Eugenic Acculturation

Manuel Gamio, Migration Studies, and the Anthropology of Development in Mexico, 1910–1940

by
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In January 1939 the anthropologist Manuel Gamio toured the hinterlands of the Mexican border town of Matamoros, Tamaulipas, to examine the progress of the federal government's Valle Bajo Río Bravo agricultural development project and to conduct an anthropological survey of the region. Over the previous four years the government of President Lázaro Cárdenas had invested huge amounts of money in the construction of irrigation and flood control works in the Mexican half of the delta region of the Río Bravo (known as the Rio Grande on the Texas side of the border) in an effort to create a cotton-producing agricultural zone that would replicate the economic growth of other cotton regions in the borderlands. The project had the goal of easing the social problems caused by the crisis of the 1930s, the most important of which was the massive re-immigration, or "repatriation," of Mexicans from the United States to the border region (Carreras de Velasco, 1973; Hoffman, 1974; Balderrama and Rodríguez, 1995).

The report that Gamio produced was a regional study of the environmental and social conditions in Matamoros, to be used as a guide for settling repatriated Mexican workers from Texas as small farmers in this new irrigation district.[1] The anthropologist concluded:

> The repatriates will find in the regional population a higher cultural level than that observed in the Center and South of the country. Because of this there is no fear that they will regress culturally because of the influence of the new social environment. As examples of the superiority of the level of material life of the

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> inhabitants of the region we can cite the generalized use of shoes, pants, beds, etc. In the normal diet the consumption of wheat tortillas and meat is frequent. . . . The physical appearance of men, women, and children shows better biological development than that in the Center or South.

The development of the region was ensured, argued Gamio, by the cultural and biological progressiveness of both the region's inhabitants and the repatriates, most of whom were originally from northeastern Mexico and had migrated to Texas to escape the chaos of the Mexican Revolution (1910–1920).

In an article published in *América Indígena* 13 years later, Gamio (1952) reflected upon the immense success of the Valle Bajo Río Bravo project. Comparing it with a similar but unsuccessful state effort in the heavily indigenous Valle de Mezquital in central Mexico, he argued that the remarkable socioeconomic development of the border region was in large part due to the fact that "almost all of [the repatriated colonists] came from hamlets and *rancherías* in Tamaulipas and Coahuila, where there were never Indians to bequeath autochthonous ideas and traditions . . . so that racially, culturally, and psychologically they could be considered *criollos* (Spanish-Americans) in their mode of living and being" (Gamio, 1952: 219). He suggested that the bodies, work habits, and knowledge of Mexicans who had migrated to the United States were more advanced than those of their compatriots and that the repatriates would therefore have a positive impact on the society and economy of Mexico upon their return. According to this "integral" vision of development, the repatriates would make the northern borderlands (and Mexico as a whole) politically stable, economically prosperous, and more European and white.

Gamio's argument was based on no serious research and failed to take into account the importance of the exceptionally favorable conditions of the national and international political economy of cotton during the late 1940s and 1950s (Barlow and Crowe, 1957). The enormous boom of cotton agriculture that made Matamoros and many other regions of northern Mexico prosperous was part of a larger movement of cotton capital, most notably the enormous Anderson Clayton Company, from the southern United States into Latin America (Walsh, 2004). What concerns us here, however, is that, right or wrong, Gamio's understanding of integral development influenced the Mexican government's decision to invest in massive irrigated agricultural projects in its northern borderlands and settle them with migrants returning from the United States.

Where did these ideas about race, culture, and development—so jarring to the sensibilities of most intellectuals today—come from? This article

provides an answer to this question through an examination of how the migration of Mexicans in the early twentieth century was understood, by a "trans- national" group of intellectuals and state actors, as a development problem with political, economic, cultural, and racial dimensions and how this understanding informed the construction and colonization by the Mexican government of regional irrigated agricultural development projects in its northern borderlands. I trace this history of racial development thought and action through the work of Manuel Gamio: his publications, his participation in the Migration Studies Project (1923–1930) of the Social Science Research Council (SSRC), and his role in shaping the Mexican government's irrigation and colonization projects during the 1920s and 1930s. In his writings on migration and population Gamio presented a version of the concept of "acculturation" prominent at that time (Vincent, 1990: 197–212), which had both socioeconomic and biological dimensions and was essentially an evolutionary, anthropological formulation of the idea of development. This idea that acculturation had biological causes and effects and could be manipulated by the state underwrote projects by the postrevolutionary Mexican government to engineer development of the irrigation districts of northern Mexico. By tracing intellectual and institutional connections in Mexico and the United States during the early nineteenth century, it becomes clear that migrations from periphery to center were a source of anxiety and development intervention long before the mass movement that characterizes the current "globalized" era.

Among the features that distinguish the earlier discussion of migration from that unfolding today is the centrality of openly racial discourse. Race in Mexico has often been studied as an ideological and symbolic formation expressed in art, literature, medicine, and anthropology (Basave Benítez, 1992; Knight, 1990; Stepan, 1991; Stern, 1999; Urías Horcasitas, 2000; 2001a; Villoro, 1950). I contribute to this discussion by showing how Gamio's ideas about "integral" cultural, social, economic, and biological development were shaped by his interactions with his anthropology professor Franz Boas and a host of other U.S. intellectuals studying migration between 1900 and 1940. Boas, Gamio, and many of their contemporaries in Mexico and the United States shared the belief, rooted in Enlightenment humanism and the nineteenth-century evolutionary thinking of Lamarck, that environmental factors are fundamentally important to the biological and cultural development of human individuals (Harris, 1968: 80–87; Stepan, 1991; Stocking, 1982 [1968]).

Although the validity of the concept of race was a major topic of debate during the twentieth century, the central place of racial concepts in developmental and evolutionary thought is not often recognized by those who study

development (Ferguson, 1990; Escobar, 1995; Cowen and Shenton, 1996), perhaps because the reaction against the scientific racism and eugenics of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had succeeded in purging development thought of openly racial language by the end of World War II, when most anthropologies of development begin. I focus a good deal of attention on this history, but I also seek to show how this generalized understanding of development was given material, social substance in efforts by the fledgling Mexican state to forge peace and prosperity after the revolution by building irrigation zones in northern Mexico and settling landless and migrant Mexicans in them. By concentrating on Gamio I do not mean to argue that he was solely responsible for placing this concept in the minds of the planners and engineers working on the development projects of the Mexican state. Nor do I imply that ideas of race, migration, and development were the only or the most important factors in the decision to create irrigation zones in northern Mexico and to colonize them with repatriated Mexicans. Rather, I follow Gamio through the years between 1910 and 1940 to identify and describe the formation of a more widely held racial concept of development and discuss its relation to postrevolutionary state formation in Mexico.

MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE MEXICO–U.S. BORDERLANDS

Recent critiques of development discourse have made scholars aware of the role it has played in reproducing U.S. hegemony and social and economic inequalities in the years since World War II (Ferguson, 1990; Escobar, 1995). Nevertheless, the periodization employed in these studies makes it difficult to recognize the variety of forms taken by development discourse over a much longer time span, and the focus on the discursive aspects of these developmental relations tends to obscure the fact that the intellectual production of development ideas responds to material social processes (Edelman, 1999). To historicize and materialize the concept of "development," I place it in the context from which it emerged, that of rapidly growing industrial capitalism and its resultant unprecedented change, social disruption, and human dislocation (Cowen and Shenton, 1996). Three points about the concept of development used here are particularly important for understanding Mexico in the early twentieth century. First, development thought and action is reactive as much as it is proactive: it is a political and intellectual effort to remedy social disorder and coordinate forces of production and can be understood only in its social context. Faced with revolutionary social upheaval in the beginning of the twentieth century, Mexican intellectuals and state officials identified

migrants as a political threat in need of development. Second, developmental intervention requires that a privileged agent be responsible for orchestrating productive social relations and managing the process of historical change. This agent is usually the state, and development thought and practice lie at the heart of processes of state formation. Finally, the geographical movement of populations of workers and citizens is a principal concern of state development efforts, which often seek either to settle migrants or to manage their movement so as to make them more productive and less politically threatening. Development concern blooms in contexts of economic and social crisis, and developmental thought and action often grapple with the problem of relative surplus populations.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries technological innovations such as the telegraph, the telephone, and the railroad enabled a dramatic increase in the volume and velocity of movements of capital, commodities, and ideas (Harvey, 1989; Topik and Wells, 1998). These movements were accompanied by an equally large movement of working people, seen most notably in the great migrations from southern and eastern Europe to the Americas. Dominant European and North American free-market economists thought that labor markets, like those for other commodities, operated best when left unrestricted. But while migration was often left to its own devices, in some places the movement of labor was actively encouraged as part of a strategy to promote development. The governments of Mexico and other Latin American countries courted European and North American immigrants with offers of land, convinced that they would stimulate national progress (Aboites, 1995; Clark, 1998; González Navarro, 1974; Hale, 1968). Such development was conceived of in economic terms but also as a reshaping of societies, individuals, bodies, and minds. The pursuit of "progress"—the chimera of development—engendered intellectual and social projects deploying countless combinations of racial, spiritual, political, economic, and cultural elements (Bernal, 1997; Clark, 1998; Scott, 1998; Stoler, 1985). At the same time that migration from Europe to the Americas boomed, so too did migration northward from central and southern Mexico. Once uprooted from their towns and communities to take commercial agricultural jobs on neighboring plantations, wage laborers often made use of the newly built rail system to reach better-paying jobs in northern Mexico or the southwestern United States (Coatsworth, 1981; Friedrich, 1977). In northern Mexico, workers moved between ranching, industrial agriculture, industry, mining, and railroad construction (French, 1996; Katz, 1976). They were highly mobile and politically volatile (Meyers, 1998).

The dramatic increase in the migration of Mexicans northward in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries generated discord, discussion, and

political responses in Mexico and the United States. Laissez-faire declarations notwithstanding, in the United States not everyone was happy with unrestricted immigration. For example, popular fears of competition from, contagion by, and conspiracies among Asian immigrants were exploited by opportunist politicians to raise support for anti-immigrant parties in the 1860s and 1870s (McWilliams, 1968 [1942]; Saxton, 1971). Around the turn of the century, radical labor organizations such as the Industrial Workers of the World and political parties such as the Partido Liberal Mexicano gained influence among migrant workers in the borderlands, and rebellions erupted in areas of northern Mexico where large numbers of migrants worked (Hernández Padilla, 1984; Sandos, 1994; Taylor, 1992; Torres Pares, 1990). As a result, migrant workers in the U.S. borderlands—many of them Mexicans—were increasingly portrayed in the United States as a threat to political stability (McWilliams, 1968 [1942]; Mitchell, 1996). These concerns of U.S. intellectuals and politicians were closely linked to fears of racial, cultural, and social dissolution (Reisler, 1976), and in 1907 Congress formed a commission to investigate all these potential problems of immigration. At the same time, Mexican industrialists and government officials, alarmed by the possibility of labor shortages, suggested moving the national army to the northern border to prevent the exodus of laborers (Cardoso, 1976).

The Mexican Revolution—which began and was fought in the northern borderlands—marked a definite shift in the way migration and development were perceived in Mexico. Because huge numbers of Mexicans fled the violence by crossing the border into the United States, emigration, rather than immigration, was the primary concern of those formulating the new Constitution in 1917 (Alanís Enciso, 2000). And while previously migration had been seen as a solution to the labor shortages that were considered the major obstacle to economic growth, new thinking about migration focused on the threat to peace and prosperity ("progress") posed by a mass of highly mobile and politically volatile worker-soldiers in the northern borderlands. Rather than the lack of workers it was now their rebelliousness that preoccupied many economic leaders and government officials (Hart, 1978; Keremitsis, 1973: 27–28). In addition, a growing nationalism in revolutionary and postrevolutionary Mexico fueled efforts to liberate Mexican migrants from economic exploitation in the United States and provide them with livelihoods in Mexico (González Navarro, 1974: 223–239). This increasing nationalism would coincide, during the crisis years of the 1930s, with a wave of return migration from the United States that was seen as a severe threat. Drawing on information provided by Gamio, the immigration lawyer Ricardo Rivera's analysis of the development problem reached conclusions that represented the fears of many (1931: 178):

> Soldiers are always recruited among the unemployed, in the floating populations of the small towns and the ragged plebes of the cities. This human material of our revolutions will very quickly double with our repatriates, and it will not be a miracle if a new batch of generals emerges among us. . . . Either the government engineers some solution to this terrible question or it will fall as so many have fallen before it.

Such a solution was already being “engineered” by the federal government in the late 1920s. Fears of the revolutionary potential of “floating populations” supported a program of rural development based in the redistribution and colonization of agricultural land. The winners of the Mexican Revolution, northerners for the most part (Aguilar Camín, 1977; Carr, 1973), assumed that national progress depended on turning migrant and landless rural workers into property-owning, politically stable, middle-class small farmers and that it was the state’s responsibility to oversee this process. Leaders of the emerging postrevolutionary state responded with a major program of irrigation and colonization in northern Mexico (Aboites, 1987), one of the priorities of which was to settle repatriated migrant workers.

