Histories of indigeneity, blackness, and mestizaje after the 1910 Revolution usually begin with Manuel Gamio and José Vasconcellos. Frequently anointed as the “father of Mexican anthropology,” Gamio established the terms of debate for postrevolutionary indigenous policies when he declared in 1916, “To incorporate the Indian we should not attempt to ‘Europeanize’ him suddenly; on the contrary, we must ‘Indianize’ ourselves a little in order to present to him our civilization, already diluted by his, which will make ours no longer appear exotic, cruel, bitter, and incomprehensible to him.”¹ These words, as well as his position directing the Bureau of Anthropology, set in motion a modern ethnographic project to study all the nation’s peoples and cultures. In short, he concluded, the Mexican state could only govern justly and democratically once ethnographers charted the nation’s indigenous and mestizo culture areas. There was one notable absence: in the 1910s and 1920s, he failed to see blackness as part of the national mosaic.²


² Gamio eventually realized the value of studying Mexico’s African heritage. As Chapter 4 explains, he asked anthropologist Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán to study the nation’s African heritage in 1942. However, the origin of this request is unclear. As I argue in this chapter, Gamio’s suggestion was a substantial deviation from his historical and ethnographic
In 1925, after the Revolution’s violence had subsided, José Vasconcelos conceived of an alternative vision of national unity, one that paid homage to the history of African slavery. He fancifully predicted in *La raza cósmica* that Mexico and Latin America more generally would soon climb to the pinnacle of human progress, as the first civilization to combine all the races of the world—black, Indian, Mongol, and white—into one biological and cultural type. This version of postrevolutionary mestizaje, which he honed while running the SEP, acknowledged the presence of African-descended peoples in Mexican history and implied that their cultural and biological footprints pervaded Latin America’s racial superman.

Accordingly, Vasconcelos’s polemic has often been the point of departure, particularly among US academics, for the study of black identity in twentieth-century Mexico. Claiming he sought to make blackness disappear, and therefore whiten the nation, they have lambasted his utopian prediction as a racist reformulation of the nineteenth-century racial models honed by historians, archeologists, and armchair ethnographers.³ While this criticism is correct, it is not sufficient; such scholarly reprobation takes Vasconcelos out of his Mexican context, where most nationalists, like Gamio, assumed black disappearance and failed to broach the subject at all.⁴ Moreover, to view blackness only through Vasconcelos’s cosmic formulation reduces postrevolutionary notions of race, culture, and nation to the musings of an individual whose influence would wane and who would soon be a reactionary at the margins of nation-state formation.

Indeed, in the 1920s, there was no singular theoretical basis for the integration of African-descended peoples and cultures into Mexico’s historical narrative and its cultural landscape. The myriad constructions of

discussions of African-descended peoples and cultures in Mexican and world history in the 1910s and 1920s.


⁴ Regarding the importance of understanding Vasconcelos’s context with more historical nuance, see Juliet Hooker, *Theorizing Race in the Americas: Douglass, Sarmiento, Du Bois, and Vasconcelos* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 164.
blackness immediately following the 1910 Revolution were the unintended byproducts of the prerevolutionary conceptions of race and world history that Gamio, Vasconcelos, and others of their ilk selectively embraced and rejected. Since independence, nineteenth-century liberals championed equality under the law and venerated the abolition of slavery and caste, even when they glorified European civilization as the apex of human achievement. These doctrines left emancipated slaves and their descendants without the ability to use race to negotiate with the state. African-descended peoples either had disappeared (as some decreed) or would disappear (as others hoped) amid the inexorable course of mestizaje. Whether these historical and ethnographic accounts were assumptions or prophecies of racial assimilation, they nonetheless rendered blackness socially invisible, left to be historical emblems of a bygone era, a civilizational model, or a cultural identity, either regional or foreign, but never to be a pillar of modern Mexican nationalism. This was the political, cultural, and historiographic context for Vasconcelos’s musings on blackness and for Gamio’s mapping of the nation’s indigenous and mestizo communities. With the trope of black disappearance permeating Mexican social science, any discussion of blackness as Mexican in the 1920s was a radical act sitting on the fringes of postrevolutionary racial formations.

LIBERALISM, ABOLITION, AND BLACK DISAPPEARANCE

Declaring the abolition of slavery and caste was a hallmark of liberal nation-state formation during and immediately after the wars of independence. Father Miguel Hidalgo y Castillo, the Catholic priest whose September 16, 1810, cry for independence initiated the war against Spain, advocated for almost immediate emancipation in addition to the abolition of Indian tribute. The following year, fellow insurgent Ignacio López Rayón decreed that “slavery will remain completely proscribed” and that all Mexican citizens “will not be hindered by anything but personal fault.”5 These credos reemerged in 1813, when another priest, the African-descended José María Morelos y Pavón, abolished slavery and the caste system in his famous Sentiments of a Nation in Chilpancingo.

Finally, on September 15, 1829, in commemoration of Hidalgo’s declaration of independence, the African-descended President and General Vicente Guerrero abolished slavery.

In between, politicians announced more moderate laws accelerating the pace of emancipation. In the 1821 Plan of Iguala, Emperor Agustín de Iturbide explained that caste identities would be forbidden, even though his vision for the new Mexican state was dominated by creoles (Spaniards born in the Americas) rather than the multiracial troops Hidalgo and Morelos had led into battle. Debates about abolition continued when the Atlantic slave trade ended in 1824. To continue the process of gradual abolition in 1825, Guadalupe Victoria, Iturbide’s successor, emancipated the slaves who had fought for Mexican independence and gave others the right to buy their freedom. In this spirit, and until Guerrero abolished slavery, national leaders annually freed a few slaves in honor of Hidalgo’s 1810 declaration.

The frequency with which liberals celebrated the abolition of slavery points to the ideological weight the founding fathers ascribed to it. Blackness, which the Spanish introduced to the New World as enslaved labor to replace the dwindling indigenous population, was fundamentally at odds with the basic tenets of the new nation. In outlining his vision for a Mexican constitution in 1813, Morelos decreed, after abolishing slavery and caste in the fifteenth point of his Sentiments of the Nation, “that the only distinction between one American and another shall be that between vice and virtue.” By affixing the abolition of slavery to the reformulation of social categories, he and his fellow insurgents rejected the Spanish caste system, an ad hoc assemblage of geographic, religious, biological, phenotypical, and occupational terms used to denote ancestry, purity of blood, and social status. Usually described in sets of sixteen, the caste system often began with the following five iterations:

The child of a Spaniard and Indian is called Mestizo.
Of Mestizo and Spaniard, Castizo.

