not employ labor, they had no stake in trying to create a colonial labor force. Instead, they found themselves competing with larger farmers who were able to undercut them by using cheap minority labor. When the California State Horticultural Society adopted a public resolution in the 1880s in favor of "Chinese cheap labor," the smaller farmers openly criticized it. As Lamar Jones notes, "opinion concerning Chinese labor had assumed a class character" (Jones, 1970, p. 25).

It is logical to assume, however, that the antagonisms that were created by these employer practices contributed to the spread of racist attitudes among the Anglo workers, so that in time racial attitudes took on a life of their own, independent of the circumstances that fostered them. It may also be the case that preexisting racial attitudes conditioned the response of the Anglo workers to the employers' practices, and led them to try to exclude the minorities rather than establish a common base with them. In this connection, it would be well to examine a couple of specific cases that lend themselves to various interpretations.

One of these cases has to do with events in the northern California gold fields in the late 1840s and early 1850s, when these fields were not worked as large hard-rock mines but as small panning and surface digging operations. Soon after these operations began, a wave of "anti-foreign" agitation spread among the Anglo miners. This took the form of mass meetings and intimidation, as well as passage of a "Foreign Miners' Tax." However, the tax was

applied only to "foreigners" who were members of racial minorities, including Mexicans, other Latinos, and the Chinese, and it was these groups who were harassed to the point of being driven out of the mine fields. Other foreign miners, such as the French and Germans, were allowed to stay and were not taxed (Pitt, 1970, p. 64). At first glance, then, this would seem to be a case where antiminority attitudes and activities by the majority were not motivated by a response to employers' colonizing practices, but by feelings of White ethnic solidarity and racism.

Closer examination of the case reveals complicating factors, however, that make it considerably less clear-cut. In the case of Mexicans, it appears that already by 1849 there were persons (in this case Mexican entrepreneurs) who were attempting to establish mining operations in these fields on the basis of peonage. According to Pitt,

> When the Mexicans set to work as peons in the employ of their patrons, they did make themselves the target of the prospectors. Miners who began muttering against the Mexicans and plotting violence felt keenly conscious that the Spanish Americans were cheapening the value of labor. [Pitt, 1970, p. 57]

Once the anti-Mexican sentiment was set in motion, it was easily generalized to all Spanish-speaking miners, given the Anglo tendency to lump Chicanos, Mexicans, and Latin Americans together. Another factor in this situation is that the Mexican miners were at this stage the most expert miners, and tended to establish the most successful diggings (Morefield, 1971, p. 6).

Anti-Chinese feelings in the mine fields developed in 1852, and here the class factor appears to be even clearer than in the case of the Mexicans. According to Morefield,

> in the spring of 1852 feeling grew so quickly against them that it resulted in the passage of the second Foreign Miners Tax. The reasons for this sudden emergence of feeling can be found partly in the vast numbers of them that came suddenly in 1852, but primarily in the fact that they were being hired in China on contracts that gave them from $3 to $4 a month and board. . . .
>
> The miner realized the allies that the Chinese had, for in a resolution passed in Columbia on May 8, 1852, they condemned the ship owners, capitalists and merchants who wanted to flood the state with cheap labor in order to sell more goods. [Morefield, 1971, pp. 11–12]

Another case that might be considered to involve antiminority activities by Anglo workers not motivated by reaction to colonial labor practices is the "Cart War" in Texas in 1857. In this series of incidents, Anglo freight carriers attacked their Chicano counterparts who were hauling freight at cheaper prices in south Texas (Meier and Rivera, 1972, pp. 89–90; McWilliams, 1968, p. 106). However, it would be stretching the term to consider the Anglo teamsters "workers" in this case. What appears to have been at stake is simply competition between Anglo and Chicano businessmen, in which the Anglos took the competition out of the marketplace and the law into their own hands.

THE CHICANA WORKER

It is difficult to make generalizations about the role of Chicanas as workers in the nineteenth century, given the lack of mention of them in the historical materials. The general picture, however, appears to be that during and prior to the 1870s the work activities of Chicanas and Mexicanas were largely confined to the home. The division of roles corresponded closely to what some analysts now refer to as the "sexual division of production," in which the production of goods takes place primarily outside the household by men, whereas women are entrusted with the care of the home and the raising of children. If there were exceptions to this pattern, they must have been in the rural areas, where women tended gardens or looked after domestic animals.