The efforts to “sedentarize” (Scott, 1998) migrants and remap the productive geography of northern Mexico formed part of a larger state project that also focused on the bodies and biology of migrants. At the same time that the mobility of the revolutionary masses was the object of state development intervention, so was their racial character. Without much empirical basis, many intellectuals painted the revolution as an Indian phenomenon (Knight, 1990) or blamed the social disruption on perceived biological and cultural shortcomings of mestizos (Urías Horcasitas, 2001b). The concern about the racial causes of national fragmentation fused with the diagnosis of migration as the seed of subversion in the analyses of state officials and intellectuals, and the government irrigation projects were designed to promote development in both arenas. One of the intellectuals whose ideas informed these projects was Manuel Gamio, and it is to the context and formation of his thoughts about race, migration, and development that we now turn.

RACE SCIENCE AS MIGRATION STUDIES

Gamio’s ideas about migration, development, and race were formed in the general historical context described above, and he contributed to that wider intellectual and political field. During the first few decades of the twentieth century, migration studies emerged as an intellectual and political response to quantitatively unprecedented flows of people across nation-state borders. The field of study was divided between a biological-psychological or racial

and a sociological-economic approach. This division was found among the scholars participating in the first large interdisciplinary project to study migration, funded by U.S. philanthropic organizations under the stewardship of the U.S. National Research Council (NRC). The division also characterized the migration research sponsored by the NRC's successor in migration studies, the Social Science Research Council (SSRC). As we shall see, Gamio's SSRC–supported research on Mexican migration straddled the line between racial and socioeconomic approaches and formed the basis of his intellectual interventions in the government's efforts to develop its northern borderlands.

The origins of the NRC's migration research lay in an earlier Committee on Race Characteristics established within its Division of Anthropology and Psychology. Unable to attract funding for the study of race, the committee recast its research focus as migration. At the same time, the chairman of the NRC's Division of Anthropology and Psychology, Raymond Dodge, proposed a project on migration that he hoped would respond to the interests of the NRC race scientists but also be eligible for outside funding.[2] The result of this project was the creation of a new Migration Committee that inherited the racial biological-psychological focus of its parent committee and many of its members.[3] In the conference organized to shape the research program of the committee, race was a major topic of discussion,[4] and it was decided that its biological subcommittee would "give special attention to the problem of race intermixture, such as results from migration" (Wissler, 1929: 5). Charles Merriam, a political scientist from the University of Chicago, spoke of immigration research as the "consideration of a race problem in the broadest sense" and emphasized the idea that good immigration policy could be based only upon a scientific understanding of "basic questions of racial relations and migrations."[5] Many of the lectures at the 1922 conference and much of the discussion revolved around ways to "regulate immigration in whatever way may seem most conducive to the highest development of the American nation and civilization."[6]

The idea of regulating immigration for these purposes was grounded in eugenic theories about the engineering of national races. Eugenics—the scientific effort to engineer changes in human populations—was the most notable version of race science of its time, and the United States's 1924 migration law was, in fact, put together with the help of some of the eugenicists funded by the NRC (Reisler, 1976; Stepan, 1991; Stern, 1999). In the language and thought of the period, "nation" meant "race" (Stepan, 1991), and "development" and "civilization" carried various mixtures of racial, cultural, social, and economic connotations. Some scientists studying immigration and race from this perspective believed that immigration led to the mixture of

genetically different groups, resulting in racial homogenization and causing the "degeneration" of white America. Others argued that it was instead the failure of immigrant groups to mix and assimilate that was a major impediment to the formation of national identity and political will in the United States. Robert Yerkes, who would direct the NRC committee until its transition to the SSRC, commented upon this contradiction: "We object to the *lack* of assimilation and, on the other hand, hold it up as a safeguard. We must face the issue," he declared, "Either we must look forward to a new type of race and try on the basis of investigation to predict the qualities and values of that race or we must restrict immigration." This either/or statement also attempted to identify the fine line between the more "pure" versions of racial science, on one hand, and policy-oriented eugenics, on the other. It was a line upon which he, his committee, and many other contemporary scholars of migration would constantly teeter.[7]

Despite some efforts to broaden its intellectual scope, the NRC Migration Committee was unable and unwilling to dilute the psychological, race-science focus it had inherited from its predecessor. This led the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial, which had funded the committee specifically to study migration, to cut off further financial support in March 1925.[8] As this was happening, however, a group of social scientists close to the NRC met to chart the course of a new, permanent body to channel and administer funding to social scientists. In early 1923 the foundations of the SSRC were established by Charles Merriam and a small group of scholars, and migration became the first major research topic of the fledgling organization.[9] The SSRC's Committee on Scientific Aspects of Human Migration both challenged and reproduced the racial thinking that had defined the NRC's Migration Committee. It established "Mexican immigration" as one of eight general "fields of inquiry" that would orient its funding decisions. But although all eight fields had to do with socioeconomic issues of migration, the committee shortly thereafter approved a project on "mental differences between races," described as "a sociological inquiry into the question of racial abilities" that "promised to yield results in the field of methods of research."[10] This focus on the development of research methods for analyzing racial differences echoed the interests of the NRC committee and attested to the pervasiveness of a race ideology that even the SSRC, with its explicit commitment to social and economic research, found difficult to avoid. Gamio, who in 1925 would be entrusted with pursuing the committee's research line on Mexican migration, also straddled this divide, with one foot planted firmly in the biological and one in the socioeconomic approach.

Gamio's interest in studying Mexican migrants in the United States was, to a large degree, his way of making a virtue out of a necessity. In the early

twenties he had conducted an anthropological study of the Teotihuacan region for the Anthropology Bureau of the Ministry of Agriculture, where he achieved some success in tailoring education, house building, and other aspects of development to the needs and resources of the indigenous population. Gamio considered it the model for a national program of rural development after the revolution, and he took a job in the Ministry of Public Education with the idea of replicating the project in other regions of Mexico. However, he soon butted heads with Mexican President Plutarco Elías Calles and his followers, and the conflict reached the point that he was forced to resign his position and look for work in the United States (Gruening, 1928: 661; González Gamio, 1987: 79–85).

Gamio's personal and professional contacts with key members of U.S. philanthropic and scientific organizations positioned him to be chosen to direct the SSRC's study of Mexican migration. When he left Mexico in 1925 he first went to New York, where he knew quite a few people from his days as a graduate student at Columbia University. From there he traveled to Washington, where he also had important contacts, including such prominent figures as Secretary of Agriculture Henry Wallace and the labor leader Samuel Gompers, both of whom were involved in the debates concerning migration.[11] In late 1925, after a period of fieldwork in Guatemala funded by the Washington Archaeological Society, Gamio returned to present the findings and to speak to his friend John C. Merriam, who was the director of the Carnegie Institute and chairman of the board of the NRC (Gamio, 1924). John's brother Charles was, as we have seen, one of the main figures in the formation of the SSRC and its Migration Committee.