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7 Torget, Seeds of Empire, 144.

As racial exogamy continued, an array of nonsensical terms, like Chinese and Wolf, permeated this genealogical wordplay, even if they did not make their way into colonial society with any uniformity. According to Mexico’s founding fathers, these odious, divisive terms needed to disappear and be replaced by the egalitarian and homogenizing futures that mestizaje made possible.¹⁰

In the decades following independence, the memory of the abolition of slavery and caste did not wane. The lettered elite often quoted these foundational emancipatory proclamations. It was as if their mere inclusion in the national narrative verified the ideological bona fide of the author and the state itself. In 1871, lawyer, politician, and archeologist Alfredo Chavero placed Mexico’s independence-era heroes within a global history of slavery from prehistoric man to the transatlantic slave trade. After referencing the abolitionist spirit in Pennsylvania and the British Empire, which abolished the Atlantic slave trade in 1808, he quoted Father Hidalgo’s emancipatory proclamation. Morelos continued the fight, but, for Chavero, his words needed to be more than repeated. A facsimile of his “vulgar but expressive” denunciation of slavery from October 5, 1813, accompanied the text. The nation’s history of abolitionist statements carried more weight in the abstractions of ideology than in the everyday realities of Mexican society. After all, the demographic peculiarities of Mexican slavery minimized the social and economic reverberations of these pronouncements. In Chavero’s estimation, the soon-to-be independent country was a society with slaves, not one dependent on them: in 1805, only 10,000 individuals were still in chains.¹¹

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¹⁰ Ben Vinson expertly discusses the ambiguities within the caste system and their legacies after independence in Before Mestizaje.

¹¹ Alfredo Chavero, “Decreto del Sr. Morelos aboliendo la esclavitud,” in Boletín de la Sociedad Mexicana de Geografía y Estadística, second series, vol. 3 (Mexico City:
This egalitarian narrative continued during the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz (1876–1910). In the 1880s, Vicente Riva Palacio, the grandson of Vicente Guerrero, took up the daunting task of compiling an official national history to justify the political stability Díaz brought to Mexico. Previously, civil wars and foreign interventions by the United States, France, Britain, and Spain had left the country in political and economic ruins. Completed in five volumes in 1889, México a través de los siglos quoted, cited, and reproduced these abolitionist decrees as well as other canonical historical and visual artifacts. In doing so, it set the terms for Mexican historiography for decades.12 Writing the history of Mexican independence, Julio Zárate noted that a few African-descended peoples along the coasts joined Morelos and Guerrero in fighting against the Spanish. These insurgents, the individuals who benefited most directly from abolition, however, were such a small segment of the population that there was no need to discuss them once they had been freed. An excerpt of Hidalgo’s decree in Guadalajara on November 29, 1811, abolishing slavery, tribute, and corporate rights, paved the way. Zárate elevated Hidalgo’s goals to the lofty ideological sphere of “human liberty,” particularly since slavery was, for Zárate, “the shame of history.” References to the abolition of slavery and caste continued with Morelos, who wanted to replace the caste system and its slanderous depiction of Americans, Asians, and Africans with race-blind signifiers. Reinforcing the symbolic value liberals gave to independence, Zárate included the same facsimile that Chavero had reproduced in 1871.13

Throughout the nineteenth century, fantasies about indigenous and black disappearance lurked beneath the egalitarian veneer of abolition. Although military generals and liberal theoreticians frequently paid homage to leaders like Cuauhtémoc, who valiantly fought against Hernán Cortés, they cast creole elites as the patriots who founded the

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12 Historian Enrique Florescano effectively explains that the approximately 2,000 images accompanying México a través de los siglos forged a visual and archival narrative that anchored Díaz’s dictatorship; see National Narratives in Mexico: A History, trans. Nancy Hancock (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006), 292–309. Also see José Ortiz Monasterio, México eternamente: Vicente Riva Palacio ante la escritura de la historia (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2004).

13 D. Julio Zárate, La guerra de la independencia, vol. 3 of Riva Palacio, México a través de los siglos, 18, 185, 287, 406–11, and 468.
Mexican nation. Pre-Columbian indigenous empires were at best historical and cultural symbols of national greatness. Their grandeur, symbolized by ancient artifacts housed at the National Museum, had little to no relationship to what, in 1836, the liberal historian José María Luis Mora called the “state of wretchedness, dejection, and stupidity” that characterized contemporary indigenous communities. Indigenous legal, political, and social visibility had to disappear, for its endurance could only signify the Mexican state’s inability to forge “equality under the law for all castes and races.”

These social yearnings also sanctioned black disappearance. Liberals eager to overcome Spanish racial policies and conservatives fearful of caste insurgencies hoped African-descended citizens would also assimilate into a new mestizo populace. Just pages after Mora blamed the Spanish for the indigenous population’s lamentable conditions, he declared that the black population “had almost completely disappeared.” Because of their demographic scarcity and geographic isolation, the few who remained along the Atlantic and Pacific coasts were “entirely insignificant.”

The continuation of caste categories in states with larger black populations, such as Guerrero, Oaxaca, and Michoacán, confounded liberals throughout the century. The evaporation of black and indigenous...
populations always seemed to be a demographic ideal that was on the horizon.\textsuperscript{18} It was on the tips of the pens of liberals, such as German immigrant and Veracruz plantation owner Carl Sartorius. Conforming to nineteenth-century conceptions of biological race in 1859, he wrote, “The African race, which is but slightly in Mexico, has such very marked characteristics, that it may be recognized in spite of every intermarriage, by the woolly hair, thick lips, and compressed nose.” Recent migrations from Louisiana, Cuba, and other slaveholding regions of the Caribbean rendered blackness more visible in port cities. Yet, mestizaje would eventually overwhelm this black social visibility, particularly because African-descended peoples were, in his opinion, not suitable for Mexico’s more temperate climate. “In time,” he predicted, “the black race will disappear altogether.”\textsuperscript{19} In 1892, Enrique Herrera Moreno similarly explained that in Córdoba, Veracruz, “the pure black race, vestige of the slaves of the colonial period, is prone to disappear through its crossing with the other races.”\textsuperscript{20} While Mexicans gave various justifications for black disappearance – chiefly demographic insignificance, climate, and mestizaje – they nonetheless assumed the inevitability of black social invisibility.