In at least some areas, however, this rigid division started to break down in the late 1870s and in the 1880s. Griswold del Castillo makes mention of women being employed as laundresses by 1880 in Los Angeles (Griswold del Castillo, 1975, p. 155). In a more extended discussion, Camarillo described the situation in the Santa Barbara area. According to him, the entry of women into the labor market was stimulated in part by the dire economic straits that many Chicano families found themselves in during that period. It was after 1880 that Chicanas are first found working as domestics. It was also in the 1880s that Chicanas were incorporated into the agricultural labor market, as entire families entered the pattern of seasonal and migratory field work. Chicano women also found employment, starting about this time, in such agriculturally related enterprises as fruit canneries (Camarillo, 1975b, pp. 169–74). Thus patterns emerged which were to be consolidated and expanded in the twentieth century.

THE FOUR ECONOMIC SECTORS

Most Chicanos during the nineteenth century were in the subordinate segment of the labor force that has been referred to here as the colonial labor force, which of course encompassed other racial minorities as well. Still, it is not possible to claim that all Chicanos were in that segment. Broadly speaking, it appears that there were four general economic situations in which Chicanos found themselves, and I have referred to these broad categories as

"sectors." These four sectors I have called peripheral, colonized, marginal, and integrated (see figure 2).

The *peripheral sector* consisted of Chicanos who found themselves on the periphery of the new economic order being established in the Southwest. They lived in rural areas which had not as yet been tightly incorporated into American commodity or labor markets. These areas, such as parts of south Texas, northern New Mexico, and southern Colorado, had been largely bypassed for the time being by the main lines of development of the new capitalist economy in the Southwest. In these areas the traditional, essentially precapitalist mode of organization of the economy remained in existence, although constantly vulnerable to penetration. These areas were by no means completely outside the new economic order, but they were on the periphery.

In the peripheral sector the process of displacement from the land took place at a slower pace, generally lasting throughout the nineteenth and even into the twentieth century. In some of these areas a Chicano peasantry continued to exist, producing in a subsistence mode or for a largely local market. In other areas what has been called the patrón–peon pattern remained dominant. Actually, this was not a homogeneous pattern, since considerable va-

FIGURE 2

FOUR CHICANO ECONOMIC SECTORS

	NONPERIPHERAL (Strongly affected by or incorporated into the American economy)		PERIPHERAL
	Urban	*Rural*	*Rural*
Colonized	Laborers (e.g. construction Domestics Laundry workers	Laborers: mines, railroads, agriculture, and ranching Weak debt peonage (transitional)	Patron–peon pattern (sharecropping, *partido* system) Subsistence farming
Marginal	Displaced artisans, skilled workers	Displaced farmers and pastoralists (often move to urban areas)	
Integrated	A few skilled workers or proprietors (?) (e.g. carpenters, blacksmiths, bakers)		

riety existed in the relationship between patrón and peon. Generally, in this kind of situation, the patrón was a landlord and the peon some kind of tenant. Tenantry could be based on agriculture, with the tenant making payments in kind to the patrón. It could also be a kind of pastoral tenantry, such as in the *partido* system that dominated New Mexico and Colorado sheep ranching during this period. In the partido system, the landlord provided the tenant with a herd and with access to grazing lands, and the tenant was usually obligated to repay the patrón with a certain payment in sheep at regular intervals (Charles, 1940). The patrón–peon relationship could be very tight, as when a situation of virtual debt peonage existed. It could also be somewhat loose. In all cases, however, the peon was dependent on the patrón in a number of ways, and the relationship always included social and political obligations as well as economic ties. To the extent that links with the outside economy existed, they were mediated by the patrón.

Taylor and West provide us with a detailed look at one such situation: southern Colorado during the second half of the nineteenth century (Taylor and West, 1975). They describe the multifaceted nature of the patrón–peon relationship and the various ways in which the peons were dependent on the patrones. They also go into the breakdown of the traditional system as the area was penetrated by the American economic system.

> By 1900 pressures from outside were beginning to threaten the isolation and self-sufficiency of the plaza settlements and the independent power of the patrón. Mines, railroads, and the timber industry produced new landowners, new jobs, and a steady flow of non-Mexican immigrants into southern Colorado. In 1900 the Rocky Mountain Timber Company . . . acquired from the Maxwell Land Grant Company a wide strip along the southern border of Colorado . . . Mexican-Americans who, through their patrones, had leased these lands from the Maxwell Company were forced to renegotiate their leases. The timber firm insisted that the land be leased only on shares, thus forcing families off the land or severing the direct lines of fealty between patrón and peasant.
>
> Wage labor reduced the personal economic ties between the patrón and peasant. Landless families . . . came to expect cash wages rather than a portion of the crops for their labor. [Taylor and West, 1975, pp. 79–80]

