

Dominated Bodies, Colonized Bodies: Differences in the Impact of Domination on the
Body/Person and Body/Social in America, a Long-term Bioanthropological Study
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Introduction

Power and domination¹ are processes that have accompanied human behavior from the earliest stages of hominization. In this context, is colonization an endless cycle of conquest and domination inherent to human nature? Or is it a form of domination from recent centuries linked to an economic model? However, these phenomena have evolved over time and across different contexts, leading us to one of the pivotal moments that shaped the hierarchies we experience today: the colonization of the Americas from the 15th to the 19th centuries. This period has been the subject of extensive discussion among various research groups. On one hand, those who uphold the postcolonial² perspective, and on the other, the decolonialists³. Considering the above, COBODIES places the body at the center of the analysis of domination and colonization. From this perspective, power is primarily exercised on bodies, and it is on them that the consequences, we can observe on them the differences, and similarities of a history of exploitation and subjugation.

The body should be viewed as a biocultural entity, with its physiological processes deeply intertwined with the social context in which they occur⁴. According to the theory of corporality, diseases, malnutrition, and genetic history are inseparable from historical-cultural processes. The body is seen as a space of opportunity, conditioned but not determined by its history, in contrast to genetic determinism⁵. It serves as our vehicle of existence in the material world, with language being the means to share our unique yet collective experiences. Therefore, COBODIES will take advantage of the wealth of skeletal series excavated in previous decades that have been largely unexplored, such as those from Teotenaco, Chapingo, San Juan de Dios from Mexico and Fond de Saint Jacques from Martinique, and have never been analysed from this perspective. What is known today as Mexico and the Caribbean holds significant importance in colonization studies because the Spanish were the first to carry out this process, setting a model for other empires to follow.

To achieve this, COBODIES will begin by directly exploring three Mexican population samples and one Caribbean that were in a state of subjugation. One sample comes from Teotenango, a population dominated by the Mexica empire between 1435 and 1521. The second sample comes from Chapingo, a context termed contact due to specific elements from the time when the Spaniards settled in the Valley of Mexico, marking the beginning of colonization (first half of the 16th century). The third series is from the 18th century when the process of colonization was already consolidated, originating from a hospital in Mexico City, representing the city's poorest population. Finally, there is the possibility of contrasting these three samples with a population in a state of slavery, which ideologically and physically

1 Weber defines "power as the ability of an individual or a group to achieve their objectives even in the face of opposition and domination, or what Weber calls "Herrschaft", is a specific form of power. It is the probability that certain specific commands (or all commands) will be obeyed by a given group of persons ". Weber, Max. (2006) *Conceptos sociológicos fundamentales*. Alianza Editorial, Madrid, p. 175.

2 Makaran, G., & Gaussens, P. (2020). *Piel blanca, máscaras negras. Crítica de la razón decolonial* (Vol. 1). Bajo Tierra, UNAM.

3 Grosfoguel, R. (2006). From Postcolonial Studies to Decolonial Studies: Decolonizing Postcolonial Studies: A Preface. Review, 29.

4 Csordas, T. J. (1995). Introduction: the body as representation and being-in-the-world. In T. J. Csordas (Ed.), *Embodiment and experience. The existential ground of culture and self* (Vol. 1, pp. 1–26). Cambridge University Press.

5 Fuentes, A. (2021). Biological anthropology's critical engagement with genomics, evolution, race/racism, and ourselves: Opportunities and challenges to making a difference in the academy and the world. *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, 175(2), 326–338. <https://doi.org/10.1002/AJPA.24162>

represents the most extreme condition of domination. For this purpose, a sample from a slave cemetery in Martinique (Fond Saint Jacques, 17th-19th centuries) will be analysed. The primary reason for selecting these cases is their representativeness of different types of colonization and domination, the intention of this project is to contrast the results, because these varied scenarios lead us to question the repercussions of different types of domination and the specific responses to them.

1.1.2. State-of-the-Art.

The hypothesis of this project is that colonization is the most global form of domination, which we would expect to have the most severe long-term impact on bodies, both throughout life and at the time of death. On the other hand, domination is a more general term that could imply control over "others" in one or more aspects, such as territorial or resource control, without necessarily involving religious control. Additionally, other concepts or processes such as submission, imperialism, occupation, contact, and conquest need to be addressed and will be defined in relation to domination and colonization in this research.