Once policy makers and intellectuals determined that blackness had disappeared, slavery’s social and demographic footprints no longer needed to be discussed. For example, in 1858, the renowned mapmaker Antonio García Cubas noted that there were 201 purely African people and another 10,000 with some African heritage in the state of Tamaulipas. Oaxaca was home to another 4,500 people who descended from slavery.\textsuperscript{21} By 1884, his sociological categories lacked these racial scripts.


\textsuperscript{18} Regarding the liberal desire to make indigeneity disappear, particularly through the disentailment of communal lands, see Emilio H. Kouri, “Interpreting the Expropriation of Indian Pueblo Lands in Porfirián Mexico: The Unexamined Legacies of Andrés Molina Enríquez,” \textit{Hispanic American Historical Review} 82, no. 1 (February 2002): 84–87.


\textsuperscript{20} Enrique Herrera Moreno, \textit{El cantón de Córdoba: Apuntes de geografía, estadística, historia, etc.} (Cordoba: Tip. “La Prensa” de R. Valdecilla, 1892), 27.

\textsuperscript{21} Antonio García Cubas, \textit{Atlas geográfico, estadístico e histórico de la República Mexicana} (Mexico City: Imprenta de José Mariano Fernández de Lara, 1858). For a discussion of the origins of the \textit{Atlas} and its significance, see Raymond B. Craib, \textit{Cartographic Mexico:}
Data about the size of the country’s largest cities better served liberal projects to industrialize the country. With race absent, the countryside receded into the background of a nationalist history represented by the deeds of great men: the Catholic priests, Spanish viceroys, and heroes of independence, who predictably were of Spanish ancestry.22 Blackness vanished—and, since its disappearance was foreordained, no explanation was required.

By the turn of the century, policy makers and academics had assumed black social and demographic invisibility. Scientific theories of race—defined through some combination of biology, environment, and behavior—hardened under Díaz’s dictatorship. Society itself was a living organism, and Díaz’s policy makers, nicknamed “the scientists,” believed they could increase the pace of national evolution by improving public education, teaching all Mexican citizens about modern hygiene and nutrition, and curtailing the immigration of undesirable racial communities, such as those of African or Chinese origin. Mexican historians, archeologists, and armchair anthropologists plotted world history as a series of great civilizations that began with ancient Egypt; continued with Greece, Rome, and India; and culminated with Europe.23 Biological homogeneity, these late nineteenth-century social scientists presumed, begat national unity, and whiteness signified national progress.

After 1882, Díaz decided it was necessary to use state coffers to study the national populace and chart the most expedient path toward European modernity. The 1895 and 1900 censuses therefore counted

22 Antonio García Cubas, Cuadro geográfico, estadístico, descriptivo é histórico de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos (Mexico City: Oficina Típ. de la Secretaría de Fomento, 1884), 11–12 and 391–470. This narrative omission is also present in volumes 3, 4, and 5 of Riva Palacio, México a través de los siglos. However, in his volume on the colonial period, Riva Palacio noted that African-descended peoples were still visible “among the mestizos of the Gulf and Pacific, and in the interior lands we call hot.” See Riva Palacio, El Virreinato, 480. As María Dolores Ballesteros Páez explains as she recounts foreign observers’ discussions of African-descended Mexicans in the decades after independence, there was no consensus on how many people were black; see “La visión de viajeros europeos de la primera mitad del XIX de los afromexicanos,” Cuicuilco Revista de Ciencias Antropológicas, no. 69 (2017): 191–93.

23 For example, see N. León, La enseñanza de etnología en el Museo Nacional de México (Mexico City: Imprenta del Museo Nacional, 1906), C8–C19, UDLAP-SACE-FMQ; Justo Sierra, Historia general, vol. 11 of Obras completas (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1948). For a broader context regarding this global history of human civilizations, see Patrick Manning, Navigating World History: Historians Create a Global Past (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 30.
how many individuals spoke indigenous languages, Spanish, and twenty-two foreign languages. Assuming linguistic assimilation, the state failed to provide a category for its African-descended peoples.24 Similarly, in 1898, Eduardo Noriega placed African-descended peoples outside the nation’s demographic parameters, which consisted of indigenous, racially mixed, and foreign peoples.25 By 1902, liberal historian Justo Sierra had eschewed blackness entirely. In synthesizing Riva Palacio’s México a través de los siglos, he characterized Mexico as mestizo, the exclusive mixture of the Spanish and the indigenous.26 Taking cues from imperialist paradigms of civilization in 1904, he placed Europeans at the pinnacle of human development. Africans were extraneous to world history. They, he implied, belonged to the category of savage people who “are material for sociological anthropology, not that of history.”27

Finally, writing about Mexico’s agrarian problems in 1909, on the eve of the Mexican Revolution that overthrew Díaz, lawyer and sociologist Andrés Molina Enríquez cast blackness as irrelevant to society. In his seminal book, Los grandes problemas nacionales, he deconstructed the liberal racial scripts that anticipated black and indigenous disappearance. Although indigenous and African-descended peoples were less evolved than the mestizo citizenry who would carry the nation toward modernity, only indigenous communities needed to be studied; their social and demographic presence—in other words, their inability to disappear—demanded that the government protect them. Contemporary Mexico consisted of “the indigenous, the creole, and the mestizo.” Conversely, people of African descent were “insignificant,” only needing to be addressed “when it would be opportune.” This perspective carried over into his analysis of world politics. Africa and Oceania, he opined, were only relevant as abstractions, “because, in international politics, these two continents do not signify anything now, and they will not signify anything for many centuries.”28

24 Loveman, National Colors, 103, 109, and 135–37. There were exceptions, of course. For example, Antonio Peñañafiel noted that in the Municipality of Mexico, there were three people, two men and one woman, who had been born in Africa; see Estadística general de la República Mexicana (Mexico City: Ministerio de Fomento, 1890), esp. 890.
25 Eduardo Noriega, Geografía de la República Mexicana (Mexico City: Librería de la Viuda de Ch. Bouret, 1898), 225.
27 Sierra, Historia general, 23–24.
28 Molina Enríquez, Los grandes problemas nacionales, 292 and 348. For analyses of Molina Enríquez’s indigenous policies, see Kouri, “Interpreting the Expropriation of
RACIAL COMPARISON AND THE MEXICAN–AMERICAN WAR