> By the turn of the century, this [traditional] way of life was under seige. As elsewhere, the coming of the railroad altered the foundations of the region's social structure. The bond of the railroad gradually integrated the isolated communities into a larger, Anglo-dominated world. On the Denver and Rio Grande came Anglo farmers, ranchers, and merchants who controlled an increasing share of the land and business of southern Colorado. . . .
>
> As rural patrones lost their special claims on wealth and status, these

> isolated societies were gradually compressed into a single class of subsistence farmers, herders, and laborers. [Ibid., pp. 94, 95]

Taylor and West have also provided an interesting description of a truly transitional case (ibid., pp. 81–86). In 1867 John Lawrence moved into the area to begin a career of farming and ranching. Within a short time he had developed the trappings of a patrón, with his own Chicano sharecroppers and *partidarios* and with the whole range of social and political obligations. Although his orientation was essentially capitalistic, Lawrence found that in moving into a peripheral area it was in his interest to adapt to the prevailing modes of economy and social organization. In harnessing this precapitalist pattern of labor organization to capitalist ends of accumulation and growth, however, he and others like him helped set the stage for the eventual undermining of the traditional patterns.

The *colonized sector* consists of Chicanos who are incorporated into the new capitalist economy of the Southwest, but on a subordinate basis. In the rural areas they could be found as nominally free wage labor on the railroads and ranches and in the mines, or in some cases in a kind of weak debt-peonage arrangement. In the cities they worked as laborers in various fields such as construction, and Chicanas were employed as domestics and laundry workers. This sector has been described in detail above.

The *marginal sector* refers to Chicanos who were strongly affected by the new economic order, but who were unable to find a place in that order. (The concept of marginality that I am using follows that of Nun [1969].) Briefly, a marginal group is superfluous to a given system of production in that it does not play a role within the system. Potential workers who are unemployed and have no prospects of finding work within a given system are thus defined as marginal. Chicanos in the peripheral sector were in areas where the economy had not yet been thoroughly transformed by American capitalism, but they were generally employed. Chicanos in the marginal sector were in areas where the economy had been transformed, but where their labor was not yet needed by the new order.

Camarillo has provided an account of one such marginal sector. Speaking of Santa Barbara Chicanos around 1870, he notes that

> their destiny was inextricably tied to the developing tourist-agricultural economic system of Santa Barbara. Since most Chicanos prior to 1880 were pastoralists, the tourist economy of the city and the agricultural development in the hinterlands placed the Spanish-surnamed worker in a precarious position outside any meaningful function in the burgeoning economy. [Camarillo, 1975a, pp. 9–11]

Apparently, a substantial number of Chicanos in the area found themselves in a marginal position in the 1870s, although this was not true of all

Chicanos who were displaced from their traditional economic pursuits. The Chicano unemployment rate during this period was phenomenally high. The same must have been true in other areas of the Southwest, although evidence is scanty.

The type of marginality found among the nineteenth-century Chicanos was transitory, however. The transitional period occurred after the disruption of the old order but before the new order had developed to the point of being able to incorporate all of the available labor power. With further development, the marginal Chicano was incorporated, usually into the colonized sector.

The *integrated sector* was at least theoretically possible, although few data can be cited to support its existence. This sector would consist of Chicanos who were incorporated into the Anglo capitalist economy on an equal or nonsubordinate basis—in other words, Chicanos who were integrated into the regular capitalist class structure. A Chicano worker who found himself in the noncolonized segment of the labor force would be in this sector. So would a small Chicano urban proprietor who was able to conduct his business on an equal basis with his Anglo competitors, or a Chicano rancher in similar circumstances. If such a sector existed in the nineteenth century, it was probably in the urban areas, where greater economic heterogeneity made a tight system of control more difficult to maintain. In the urban areas, also, there were more likely to be employers who did not depend heavily on minority labor and whose stake in creating and perpetuating a colonial labor force could be expected to be correspondingly weaker.

What little evidence there is for the urban areas, however, certainly does not indicate the existence of such a sector. The studies by Camarillo and Griswold del Castillo for two California urban areas show a marked degree of occupational stratification. The same is true for Barr's figures on San Antonio. In all these cities there was a small number of Chicano skilled workers, professionals, and proprietors, but there is no information on the conditions of their work. Griswold del Castillo reports on a case (in 1883) of Chicano workers who refused to work because they were paid $2 a day while Irish workmen on the same job got $2.50. He also notes that such wage discrimination seemed to be widespread (Griswold del Castillo, 1974, p. 82).

On the basis of such fragmentary evidence, it might be postulated that economic colonization of the Chicano was found everywhere, but on a somewhat weaker basis in the urban areas. Still, this must remain speculative until further evidence can be uncovered.