Gamio was also close to anthropologists and sociologists at the University of Chicago because of his earlier contact with Frederick Starr and his new friendship with Robert Redfield. At that time Redfield was a graduate student working on a study of Mexican migration as part of a larger project, led by his professor and father-in-law Robert Park, studying immigrants in the United States. Charles Merriam was in the political science department at the University of Chicago, and the Chicago anthropologists Edith Abbott and Fay-Cooper Cole were the primary decision makers regarding the project on Mexican migration that was entrusted to Gamio. In August 1925 Cole—who, like Gamio, was a former student of Boas—called for an ethnography to be done in Mexico on potential immigrants and the social and cultural roots of migration.[12] The committee discussed the study of Mexican migration and decided that the first step was a "preliminary survey to determine on what lines these investigations ought to be undertaken."[13]

Gamio was chosen to direct the SSRC's Mexican migration survey because of his relationships with the Chicago and Washington intellectuals

and with Lawrence Frank, who directed the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial and managed the funding of both the NRC and the SSRC migration committees. In early December 1925 Frank invited Gamio to submit a "brief outline for a preliminary study or reconnaissance of the Mexican population in the U.S.,"[14] and at the next SSRC meeting Abbott presented Gamio's proposal, entitled "Antecedents and Conditions of Mexican Population in the United States and the Formation of a Program for a Definite and Scientific Study of the Problem," together with a "Mexican Peasant Communities Project" that was "prepared by Fay-Cooper Cole on behalf of Mr. Robert Redfield." According to the "feeling of the committee," Redfield's project was to be made part of Gamio's.[15]

The Gamio project was accepted in early 1926 and involved a U.S. component and a Mexican component. Gamio planned to spend six months in Mexico investigating the following questions:

> From what geographic localities in Mexico have the Mexicans come who have emigrated and are emigrating into the United States? What are the economic and biological backgrounds of these regions in relation to the development of human life? What is the state of civilization of the inhabitants of these regions? Is it analogous to, superior or inferior to the state of their civilization during the colonial period or the period prior to the conquest? What are the proportions of those emigrating to the United States classified racially as white, native, or mixed? What economic, social, political, or other factors have directly contributed to the emigration? Can this emigration be prevented by a change for the better in these factors?[16]

The other six months of investigations were to cover Mexican communities in the United States, with the purpose of comparing findings from the two contexts. Gamio expected that the results of this comparison would form a base from which academics and government officials would launch a more comprehensive policy-oriented study of the migration of Mexicans to the United States. This future study would, he promised, "determine the real nature of the problem presented by the contact between the Indo-Spanish and Anglo-American races and how the relations between these two races may be made more harmonious and mutually helpful." His final goal was humanitarian and developmentalist: "the improvement of the social conditions of the groups to be studied."

These phrases show that, like many of his era, Gamio framed Mexican migration as both a socioeconomic and a biological-racial question, but his perspective was not generated only by his contacts with other intellectuals studying migration at that time. He had inherited the tradition of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European and Mexican encylopedists and

statisticians who espoused the integrated study of society in all its aspects, and he was adamant that culture be included in socioeconomic studies made for the purpose of promoting development. His notion of development was quite close to the evolutionary concept of "civilization," well-entrenched among intellectuals since the nineteenth century, as a general process (and stage) of human cultural, social, economic, political, and biological advancement. Surprisingly, he was able to integrate these influences with some of the intellectual tendencies of his mentor, Franz Boas, who criticized the unilineal evolutionists and fought scientific racism at every turn.

GAMIO'S INTEGRAL, REGIONAL APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT

Gamio's use of racial language and concepts in the SSRC proposal quoted above is curious in that both his methods and his goals were much more sociological than biological. He shared with the migration scholars discussed earlier geopolitical concepts (nation, region) that were fundamentally based in ideas of race, but although he was interested in the "biological backgrounds" of Mexican regions this was presented more as an environmental question than as an anatomical one. In contrast to the anthropological migration studies of the NRC anthropologists Clark Wissler and Louis Sullivan, for example, Gamio's study of "races" did not include anthropometric analyses of skull or body size. Nor was this particular project the same kind of immigration-law-oriented population research as that of U.S. scholars of a nativist bent such as Robert Foerster and Harry Laughlin, both of whom were close to politicians in Washington who advocated the restriction of immigration (Stern, 1999: 77–79) and were also seriously considered for funding by the SSRC.[17] As we shall see, however, soon after he penned his SSRC proposal, Gamio would indeed contribute to the formulation of Mexican government immigration and colonization policy designed to promote the eugenic evolution of the Mexican population.

According to Nancy Leys Stepan, the racial thinking of Gamio, José Vasconcelos, and other postrevolutionary Mexican thinkers was part of a distinctive current of evolutionary thought that was neither purely derivative of European and North American versions nor purely reactionary against them (Stepan, 1991). Latin American race thinking was inspired by a strain of evolutionism based in the ideas of Lamarck, in which social and environmental factors were assigned primary importance in determining the biological characteristics of humans. The efforts at eugenic social engineering that emerged from this tradition in Latin America were often aimed at improving

public health through sanitation, child care, maternal education, antialcohol campaigns, and other measures that would allow people to realize their full biological potential (Stern, 1999).

Gamio had inherited this evolutionary perspective from nineteenth-century liberal intellectuals such as Andres Molina Enríquez (1997 [1909]; see Basave Benítez, 1992), but his theories and proposals also drew on similar ideas held by his anthropology professor, Franz Boas, with whom he studied at Columbia University from 1908 to 1910. Boas and Gamio are both known for struggling to bring progressive anthropological knowledge to bear on social problems, and both had some role in shaping state policy regarding migration. When Gamio was in graduate school at Columbia, Boas was formulating his attack on scientific racist thinking in anthropology. In fact, a central piece of Boas's argument against the fixity of genetic heredity was derived from his studies of 1908 that showed that the bodies of children of immigrants changed significantly because of the different environment in which they were raised (Boas, 1940). The stress placed by Boas on the role of environmental factors in biological development questioned the iron-clad principles of heredity that underwrote theories of racial hierarchy and white supremacy and, George Stocking (1982 [1968]) argues, was rooted in the same general Lamarckian intellectual climate that shaped Mexican anthropology at the turn of the century. In 1910 Boas accompanied Gamio to Mexico City, where, despite the outbreak of revolutionary turmoil, together they founded the Escuela Americanista Internacional (International Americanist School), dedicated to archaeological and anthropological research of the sort that Gamio conducted in Teotihuacan (Gamio, 1922; Godoy, 1977). Boas's *The Mind of Primitive Man*, his classic statement separating race and culture, and in 1911 and 1912 he gave a series of lectures at the National University of Mexico based on this book (Boas, 1911; Urías Horcasitas, 2001a). Boas returned to New York in 1912, but his continued influence on Gamio is evident in the chapters of *Forjando patria* (1964 [1916]), in which Gamio reproduced Boas's critique of racial supremacism.