Liberal claims of black disappearance were often comparative. In the decades immediately after independence, mestizaje sat in contrast to the Spanish caste system. However, by the 1840s, the United States blossomed as the foil to Mexican claims of racial harmony. Texan independence set this pillar of Mexican racial formation in motion. Since 1819, and at the behest of the Spanish empire and then the Mexican state, Anglo settlers like Stephen F. Austin and Sam Houston migrated to Texas to establish a modern cotton economy and to protect this sparsely populated region from Comanche raids. After Vicente Guerrero abolished slavery in 1829, many colonists protested, claiming that the Mexican government violated their constitutional rights to property – in other words, to own slaves – before declaring their independence in 1836. For many Mexicans, abolitionists in the United States, and African Americans, this conflict was more question of slavery and abolition than it was of federalism and centralism. As such, in Mexico, national pride was at stake. For instance, National Guard units in what would eventually become the state of Guerrero placed Afro-Mexican and indigenous federalists alongside mestizos and Afro-Mexicans in favor of a more centralized state. When Mexico lost the northern half of its country following the Mexican–American War (1846–48), the comparison between Mexico’s claims of racial harmony and the hardening color line in the United States proved inescapable.  

During the war, Mexican newspapers published articles wondering whether a victorious United States would enslave African-descended Mexicans and possibly other nonwhite citizens. At the most extreme, some feared that the United States would incite a race war. The belief...
that Mexico was morally correct to resist US expansion encouraged some to keep fighting once Mexico City fell in 1847 and defeat appeared inevitable.\(^{30}\) Conservative historian Lucas Alamán hyperbolically argued that Mexico’s geopolitical position adjacent to slaveholding states placed the nation strategically at the center of global politics about slavery, abolition, and social justice. “Do not think,” he exclaimed, “that the consequences of the future fate of Mexico are limited only to this republic; they include territorial and commercial interests of the highest importance for the European powers and for the maintenance of a principle that England has been so determined to establish, that all other nations have adopted with ardor, and to the observance of which they have been tied by the most solemn treaties: the abolition of slavery.” A strong state able to rebuff US expansion would preserve the race-blind freedoms granted to all African-descended, indigenous, and mestizo citizens. Internationally, a sovereign Mexico would be the primary bulwark against slavery’s expansion.\(^{31}\)

Writing positively about Mexican racial formations in 1852, the abolitionist historian José María Torne y Mendivil noted that the liberal project aimed “to establish a barrier between Mexico and the United States, where slavery was maintained in open contradiction to the principles solemnly proclaimed in its Declaration of Independence in 1776.”\(^{32}\) In the wake of this embarrassing defeat, Mexican liberals under the leadership of Benito Juárez, a Zapotec Indian, reaffirmed Mexico’s devotion to abolition in the Constitution of 1857: the first article asserted Mexico’s belief in the rights of man, and the second proclaimed the state’s dedication to the abolition of slavery.\(^{33}\)


\(^{32}\) José María Torne y Mendivil, *Breve reseña histórica de los acontecimientos más notables de la nación mexicana desde el año de 1821 hasta nuestros días* (Mexico City: Imprenta de Cumplido, 1852), 85. On Torne’s attempts to abolish slavery in 1824, see Torget, *Seeds of Empire*, 144.

\(^{33}\) Historian Karl Jacoby examines the Constitution of 1857 from this transnational perspective in *The Strange Career of William Ellis: The Texas Slave Who Became a Mexican Millionaire* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2016), 17–18. Liberal Mexicans continued to compare slavery in the United States and Mexican abolition for decades after the Mexican–American War, even after the Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery in the United States; for example, see D. Enrique Olavarría y Ferrari, *México independiente*, 1810–1940.
After the US Civil War, Jim Crow segregation replaced the expansion of slavery as the rhetorical foil to Mexican racial formations. While blackness had theoretically disappeared from Mexican society, it remained visible in legal statutes and could be found scrawled on signs across the United States. For Justo Sierra, the infamous slogan “for whites, para blancos” broadcast the country’s racial problems and ideological inconsistencies. Traveling through the United States on the eve of the Plessy v. Ferguson Supreme Court decision that legalized segregation, he simultaneously sympathized with the oppression African Americans encountered daily and used his firsthand observations to buttress nineteenth-century racial tropes about their inferiority. The United States’ egalitarian credos rang hollow. In practice, democratic government, he commented, “is a dream; a democracy is an aristocracy constantly assaulted by those who want to enter it.” However, racial tolerance did not accompany his disdain for the color line. He cast pure-blooded African Americans working in Washington, DC, hotels as “dirty and ugly like a low class devil,” whereas New York City’s racially mixed mulattoes were “clean, elegant, and nice.” As both a critique of the United States and a reference to stereotypes of black incivility, he went as far as to exclaim that African Americans would enslave the white population if they ever were to take control of the nation’s capital.\(^\text{34}\)

Despite its claim to racial egalitarianism, Mexican society was not free of racism. Alberto María Carreño best illustrates this racial chauvinism. Shortly before the 1910 Revolution, he spoke to the Mexican Geographic and Statistic Society about a proposal to bring 20,000 African Americans from the United States. For forty years, Mexican policy makers had debated whether African American laborers with knowledge of cotton production could help northern Mexico develop a capitalist economy, prevent Indian attacks, and deter further US territorial acquisition.\(^\text{35}\) These claims did not convince Carreño, who inveighed against what he called a black threat. Like many

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\(^{34}\) Justo Sierra, *En tierra yankee (Notas á todo vapor)* (Mexico City: Tipografía de la Oficina Impresora del Timbre, 1898), 20, 21, and 122.

intellectuals across the Atlantic, he disregarded slavery’s pernicious structural legacies and the racist assumptions that diffused throughout postemancipation societies. Freed slaves and their descendants in the United States and Cuba, he argued, were “lazy and indolent” laborers prone to criminality and race war. He echoed the historical philosophies espoused throughout the nineteenth century that minimized the agency of Africans and their descendants across the globe. African Americans and Afro-Cubans, he concluded, “lack history” and “intellectual development,” and therefore “descend into barbarism.” Deprived of any positive traits, African-descended migrants could only hinder the social and cultural advancement of the Mexican nation.36