Philosophical and historical theories surrounding the process of modern colonization (16th-19th centuries) are diverse and can be broadly categorized as anticolonial. However, the nuances and objectives of each are distinct. Two primary lines of study have emerged as the most influential within academia: postcolonial studies and the decolonial perspective. Both examine the impact of colonization on the lives of the colonized, but the key difference lies in the positioning of the researcher. Postcolonialists conduct studies about subalterns, while the decolonial theory conducts studies with and from the perspective of the subalterns⁶.

The decolonial perspective (on which this project is based) posits that the colonialist process encompasses various hierarchies that significantly influence how colonized subjects perceive themselves and the world⁷.

Current studies on the bioarchaeology of contact and colonialism assert that colonization processes throughout human history are both similar and distinct⁸. However, these studies often lack conceptual clarity, and their methodological efforts are overshadowed by questions that confuse historical concepts and processes. Additionally, they often conflate demographic analysis (e.g., death probability, mortality rates, and life expectancy) with "age-at-death distribution" and generally adopt a postcolonial perspective without a paleodemographic approach. Despite these shortcomings, several important points have been demonstrated⁹: 1. Bioarchaeology has helped dismantle the "monolithic response" paradigm that emerged from the focus on the New World demographic collapse. 2. Bioarchaeologists are beginning to narrate the global experience of colonialism. 3. Colonialism played a crucial role in shaping social bodies, creating hybrid "peoples" with complex and contested histories, which genetic studies alone cannot fully capture. 4. There is a need to compare data and conduct a global

6 Dussel, E. D. (1973). Para una ética de la liberación latinoamericana. Tomo 1: Vol. I. Siglo XXI.

7 Grosfoguel, R. (2011). Decolonizing Post-Colonial Studies and Paradigms of Political-Economy: Transmodernity, Decolonial Thinking, and Global Coloniality.

TRANSMODERNITY: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World, School of Social Sciences. <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/21k6t3fq>

8 Larsen, C. S., Griffin, M. C., Hutchinson, D. L., Noble, V. E., Norr, L., Pastor, R. F., Ruff, C. B., Russell, K. F., Schoeninger, M. J., Schultz, M., Simpson, S. W., & Teaford, M. F. (2001). Frontiers of Contact: Bioarchaeology of Spanish Florida. In Source: Journal of World Prehistory (Vol. 15, Issue 1).

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/25801169?seq=1&cid=pdf>, van Buren, M. (2010). The archaeological study of Spanish colonialism in the Americas. Journal of

Archaeological Research, 18(2), 151–201. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10814-009-9036-8>, Murphy, M. S., & Klaus, H. D. (2017). Colonized Bodies, Worlds Transformed Bioarchaeological Interpretations of the Human Past: Local, Regional, and Global Perspectives.

9 Stojanowski, C. M. (2017). The Bioarchaeology of Colonialism: Past Perspectives and Future Prospects. In M. S. Murphy & H. D. Klaus (Eds.), Colonized Bodies, Worlds Transformed. Toward a Global Bioarchaeology of Contact and Colonialism (pp. 411–445). University Press of Florida.

analysis of the consequences of European expansion alongside paleodemographic studies. 5. It is essential to work on local sites while interpreting data within a broader theoretical framework.

To explore the different hypotheses and research questions in a more general and diachronic sense, it is essential to begin with an analysis that allows us to identify the various types of control over the population and their direct impact on the bodies of subjugated populations. This involves standardizing the methodology and integrating it into a database. In France, and particularly at my principale, methodologies have been developed for generating relational databases with heterogeneous sources of information that consider interdisciplinary approaches¹⁰. This will enable the multiscale analysis: individuals, groups of individuals, and data related to the historical context.

On the other hand, recent non-bioarchaeological studies related to the processes of body colonization fall into two main currents: 1. Deconstructivist, Postmodern Black Feminism: This approach addresses the perception of female bodies, and the power exerted over them by a racist patriarchy, and it is part of a decolonial perspective¹¹. 2. Analyses of Imperialist and Colonial Policies: These studies focus on the (mainly negative) consequences of imperialist and colonial policies (mostly health policies) on native or subaltern populations¹².

Overview of the Methodological Approach.