Although Gamio embraced Boas's critique of racial prejudice, he did not adopt Boas's critique of the ways in which certain statistical forms of knowledge supported "racial formalism" (Stocking, 1982 [1968]: 168–181), and an evolutionary concept of racial "types" remained central to his developmentalist anthropology. Gamio argued that indigenous groups were biologically "deficient" or "abnormal" as a result of centuries of socioeconomic oppression, and he called for state-sponsored research dedicated to generating knowledge "in accordance with purified anthropological criteria: 1st, quantitatively: statistics; 2nd, qualitatively: physical type, language, and civilization or culture; 3rd, chronologically: precolonial, colonial, and

contemporary periods; 4th, environmental conditions: regional physiobiology" (1964 [1916]: 18). This knowledge would provide the bases for political and economic projects to encourage the "normal evolutionary development" of Indians (15). Only if their material, environmental conditions were improved, he argued, would the biological progress immanent in the bodies of those "physical types" be achieved.

Gamio added the environmental emphasis of Boas's critique of racial determinism to the understanding of the social, ecological determinants of evolution inherited from his predecessors in Mexico to argue for the possibility—and necessity—of shaping the physiology and culture of Mexicans through state development projects designed by anthropologists. These development efforts focused on the major social problems of the time, namely, revolutionary social turmoil and the massive migration of Mexicans to the United States. So while the Mexican Revolution raged Gamio issued a manifesto—*Forjando patria* (Gamio, 1964 [1916])—proclaiming the need for anthropological knowledge in the construction of a new Mexican state. He argued that the revolution was just one example of Mexico's "eternal governmental failures" (29), which derived from a lack of accurate statistical, anthropological knowledge of Mexico's population. And in his 1918 *Programa de la Dirección de Estudios Arqueológicos y Etnográficos* he made it the task of the agency (which he ran) to generate such knowledge. He incessantly championed—through the 1940s—the cause of obtaining accurate anthropological knowledge of the racial/cultural populations of Mexico as the basis for increasing agricultural production, securing political stability, improving the health and physical well-being of the indigenous population, and generally promoting the development of Mexico (1987 [1935]: 57–59):[18]

> [The] standard of living of more than 12 million people is deficient or semideficient, from the material point of view, which brings as a consequence the abnormality of its development in all aspects and principally in the biological. . . . The way to resolve such an inconvenient situation consists not only in procuring the economic improvement of this great mass but also in teaching it to raise its level of material culture.

By this reasoning, anthropological knowledge of the material living conditions—the environment and material culture—of the population was the prerequisite for achieving a more general biological and socioeconomic development.[19]

Gamio argued that the analysis of environment and physiobiology was the most practical way to identify and delimit racial/cultural groups, but he also brought his developmentalist state anthropology to bear on what he felt was a

neglected object of statistical inquiry: hearts and minds. Faced with social disturbances that Mexico's neoclassical statisticians (known as *científicos*) had simply failed to anticipate, Gamio advocated the study of the subjective, qualitative conditions of the Indian and mestizo populations of Mexico—their "true aspirations," their "souls" (1964 [1916]: 25, 29–30). He argued that the modern science of anthropology could provide the basic statistical knowledge for a wider, more successful project of cultural development and national state formation than that undertaken previously. This was a clear effort to make the bodies, hearts, and minds of Mexicans "legible" (Scott, 1998) to the national state.

In the publications that presented the results of the SSRC migration project (1930a; 1930b; 1931a; 1931b), Gamio identified the question of race as one for physical anthropology and put it aside. He had no new anthropometric, physiological, and pathological data and therefore declared that the "racial characteristics" of these groups could not be known and reproduced the conventional wisdom that Mexico had three races: Indian, mestizo, and European/white. The lack of information about mestizos was particularly problematic for his study, since mestizos, he argued, "probably form the majority of the immigrants" (1930a: xiv–xv). After conceding that more needed to be done, he then, following the lead of Boas, turned to the question of racial prejudice, arguing that prejudice against Mexicans and Mexican Americans prevented them from intermixing biologically and socially with white Americans (1930a: 56).

Although Gamio banished the physical description of race from these particular SSRC–funded publications on migration, racial categories returned in the guise of culture. Gamio identified "three cultural groups corresponding to the racial elements"—modern civilization, indigenous civilization, and mixed civilization—and arranged them in a hierarchy. Until about the mid-nineteenth century, he argued, the racial groups and the cultural groups were much more closely correlated, but the increase in spatial and social mobility during the late nineteenth century had made these categories less well-defined and eroded the correlation between space, culture, and race. To be sure, Gamio did not think that culture was entirely derivative of race and in fact argued that some of the most culturally advanced Mexicans were indigenous migrant workers in the United States. Thus while nineteenth-century thinkers often proposed that the immigration of Europeans would serve as a means to speed up the evolution of the Mexican racial nation because it would lead to their breeding with Indians and mestizos, in his SSRC–period migration work Gamio proposed the repatriation of Mexicans from the United States as a means to speed up the modernization of Mexican culture. Redefining the boundaries of education, Gamio argued that processes of

migration and acculturation could be harnessed for educative purposes, for the "modern" culture of repatriated migrants would act as a progressive influence on "deficient" indigenous ("pre-Columbian") and mestizo ("colonial") cultures (Gamio, 1931b; 1987 [1935]: 71–83). Disregarding the boundary between race and culture then under construction by Boas and his (other) students, he argued that this process of acculturation would have lasting biological effects, as the modernization of their material cultural living conditions would enable Indians and mestizos to achieve the development immanent in their races.

Around 1930 Gamio followed the lead of fellow Mexican Gilberto Loyo and others interested in questions of demography and eugenics by casting his migration research as population research.[20] He wrote two articles for the International Congress for Studies Regarding Population Problems, which were published in 1932 through the offices of the Italian Committee for the Study of the Problem of Population. In these works Gamio was not as careful as he had been earlier before to monitor the Boasian boundaries between race and culture. The problem with the evolution of mestizos in Mexico, he stated, was that "racial contact was quite far from being eugenic, and so the product of the mixing came out defectively and slowly" (1932a: 8). The solution was to "ethnically homogenize the heterogeneous populations, which will automatically bring their social, cultural, and psychic unification and the convergence of their necessities, attitudes and aspirations." Although evolution was an independent historical process, social science could intervene to encourage *mestizaje*. "Nor should a passive attitude of laissez faire be adopted," he argued, "because by means of the social sciences an intervention can be made toward an evolution of that [eugenic] sort, in the sense of transforming and even gradually replacing unfavorable factors" (1932b: 3). The eugenic component of Gamio's research on migration and development is clearly apparent in these writings on population.