AFRICA, AFRICANS, AND MEXICO’S FIRST SETTLERS

The certainty of black disappearance fueled all branches of Mexican social science. In 1862, José María Melgar y Serrano unwittingly entered these debates when he visited the rural village of San Andrés Tuxtla, Veracruz, in search of indigenous antiquities to sell to collectors or to display in the National Museum. When a farmer showed him a partially disinterred artifact, what archeologists would eventually call an Olmec head, he stumbled upon a sculpture that catapulted blackness into liberal histories of pre-Columbian Mexico. With large lips and a flat nose, the immense head conjured stereotyped images of African phenotypes ubiquitous in physical anthropology texts and ethnographic accounts (See Figure 1.1). The nineteenth-century conflation of race, place, and biology verified the head’s African pedigree. Melgar had limited information about Mexico’s pre-Columbian roots and even less about the sculptors of this half-buried object.37 He did little with the artifact, which itself was too large to move, even though it kept his attention for years. “As a piece of art,” he explained

in 1869, “it is without exaggeration a magnificent sculpture.” “But what amazed me the most,” he continued, “was the Ethiopic type it represented; I thought that undoubtedly there had been blacks in this country, and this had been at the beginning of the world: this head was not only important for Mexican archeology, but also for the world in general, since it revealed a fact whose consequences were already evident.”

The giant head forced archeologists and historians to retell the history of the first Mesoamericans and thus the first inhabitants of Mexico. For decades, archeologists had been unearthing pre-Columbian artifacts to examine the racial, cultural, and historical contours of indigeneity and

\[\text{Figure 1.1 Colossal head, no. 1, “El Rey,” 1200–900 BC, San Lorenzo Tenochtitlán, Veracruz. Museo de Antropología de Xalapa/Catálogo digital, Universidad Veracruzana.}\]

mestizaje. They had considered the Mayans to be the mother civilization for all of Mesoamerica. Every known ancient indigenous society – like the Aztec, Zapotec, and Maya – lacked anything resembling the head’s unique, ostensibly African facial features. Without a viable explanation for its genesis within Mesoamerica, the Western Tradition, or Asia, archeologists assumed the facial features they interpreted as Ethiopic proved the migration of Africans to Mexico long before Christopher Columbus arrived in the Caribbean. In 1880, historian Manuel Orozco y Berra thought these discoveries underscored “the problem of the origin of the American population.” At the heart of the issue was the question: “Were there blacks in America?” Citing Melgar’s work, he established a historiography built on the assumption that the colossal head was “exactly the black type,” sculpted with “the deliberate intention to represent the Ethiopian race.” He was not so kind to these African migrants once they crossed the Atlantic by way of Atlantis. Their presence was neither a feat of human ingenuity nor proof of a grand African civilization; rather, it was the product of the wind and water currents that transported the unsuspecting travelers to Mexico.

Alfredo Chavero also used the head to discuss the historical and mythological origins of human civilizations in the Western Hemisphere. Archeologists needed to discard most of the theories, what he called “absurd hypotheses,” that enlivened previous accounts of the first indigenous inhabitants. Previously migration across the Bering Strait, Carthaginian voyages, wandering Jews, and the mythical land of Fusang founded by Buddhist monk Hoei Shin had captivated those fascinated with Mexico’s first settlers. The union of two or more continents, whether via land bridges from Asia and Oceania or Atlantis, was possible. The


question was not whether Africans had made it to the Americas – for that was already confirmed – but whether they had arrived before the first indigenous communities. Archeological digs at Teotihuacán, the head from San Andrés Tuxtla, and the research done by scholars like Orozco y Berra provided all the evidence Chavero needed. He determined, “the swollen and flat nose and the protruding lips” on these artifacts “could not apply to any individuals except those of the black race.” His analysis of the African head and the people who carved it concludes with a discussion of disappearance. In language often utilized to explain how nomadic, seemingly more evolved indigenous societies, like the Aztecs, conquered other civilizations in central Mexico, he stated that this first society in the Americas “presents themselves to us as an expelled race,” which left no clear imprint on national identity.  

42 Theories about the irrelevance of Africans in world history and about black disappearance distanced contemporary Mexico from these pre-Columbian African settlers, thereby leaving mestizaje safely affixed to the nation’s indigenous past and European future.

**BLACKNESS AND REVOLUTIONARY MEXICO: AT HOME AND ABROAD**

When, in 1910, Francisco Madero led a political revolution to overthrow Porfirio Díaz and reinstate democratic elections, no one presumed that blackness would capture the attention of those in search of a more inclusive nation-state. Taking up arms in search of political power, land reform, community autonomy, or socio-economic mobility, many local and regional elites across the country followed Madero’s lead. Insurgents came from all sectors of society, from wealthy landowners to middle-class businessmen and impoverished rural communities; they were male and female, indigenous and mestizo. There was also a much smaller group of African-descended revolutionaries, including a few African Americans who joined Francisco “Pancho” Villa, a popular leader in northern Mexico who, some believed, possessed African ancestry.  

43 In the 1920s,
the revolutionary violence subsided, and a new state apparatus emerged under Adolfo de la Huerta, Álvaro Obregón, and Plutarco Elías Calles, three Sonorans who rose to national prominence as a result of the previous decade’s political factionalism and who, in succession, occupied the President’s chair from May 1920 to November 1928. They assassinated some regional and national leaders like Villa and either exiled or, when it was suitable, integrated others into the state bureaucracy to institutionalize the 1910 Revolution’s aims as expressed in the Constitution of 1917. At the same time, intellectuals like Manuel Gamio and José Vasconcelos maneuvered the growing, albeit underfunded, state infrastructure while they shaped the racial and cultural parameters of postrevolutionary indigeneity, mestizaje, and blackness.44

The relationship between the countryside and Mexican modernity established itself not only as a fundamental issue for the making of a mestizo nation but also as one of the most nettlesome. Questions about how to integrate indigenous communities into the nation were bandied about and have remained touchstones of Mexican social science and policymaking ever since. At one extreme were ideas like those expressed by Vasconcelos, who wanted the state to assimilate indigenous peoples into a homogenous mestizo nation whose aesthetic expressions would mirror the Western Tradition.45 Others, like Gamio, embraced a more pluralist vision of contemporary society. Which indigenous cultures, they asked, should the state preserve? Setting the terms of debate for indigenous integration, Gamio famously declared in 1916, “To incorporate the Indian we should not attempt to ‘Europeanize’ suddenly; on the contrary, we must ‘Indianize’ ourselves a little in order to present to him...
our civilization already diluted by his, which will make ours no longer appear exotic, cruel, bitter, and incomprehensible to him.”

The national preoccupation with indigeneity did not have an obvious parallel with blackness. At best, there were fears that any reference to a so-called black problem would manufacture one that endangered the nation’s claim to racial egalitarianism. In fact, no one was critiqued for failing to mention African slavery or its cultural footprints. Its absence was the point of departure for any inquiry into the postrevolutionary recognition of Mexico’s African heritage. To discuss blackness therefore was a conscious act, a choice for intellectuals like Vasconcelos to describe a history and to reintroduce communities that liberal scripts had erased from the national landscape. Of course, the same can be said for others, like Gamio, when they chose to ignore blackness. As these scholars and policy makers established the racial, cultural, and political contours of mestizaje, they had to decide which tenets of nineteenth-century social science were valid and which needed to be replaced with new ethno-graphic theories, historical narratives, and aesthetic judgments. In other words, they had to decide which pillars of black disappearance were relevant to postrevolutionary nation-state formation and which they needed to discard as pseudo-science.

Almost all research into Mexico’s relationship to the African Diaspora begins with José Vasconcelos’s 1925 *La raza cósmica*, a polemic based primarily on his travels through South America in 1922. While his description of blackness in Mexico was the most literal reincarnation of prerevolutionary racial fantasies, his spiritual conception of humanity uniquely brought the cultural dynamics of mestizaje to the forefront of postrevolutionary statecraft. As the first Director of the SEP between 1921 and 1924, he shaped the ideological and aesthetic parameters of nation-state formation. He founded rural schools to give isolated indigenous communities a sense of national pride, commissioned murals to detail the nation’s history on the walls of government buildings, and gave composers the institutional support to combine indigenous, popular, and classical inspirations into a transcendent auditory experience. Like his liberal predecessors, Vasconcelos cast his policies in contrast to US segregation, which he had experienced as a child living in Eagle Pass, Texas. Fearing

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46 Gamio, *Forjando patria*, 172.  
that bilingual education, for instance, would create a nation filled with indigenous reservations akin to those in the United States, he embraced assimilation as a cornerstone of nation-state formation.\(^4^9\) In *La raza cósmica*, he divided humanity into “four stages and four trunks: black, Indian, Mongol, and white.” Conceiving of race at the intersection of international relations and human evolution, he declared that each group had dominated global affairs at one time in history, with Caucasians, particularly Anglo-Saxons, being the most advanced and currently enjoying a global preeminence buttressed by racial segregation. In the next and last stage of historical development, the cosmic race – the fusion of these four racial groups – would replace Britain and the United States as the global hegemon. All four races, he predicted, would supply their best cultural traits and liberate themselves from their worst. In sum, racial mixture would bring humanity into its golden age.\(^5^0\)

A philosopher moored to nineteenth-century pseudo-scientific ideas that described racial progress in relation to environmental factors, Vasconcelos echoed the prerevolutionary intellectuals who envisioned black disappearance as a fait accompli. As he explained in *La raza cósmica*, black blood was “eager for sensual happiness, drunk with dance and unbridled lust.” African-descended peoples in Latin America would eventually disappear through a “voluntary extinction,” first whitening themselves by becoming mulattoes, then blossoming into a racially mixed cosmic superman. Abolition advanced this assimilationist project; it symbolized “a universal human sentiment” capable of overcoming racial division. “Hidalgo, Morelos, Bolívar, Pétion the Haitian, the Argentines in Tucumán, Sucre,” Vasconcelos averred in a distinctly liberal fashion, “all were concerned with liberating the slaves, with declaring by natural right the equality of all people, the social and civic equality of whites, blacks and Indians.”\(^5^1\) However, liberals failed to enshrine these lofty goals, for


\(^{50}\) Vasconcelos, *La raza cósmica*, vigesimoquinta ed. (Mexico City: Colección Austral, 2002), 16.

\(^{51}\) Ibid., 28, 31, and 43. It is not surprising that Vasconcelos echoed many nineteenth-century tropes about black disappearance. He read many of the intellectuals, such as
blackness had not yet disappeared, as he lamented during his Norman Wait Harris Memorial Foundation lectures at University of Chicago in 1926. Blackness was still present in tropical regions, including along the coasts of Mexico, which were “largely mulatto, a mixture of the Spanish and the Negro.” Its survival was “probably the most vital problem for the future of our whole continent – perhaps even the most vital for the future of humanity at large.”

Anthropologist Manuel Gamio accompanied Vasconcelos to the University of Chicago. In contrast to his colleague, Gamio failed to reference Mexico’s history of African slavery and its legacies in contemporary society. The modern ethnographic methods that he introduced to Mexico have likely obscured this omission. Numerous historians and anthropologists have pointed out that he wanted modern anthropology, as an applied science, to integrate the indigenous into a united mestizo nation more than his mentor anthropologist Franz Boas did. In 1916, at the peak of the revolutionary violence, Gamio penned that a well-functioning government needs “to know the characteristics of individuals and groups in order to attend consciously to their needs and improve them.”

Despite Gamio’s unwillingness to address blackness as Mexican, his project to document and integrate the nation’s peoples and cultures – and the intellectual networks that surrounded it – elucidate the myriad constructions of blackness that wove in and out postrevolutionary social science just before, during, and immediately after the 1910 Revolution. As such, his ethnographic project sat at the confluence of prerevolutionary paradigms rooted in black inferiority, biological evolution, and national homogeneity, on the one hand, and the modern ethnographic methods

Antonio García Cubas and Vicente Riva Palacio, who established this national narrative; see Blanco, Se llama Vasconcelos, 22.