In addition to his views on the imbricated nature of race, culture, and socioeconomics, the "regional, integral" dimensions of Gamio's anthropological thought stand out as particularly important to his ongoing efforts to facilitate development. Gamio espoused the study of society in its entirety, and he set the region as the spatial, ecological domain for such study. *Forjando patria* broadcast the idea that the government's ignorance of the population was a source of both its failure to raise the country's level of civilization and its failure to anticipate the revolution.[21] It was not enough, Gamio ceaselessly argued, to understand the economy and politics of a given region or nation if one ignored the people, their "races" and cultures. Developmentalist thought and action must, he felt, address all these aspects in an "integral" manner.

To make this sort of all-encompassing anthropological research and development feasible, Gamio seized upon the region as the spatial unit of analysis and intervention and defined the region in terms of a mix of biological/cultural and geographical/ecological factors. There was, he argued, an interdependence between the climatic conditions of a particular geographical area and the biology and culture of its inhabitants. In 1918 he wrote that "one can justifiably state that the Mexican population is a grouping of little known, abnormally developed regional populations" (1918: 16). In order to promote the integral development of Mexico's regional populations, he established an agenda for the Dirección de Estudios Arqueológicos y Etnográficos that included the study of racial characteristics for the purpose of "bringing together the races, for cultural fusion, for linguistic unification, and for the economic equilibrium of those populations, which only in that way will form a coherent and defined nationality and a true nation" (16–17).[22] Despite important changes in government and the national political climate, Gamio's integral regional approach showed remarkable continuity from 1917 to 1940, and his racially inflected, ecological concept of "integral, regional" development informed efforts to settle repatriated Mexicans in the regional irrigation systems built by the federal government during the late 1920s and 1930s.

GAMIO, IRRIGATION, AND SOCIAL ENGINEERING: THE DON MARTÍN PROJECT

Gamio spent the five years between 1926 and 1931 working on his SSRC migration study and published two books in English (1930a; 1931a) as well as a volume of migration statistics in Spanish (1930b). This involvement with an international community of migration scholars reinforced both the socioeconomic and the biological tendencies in his anthropology. Because of his engagement with international debates about migration and development, he was quite aware of the restrictionist climate in the United States regarding the immigration of Mexicans, and he devoted much of his energy to exploring the benefits of repatriating Mexicans in the United States back to Mexico, to colonize the irrigated agricultural zones. While some viewed Mexican exiles, emigrants, and repatriates as a potential political threat, Gamio argued that they were an important resource for the Mexican government and nation because they brought with them from the United States the industrial work discipline and production techniques of that country, as well as exaggerated nationalist sentiments developed in exile.

The construction and colonization of irrigation systems in northern Mexico were viewed by the postrevolutionary government as a way to jump-start

the economy, reduce political instability, and settle landless sharecroppers and migrant agricultural workers. In 1926 the government's Comisión Nacional de Irrigación (National Irrigation Commission—CNI) was created by a set of federal laws governing irrigation and colonization (Aboites, 1987), and it immediately began to build massive hydraulic works in various parts of northern Mexico and to colonize these irrigation zones with small farmers, including repatriates. Gamio was aware of the debates and plans surrounding this program during the 1920s (Gamio, 1926), and he designed his SSRC–funded migration project to inform it. In fact, the similarities between the interviews he designed for his research on migrants in the United States (1930a) and the interviews required of potential colonists by the CNI (1928) suggest that Gamio's research was meant to serve the specific purpose of helping in the selection of repatriated colonists for government irrigation programs (Devra Weber, personal communication).

Gamio's initial research was concluded in 1927, and his findings were presented as an oral report to the SSRC in September 1927 (Redfield, 1929: 433). By late 1928 he had submitted the manuscript of his 1930 book (Gamio, 1930a) to the University of Chicago Press, complete with an appendix discussing "causes for the failure of repatriation and colonization enterprises and suggestions by which this may be avoided." Redfield described the appendix as "a plan to encourage the repatriation of Mexicans long settled in the United States and their establishment upon public lands of Mexico" (1929: 438). Much of this public land was found in the new irrigation systems.

Gamio's ideas about "integral" development, migration, environment, acculturation, and race played an important role in the construction and colonization of at least two irrigation systems in northern Mexico, including what the director of the CNI during the 1920s considered the "most important" of all its projects—the Sistema de Riego Río Salado (#4), also known as Don Martín (López Bancalari, 1929: 37). The authors of the preliminary study for the Don Martín project had read Gamio's SSRC–period work and probably met with him, for they cited a large piece of an unpublished text of his concerning migration, repatriation, and colonization (CNI, 1930: 181). In accordance with the notion of "integral" development, the effort carried out in the Don Martín system to stabilize and develop postrevolutionary borderlands society had interrelated social, cultural, and economic dimensions. Ownership of land was the key to creating modern, productive citizens, it was thought, and the colonization of these irrigation zones with small farmers was seen by the CNI as "a civilizing action, for the dual cultivation of the land as well as its inhabitants" (1931: 390). The CNI hoped to use much of the land to "rehabilitate" landless peasants so that, as one engineer put it, "today

they would be sharecroppers and tomorrow, property owners" (Rangel, 1931: 526). Along with this new class the CNI planned to create a sizable agricultural working class that would be settled in small rural communities of five to ten families, each on its own property (CNI, 1931: 390). To counter individualist tendencies arising from private property ownership, the inhabitants of the new irrigation districts were grouped into *ciudades agrícolas* (agricultural cities) and *poblaciones agrícolas* (agricultural settlements), in which the government could concentrate its subjects, its investment, and its social and cultural development efforts (Orive Alba, 1944). The CNI planners argued that the engineering of space in the irrigation zone would promote progressive, collective sentiments and social relations between individual farmers (CNI, 1931: 390–391).