Gamio, Forjando patria, 45–46.
that inveighed against such cultural and racial assumptions, on the other.\textsuperscript{55} He gave primacy to Mexico’s indigenous heritage and its subsequent fusion with European cultures: Mexican culture emerged from “pre-Hispanic” and “foreign” elements. Because of their “important influences” on Mexican society, the people of Central America, the United States, South America, Spain, and France merited special recognition. Africans were absent from his version of Mexican history and were invisible in contemporary society. Defined by European colonialism, slavery, passivity, and social instability, they only deserved mention as part of “the history of the other countries in general, no matter how remote or close, because all peoples are influenced by each other.”\textsuperscript{56}

Gamio’s opaque references to Africa did not align with the conclusions about African civilizations espoused by Boas and other modernists in New York City in the first decades of the twentieth century, when the New Negro Movement caught the eye of some of the intellectuals, artists, and writers of Gamio’s generation. Boas famously divorced culture from biology, thereby transforming the nineteenth-century paradigms that used physiology and ancestry to rank cultures into pseudo-scientific musings not representative of the human condition. Each race, Boas stated and Gamio restated, possessed the same natural abilities as every other. For Boas, European communities on both sides of the Atlantic were not the most evolved, and African societies, whether in the Americas or Africa were not, in any absolute terms, the least. Anthropologists needed to evaluate every community on its own terms. “To those unfamiliar with the products of native African art and industry,” Boas explained in 1911, “a walk through one of the large museums of Europe would be a revelation.” Turning to the African craftsmen that armchair anthropologists had disregarded, he continued, “The blacksmith, the wood-carver, the weaver, the potter, – these all produce ware original in form, executed with great care, and exhibiting that love of labor, and interest in the results of work, which are apparently so often lacking among the negroes in our


American surroundings . . . All the different kinds of activities that we consider valuable in the citizens of our country may be found in aboriginal Africa.”

Boas’s celebration of African plastic arts illustrates the broader social and cultural transformations that Gamio likely encountered during his sojourns to New York City. With African Americans migrating from the rural south, and with thousands of Afro-Caribbean migrants arriving annually, New York City blossomed as a space for African-descended cultural expressions to flourish and to inspire cultural producers and ethnographers thirsty to transcend nineteenth-century racial models. Although Harlem’s transformation into a thriving Afro-diasporic community and downtown’s modernist reinterpretation of African American life did not captivate Gamio, it did catch the attention of other Mexicans, including caricaturist and expatriate Marius de Zayas. Having already embraced the Parisian art scene that Boas referenced, de Zayas was the first curator to display African sculptures for Manhattan’s cosmopolitan elite in December 1915. Similar to Boas, modernist artists like Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, and de Zayas presumed African primitiveness, even while they refashioned it as something capable of enlivening Western aesthetics. For de Zayas, Africans had “no history.” A continuation of nineteenth-century racial tracts, his civilizational model separated Egypt and North Africa – the regions that historically had been in contact with the great empires of Greece, Rome, and the Middle East – from the rest of the continent, which despite having slight variations in its spiritual practices and aesthetics was made up of the psychologically homogenous “Negro Race.” Accordingly, he used European colonial boundaries, not African politics or cultural expressions, to map sub-Saharan Africa (See Map 1.2). In modernist terms, his exhibits helped recast the African

57 Franz Boas, *The Mind of Primitive Man* (New York: Macmillan, 1911), 270. Despite embracing Boas’s assertion that all races had the same capabilities, Gamio also stated, in language typical of turn-of-the-century Latin American social science, that environmental factors allow people in certain parts of the world to be more advanced than those living in other regions; see *Forjando patria*, 37–38.


reliquary masks and other plastic arts frequently assumed to be ethnographic objects as inspirations for new artistic forms. These artifacts captured during imperial adventures became pieces of art in their own right, ready to share the spotlight with Western masters like Édouard Manet, Paul Cézanne, and Vincent Van Gogh.  

When Gamio arrived at Columbia University in November 1909, he too was versed in the social scientific paradigms that relegated African-descended peoples to obscurity. But, unlike de Zayas, Gamio did not escape these tenets of Porfrian social science. He had studied archeology at Mexico’s National Museum of Archaeology, History, and Ethnology, where he was part of the first cohort to take classes in ethnology in 1906. Because he and his fellow students were beginning to undertake fieldwork unearthing pre-Columbian artifacts and observing contemporary indigenous communities, Nicolás León, one of Gamio’s professors, rewrote the curriculum to highlight ancient history. African civilizations found a place on the syllabus in 1907, when León added a unit on the “Black or Ethiopic trunk,” which itself consisted of several ethnic groups: the Sudanese, Bantus, Negritos, Bushmen, and Hottentots. Although these culture areas pushed back against homogenizing assumptions of a single African biological, historical, and cultural type, they also provided greater credence to the nineteenth-century assumptions that specific indigenous civilizations, like the one Melgar unearthed in the 1860s, had their origins in Africa. Accordingly, Gamio’s introduction to the peoples and cultures of Africa was nothing more than a rehashing of nineteenth-century armchair anthropology. It was certainly neither a modernist reevaluation of African historical agency nor a relativist introduction to ethnographic methods.


61 “Programa del curso de etología del Museo Nacional de México: Segundo año” (1907) (C8–21), Obras de Dr. N. León #14, UDLAP-SACE-FMQ. Regarding León’s discussion of pre-Columbian Africans among the Tarascan peoples of west central Mexico, see
Upon Gamio’s arrival to New York City, Boas quickly recognized that his protégé lacked a sufficient foundation in modern ethnographic techniques. Unsurprisingly, their perspectives on African-descended peoples and cultures differed dramatically. Whether or not Boas and Gamio discussed the NAACP or the contributions of Africans to humanity is unclear. Gamio only defended African-descended peoples and cultures within broader condemnations of racial hierarchies. Absolute conceptions of racial inferiority and superiority could not permeate the ethnographic mapping of Mexico’s peoples and cultures, as Gamio explained when he lashed out against Porfirián Secretary of Foreign Affairs Francisco Bulnes in the pages of El Universal in 1921, the year he received his PhD in anthropology from Columbia. In articles published on March 1 and 3, Bulnes described the deficient work habits of African-descended and indigenous peoples to explain the poor social, economic, and political conditions found in Mexico and other Latin American nations. However, he reserved the most scorn for people of African descent, who were the least evolved and whose work habits, he believed, had only declined after emancipation. Within days, Gamio responded, condemning Bulnes for adhering to “the old and unsustainable postulate that there are irredeemable inferior races fatally condemned to disappear.” Modern social science had concluded that “all races are equally capable of assimilating into modern civilization.”

Nicolás León, Compendio de la historia general de México: Desde los tiempos prehistóricos hasta el año de 1900 (Mexico City: Herrero Hermanos, 1902), 30–31. For a discussion of the National Museum’s pedagogies as well as León’s intellectual trajectory, see Cházarro, “From Anatomical Collection to National Museum”; Rutsch, Entre el campo y el gabinete, 103–9 and 144; and Vinson, “La historia del estudio de los negros en México,” 42–43. Ángeles González Gamio examines Gamio’s relationship with León in Manuel Gamio: Una lucha sin final, 2nd ed. (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2003), 33–34.

Rutsch, Entre el campo y el gabinete, 245–46.


Manuel Gamio, “Las pretendidas razas inferiores de México,” El Universal, 4 de marzo de 1921, Record ID: 737290, ICAM-MFAH.
By the 1920s, Gamio’s application of Boasian thought created a theoretical and methodological space for Mexican social scientists to discuss African-descended peoples and cultures. In 1924, he made his most direct statement about the discrimination African Americans faced in an issue of *Survey Graphic* dedicated to postrevolutionary Mexican society and culture. Despite focusing on indigeneity, Gamio equated the social and political inequalities encountered by African Americans in the US South with those endangering indigenous communities throughout Latin America. Although he failed to give African Americans any cultural ingenuity or historical agency, he rejected invectives that used racial hierarchies to justify socio-economic stratification. Instead, Gamio held colonialism liable, explaining, for instance, that Europeans “cheated the Indian of his material good and tried to erase his nationality and civilization.”

More importantly, blackness appeared briefly in Gamio’s ethnographic project to describe the entire national populace. Founded in 1917 under his directorship, the Bureau of Anthropology undertook a qualitative study of Mexico’s “regional physio-biology”: its physical types, languages, cultures, and environment. Its mouthpiece *Ethnos* provided social scientists with the opportunity to disseminate information about indigenous cultural areas. In 1921, Alfonso Toro published a short article “Influencia de la raza negra en la formación del pueblo mexicano.” It was the decade’s most deliberate attempt to situate blackness in national identity. He analyzed the demographic presence of colonial-era slaves to understand their influence on contemporary society. Because African-descended peoples outnumbered Spanish settlers in the mid-sixteenth century, they contributed as much as, if not more than, Europeans to the biological roots of the national populace. Mestizaje, however, hid these contributions. It reduced black visibility to such a degree that “black physical characteristics have disappeared” across most of the nation.

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67 Anónimo, “Reglamento interior de la Dirección de Antropología” (1440–12), pp. 1–3, tomo CLXXXII: Leyes y estudios para formular la “Ley sobre protección y conservación de monumentos arqueológicos e históricos y su reglamento,” 1896–1926, INAH-ATA-CNA.
For Toro, black biological invisibility was a statement of fact, not an aspirational plea to whiten the nation’s history and racial landscape. The cultural vestiges of the black body only remained regionally. “The persistence of the ethnographic traits of the African race,” he noted, “is demonstrated among many of the mestizos of the Gulf and Pacific and in the regions called tierra caliente.” Colonial-era stereotypes about black primitiveness informed his conclusions as well. Black cultural behaviors, such as a propensity to rebel, still resided in contemporary society. Refusing to fall for the supposition that black bellicosity was mere criminality, he wondered whether “the unwillingness of the Mexican people to subject themselves to their ruler and their tendency to incite revolution comes from their black blood.”

At the University of Chicago in 1926, Gamio continued to avoid discussing blackness, even while Vasconcelos articulated what might have been his most coherent statement about Mexico’s black predicament. The indigenous and the European still defined Gamio’s conception of postrevolutionary history and society. Mexico’s struggle for independence and the 1910 Revolution could find parallels, if not their origins, in the “incessant wars and bloody ceremonies” that defined pre-Columbian societies. Toro’s references to the indelible stamp black insurrections left on the national spirit went unmentioned. So too did any discussion of Mexico’s African heritage. Taking black disappearance as a historical truism, Gamio embraced an alternative strand of prerevolutionary historicism: Spanish colonial atrocities exploited and impoverished indigenous communities. However, the abolition of race, caste, and slavery no longer defined independence. Independence now marked the consolidation of racial inequality and social hierarchy:

Mexico achieved her independence from Spain in 1821, but it was a movement which favored only the white minorities, for the indigenous masses remained in the same miserable situation, or perhaps worse, as during the colonial period. By the new constitution they lost the only support they had, the weak Laws of the Indies. This constitution proclaimed equal rights for all inhabitants, but it did not establish any means of making these rights effective or beneficial to the Indian. All

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relationships between the two ethnic groups continued under the same evil auspices begun after the Conquest.\textsuperscript{71}

CONCLUSION

The 1926 Norman Wait Harris Memorial lectures tell a tale of two intellectuals and two conceptions of black invisibility. Of course there were similarities between Gamio and Vasconcelos. They both came of age when nineteenth-century educational systems decreed the insignificance of African-descended peoples on the world’s stage. By 1925, they were so disillusioned with the pace of postrevolutionary progress that they went into self-imposed exile. Yet, these two faces of Mexican nation-state formation embraced two distinct visions of black disappearance by the time they set foot on the University of Chicago’s hallowed grounds. Gamio recited what is, in retrospect, the more common history of Mexico, a history of indigenous exploitation that required the eventual formation of a mestizo citizenry erected on the nation’s pre-Columbian and European ancestries. Vasconcelos conversely articulated his most detailed account of contemporary blackness: it was present regionally, along the country’s tropical coasts. While Gamio conceived of blackness as irrelevant to the exigencies of postrevolutionary nation-state formation, Vasconcelos still yearned for that future moment when it would melt into obscurity. By the 1920s, liberal theories about racial disappearance had defined blackness negatively as foreign, regional, dangerous, and invisible. This definition left Gamio, Vasconcelos, and the intellectuals and cultural producers who followed them without a coherent platform for constructing blackness as Mexican. It would take intellectuals, cultural producers, and policy makers from Mexico, the United States, and other parts of the Americas decades to reintroduce blackness into Mexican history, culture, and society.

\textsuperscript{71} Manuel Gamio, “The Indian Basis of Mexican Civilization,” in Aspects of Mexican Civilization, by José Vasconcelos and Manuel Gamio (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1926), 117 and 119. Gamio criticized nineteenth-century intellectuals and policy makers for exacerbating the social and cultural tensions left by the Spanish. He argued that prerevolutionary liberals had “almost entirely forgotten” the needs of indigenous communities; see Manuel Gamio, Introduction, Synthesis and Conclusions of the Work the Population of the Valley of Teotihuacan (Mexico City: Talleres Gráficos de la Nación, 1922), xviii.