The ideas about repatriation and acculturation that guided the colonization are strikingly similar to Gamio's. He believed that the Mexican repatriates were technologically and culturally progressive and that this productive culture needed to be harnessed by the state to promote development. He explained that the return of workers to Mexico could serve as an enormous educational system in which the repatriates would be the "teachers of life in general" (Gamio, 1987 [1935]: 72). The problem with such a model of progressive acculturation, however, was that the reverse of it was also possible. Repatriates usually failed to prosper in Mexico, he maintained, because when they returned to their communities of origin they returned, through negative acculturation, to the cultural level of the majority of Mexicans (Gamio, 1930a: 236; 1987 [1935]: 71–83). He reasoned that regional irrigation systems would constitute enclaves of progress that encouraged repatriated colonists to reproduce their progressive culture and industrial work habits and isolated them from the regressive social milieu of the Mexican countryside. As he expressed it, "to take lasting advantage of whatever these men have learned in the United States, large, organized centers some distance away from centers of the old type would be necessary" (1930a: 50). These "isolated rural centers" (1987 [1935]: 76), populated by repatriates from Texas, were the agricultural settlements created by the CNI engineers working in the irrigation districts of the borderlands (Orive Alba, 1944). The urban hub of the Don Martín system, Ciudad Anáhuac, was one such settlement. While the repatriates settled in Ciudad Anáhuac were saddled with the responsibility of educating their neighbors and countrymen, the government took on the job of ensuring that the material culture and social space of the settlements and households in its new regions encouraged this process of developmental acculturation.

Race was an inseparable element of the complicated amalgam of socioeconomic, cultural, and biological understandings of space, ecology, migration, and colonization that characterized the developmental thinking of Manuel Gamio and the engineers of the CNI in 1930, and the idea that the population of northeastern Mexico was predominantly European in racial origin led them to believe that it would be especially responsive to state-led development. Alejandro Brambila argued that "the region's dwellers are similar in every way to those of the rest of the borderlands of the states of Nuevo León and Tamaulipas; they are of Hispanic ancestry, white, bearded, with caucasian features, tall and robust. . . . Irrigation will undoubtedly bring them uncountable benefits that they will know how to take advantage of" (1930: 22–23). This kind of regional irrigated development, it was imagined, would both safeguard the eugenic acculturation achieved among the repatriates during their exile in the United States and help the local populations fulfill the destiny of progress immanent in their biology and culture.

As we have seen, Gamio shared the beliefs of the CNI engineers in the racial/cultural progressiveness of the inhabitants of northeastern Mexico and the need to ensure their eugenic acculturation through the engineering of regional spaces. He was also involved in planning two such projects: the Don Martín and the Matamoros. The importance of racial ideas to the concept of development implemented by Gamio and the CNI engineers is apparent, as well as their fusion with categories of geography, culture, and economy. The "Hispanic," white nature of both the repatriates and the existing population of northeastern Mexico was considered an important basis for eugenic acculturation, and these popular beliefs about the racial-cultural whiteness of northern Mexico found expression in the colonization and spatial engineering of government development projects.

CONCLUSION

The *norteño* leaders who formed and controlled the Mexican state after the revolution were well acquainted with the social problems of northern Mexico and made their resolution a priority of development efforts. They sought to continue the rapid economic growth experienced in the southwestern United States and northern Mexico during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries while avoiding the creation of a politically unstable floating population of workers in the region. Regional irrigation projects such as the Don Martín were created to house the progressive small farmers of the new agrarian north, who were settled in carefully engineered social

spaces in order to reinforce their progressive tendencies and facilitate "integral, regional" actions by the Mexican state to accentuate their eugenic acculturation.

The CNI's program of social engineering in the borderlands of northern Mexico was guided by a concept of development that included strong racial and environmental aspects, a concept that was widely held but perhaps best articulated by the anthropologist Manuel Gamio. The colonization of the CNI's irrigation systems with repatriates was backed by the idea—common among rulers and ruled alike—that these northerners were culturally, economically, and racially more progressive than their compatriots in the Center and the South of the country. The state's efforts to develop northern Mexico through the construction and colonization of the Don Martín and Matamoros irrigation systems gave material expression to those ideas about integral regional development and reinforced the popular idea that the North was whiter and more progressive than the rest of the country.

The lengthy textual citations of Gamio's work in the preliminary study for the Don Martín project and his authorship of a similar study for a similar project in Matamoros provide concrete evidence that the many similarities between Gamio's thinking and that of the engineers and government officials responsible for postrevolutionary development in northern Mexico are not simply coincidences. But this clear connection should not lead us to believe that Gamio was the only person thinking about these issues or that these ideas originated with him. We have seen that Gamio inherited a Lamarckian evolutionary perspective from Mexican and North American predecessors such as Andrés Molina Enríquez and Franz Boas and that he was involved in international discussions during the 1920s and 1930s about immigration, eugenics, and development. But Gamio did not simply reproduce the ideas he encountered, as is made clear by his use of Boas's argument about the influence of the environment on human biology to argue for the possibility of promoting a eugenic *mestizaje* by managing processes of migration and acculturation.

Instead of viewing him as the sole creator of racial development ideology in postrevolutionary Mexico, we should view Gamio as an intellectual who gave voice to more generalized currents of thinking about acculturation, development, space, and social engineering. At the same time, however, he was unquestionably the single greatest influence in institutionalizing anthropology in the postrevolutionary state apparatus and integrating an anthropological notion of culture into the domain of state knowledge. By locating Gamio in his political-intellectual context, we can understand his words as the best-articulated and politically most important expression of a more widespread understanding of the role of culture and race in the politics of migration and development in postrevolutionary Mexico.

NOTES

1. Manuel Gamio, "Consideraciones previas sobre posibilidades de colonización en las zonas del 'Valle del Bajo Río Bravo,' 'Colombres No. 1' y 'La Sauteña, Edo. de Tamaulipas" (2-13-39), Archivo General de la Nacion, Mexico City (hereafter AGN); Ramo Presidentes, Fondo Lázaro Cárdenas, 565.4/1940.

2. Transcript of the NRC biology subcommittee conference of 1922, Appendix 1 of the "Report to Committee on Scientific Problems of Human Migration submitted by Frank R. Lillie," Rockefeller Archive Center, Tarrytown, NY (hereafter RAC); Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial (hereafter LSRM), series 3, subseries 6, box 59, folder 634.

3. Established in October 1922, this migration committee took as its primary tasks "(1) carefully to consider, from the point of view of natural science, the complex migrational situation resulting from the World War and from the virtual elimination of space as a barrier to movements of man and to race intermixture; (2) to prepare a research program which might reasonably be expected to yield ultimately such reliable information concerning physical, mental and social characteristics, relations and values of ethnic groups (races or peoples) as is necessary for the understanding and wise regulation of mass-movements of mankind; and (3) to initiate, organize, support, coordinate, or otherwise further in accordance with the best judgment of the group, important investigations" (Yerkes, 1924).

4. The conference, held on November 18, 1922, brought together a truly diverse group of people: professors of psychology, economics, and climatology, representatives of the War Department, NRC researchers, and a pair of assistant surgeons general. All citations from the conference are taken from the "Conference Proceedings," RAC, LSRM, series 3, subseries 6, box 58, folder 629.

5. "Appendix 1, Report to Committee on Scientific Problems of Human Migration Submitted by Frank R. Lillie," RAC, LSRM, series 3, subseries 6, box 59, folder 634.

6. William McDougall, "The Problems of the Unassimilated Groups," RAC, LSRM, series 3, subseries 6, box 58, folder 629.

7. In 1914 Yerkes himself published a book that used a statistical method of recording "family traits" devised by C. B. Davenport, a eugenic "extremist" (Stepan, 1991: 96) who was the director of the eugenics project funded by the Carnegie Institute (Allen, 1986). Davenport sat with Clark Wissler—a student of Boas—on the NRC Migration Committee. In the words of his assistant, Harry Laughlin, Davenport's Eugenical Record Office "planned ultimately to index all of the defective, the especially peculiar, and the especially talented blood in the American population" (Laughlin, 1912: 216). Laughlin, who in 1921 was appointed "expert eugenics agent of the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization of the House of Representatives," also participated in the NRC conference (Stern, 1999: 77). He was more dedicated to the eugenics project than Yerkes, and his vision was more sinister than that of Davenport. In December 1922, a month after the NRC conference, Laughlin published *Eugenical Sterilization in the United States*, a sober assessment of the legal issues, medical techniques, and social uses of sterilization (Laughlin, 1922). In April 1925, the NRC's Migration Committee would recommend its second-largest grant award ever—$13,500—to Laughlin for eugenics research and migration studies.

8. Memorandum, Guy Stanton Ford (3-25-25), RAC, LSRM, series 3, box 58, folder 631.

9. The SSRC appointed the first members of the Committee on Scientific Aspects of Human Migration on May 17, 1924. Mitchell to Ruml (10-12-25), RAC, LSRM, series 3, subseries 6, box 68, folder 710. The committee included three members of the NRC Migration Committee: Mary Van Kleeck of the Russell Sage Foundation, Clark Wissler of the American Museum of Natural History, and Robert Yerkes. Nine more members were appointed: Wesley Mitchell,

Charles Merriam, Edith Abbott (Anthropology, Chicago, committee chair), John Commons (Economics, Wisconsin), John Fairlie (Illinois), Robert Foerster (Princeton), Edward A. Miller (Ohio State), Frederick Ogg (Wisconsin), and Carl Wittke (Iowa).

10. "Appendix D, Committee on Scientific Aspects of Human Migration," minutes of SSRC meeting (4-4-25) RAC, SSRC, accession 1, series 9, box 349, folder 2077.

11. Manuel Gamio to Ramón DeNegri (5-20-24), Fondo Plutarco Elías Calles, Archivo Calles/Torreblanca, Mexico City (hereafter PEC), expediente 38, inventorio 2210, legajo 1/6.

12. A project suggestion by Ethel Richardson, of the California State Board of Education, was presented as well, entitled "Investigation of Mexican Immigration and Casual Labor in the U.S.," Proceedings of the 1925 Hanover Conference, Committee on Problems and Policy, pp. 67–71, RAC, SSRC, accession 1, series 2, subseries 1, box 307.

13. "Minutes of the Third Meeting of the Committee on the Social Aspects of Human Migration (11-7-25)," RAC, SSRC, accession 1, series 1, subseries 19, box 191, folder 1134.

14. Lawrence Frank to Manuel Gamio (12-4-25), PEC, expediente 38, inventario 2210, legajo 1/6.

15. "Minutes of the Fourth Meeting of the Committee on the Social Aspects of Human Migration, December 27, 1925," RAC, SSRC, accession 1, series 1, subseries 19, box 191, folder 1134, p. 489. "The Report of the Committee on the Scientific Aspects of Human Migration," RAC, LSRM, series 3, subseries 6, box 68, folder 711.

16. "Appendix 4 to the Report of the Committee on the Scientific Aspects of Human Migration," RAC, LSRM, series 3, subseries 6, box 68, folder 711.

17. Foerster, an expert on the Southern Cone, sat on the SSRC Migration Committee in 1924 and was "unanimously" supported by the committee to head up a Latin American project. Apparently he could not commit the time, and Gamio was later selected. "Memorandum to Professor Merriam from Edith Abbott," RAC, LSRM, series 3, subseries 6, box 68, box 711. Foerster felt that Gamio's arguments for the progressiveness of Indians and against any "essential incapacity" were unfounded (Foerster, 1925: 15) and instead maintained the stance that "the Indian races, so far as can be known to-day, provide a less valuable stock for the responsibilities of citizenship in a civilization maintained by European white stocks than such white stocks themselves provide. At the best they can be described as competent within limits to abide by such civilization but as apparently almost never competent to advance and even sustain such a civilization" (43).

18. A long-standing goal of Gamio's was to perfect a way to define racial/cultural groups statistically and measure them in a census. By the 1930s he had discarded language and physical appearance as too mutable to serve as indicators of race and seized upon the statistical analysis of material culture as the method by which the Mexican state could determine the racial composition of the Mexican nation and identify the groups that needed development (Gamio, 1987 [1935]: 135–139; 1937).

19. Confronted with the immense task of surveying material culture for all of Mexican society, Gamio would turn back to language as the defining aspect of indigenous or mestizo social identity in order to create a census of the indigenous population in the 1940s (Gamio, 1942a; 1942b; 1942c).

20. During the SSRC's 1927 annual conference, the Committee on Scientific Aspects of Human Migration was renamed the Committee on Population to give it broader scope and to steer it toward the kind of demographic research being promoted under that banner at the time. Although it never really gathered much steam, the committee marked a resurgence of racial-biological approaches to the study of migration.

21. As a result of this critique, the Anthropology Bureau of the Ministry of Agriculture and Development was created in 1917, with Gamio in charge. "Programa del Instituto de Estudios

Sociales," Manuel Gamio, 1934, Archivo Histórico de la Secretaría de Educación Pública, Mexico City, Instituto de Orientación Socialista, box 3954; 3093/37.

22. This was a three-step process: "1st. Gradual acquisition of knowledge about the racial characteristics, the manifestations of material and intellectual culture, the languages and dialects, the economic situation, and the conditions of the physical and biological environment of the regional populations, past and present, of the Republic. - 2nd. Investigation of the means adaquate for developing the present economic, physical, and intellectual development of those populations. - 3rd. Preparation for bringing together the races, for cultural fusion, for linguistic unification, and for the economic equilibrium of those populations, which only in that way will form a coherent and defined nationality and a true nation" (Gamio, 1918: 16–17).

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