The qualitative approach will consist of the osteobiographical analysis of each individual (the reconstruction of people's lives from skeletal indicators, the marks left on the body by their experiences, schema 1), the analysis of their quantifiable characteristics through statistical models, and the calculation of paleodemographic indicators through collective age, constituting the quantitative perspective of this study. The multi-scale/diachronic analysis depends on the contexts but generally includes individuals, funerary sets, and the complete series, known from archaeological reports and other previous studies to correspond to the pre-European contact era (14th-15th centuries), the beginning of colonization (16th century), and the period when colonization was consolidated (San Juan de Dios osteological series already analyzed, and Fond Saint Jacques, 18th century). The various osteological analysis techniques proposed will allow us to observe changes throughout individuals' lives and their situation at the time of death. The following section outlines each phase of the methodology.

A) Data Collection: Ongoing Lab Work and Published Archives. Data for each individual will be collected during osteological analysis at the Department of Physical Anthropology's (DAF) human remains repository in the National Museum of Anthropology in Mexico and at the Direction of Cultural Affairs in Martinique, using information forms for each individual. Dietary information will be obtained at LAMPEA (secondment). Information from first-hand historical sources will be

10 For example, the Isabelle Séguy's project ANR-DAI-CRÉTDHI : Développement d'Approches Intelligentes - Charleville, (Île de) Ré, Tours, Données Historiques de l'INED

11. Adair, C. (1992). Colonised bodies — the oppression of women. In C. Adair (Ed.), *Women And Dance: Sylphs and Sirens* (pp. 40–61). Macmillan Education UK.
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-22374-9_4, Benard, A. A. F. (2016). Colonizing Black Female Bodies Within Patriarchal Capitalism. *Sexualization, Media, & Society*, 2(4), 237462381668062. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2374623816680622>. Colonizing women's bodies: Population policies and nationhood in eighteenth-century Sweden. In *Journal of Women's History* (Vol. 22, Issue 2, pp. 108–132). <https://doi.org/10.1353/jowh.0.0146>

12 Manjapra K. Body. In: *Colonialism in Global Perspective*. Cambridge University Press; 2020:200-214. Kelm, M.-E. (1998). *Colonizing Bodies Aboriginal Health and Healing in British Columbia, 1900-50*. University of British Columbia Press. Edgren, M. (2010). Peiretti, D. (2021). *Corps noirs et médecins blancs : la fabrique du préjugé racial, XIXe-XXe siècles / Delphine Peiretti-Courtis*. La découverte.

sourced from published materials¹³, and data from unpublished archives will be obtained from the National General Archives (AGN)¹⁴. These sources may contain information such as the amount of tribute demanded from indigenous communities, the forced labor they were obliged to perform for the crown, the tithes required by the church, or the corporal punishments they were subjected to—all aspects that have physical repercussions. All archaeological information will be digitized.

- B) Database Organization. The nature of the data from osteological analysis is highly diverse, including graphic materials (photos and drawings) that must be coded to convert them into variables for use in mathematical models. Additionally, various levels (individual, burial group, population, and others) must be considered and coded. Historical information sources can also be diverse, such as maps, population or tribute tables, and texts. Organizing all this information requires a program that can manage it in a way that allows for a global analysis.
- C) Osteological and Isotopic Analysis. The analysis of skeletal remains will be conducted in relation to paleodemographic indicators (sex, collective and individual age), biological development (immature/mature), stress indicators (at death and throughout life), physical activity indicators (entheses in the skeleton), and paleopathological indicators (specific disease diagnoses). For stress indicators, in addition to the classic ones used in previous works (many of which have unclear etiologies: dental caries, hypoplasias, periosteal reactions, cribra, skeletal trauma, cortical bone maintenance and porotic hyperostosis), this research proposes the implementation of new indicators such as spina bifida, which has been reported in medical literature in contemporary populations that experienced high stress levels after war and severe famine periods¹⁵. Isotopic analysis through microsampling will also allow for the examination of dietary changes in individuals throughout their lives, specifically the intake of proteins that could be associated with indicators of stress and malnutrition (O3 and O2)¹⁶.
- D) Statistical and Paleodemographic Analysis. The initial analyses for this work will include correlations and multivariable models to observe intra-sample and inter-sample variability (O3). Additionally, paleodemographic indicators will be generated using the "New Bayesian Method" (developed by Séguy and colleagues) to contrast the samples (O2). Once dietary information is obtained using the "dentine microsampling and age-alignment approach for human teeth isotopic sequences" method, longitudinal and biographical models will be generated, and other indicators manifesting throughout life, such as Enamel Hypoplasia Lines (EHL), will also be considered (O2).

13 García Icazbalceta, J. (1889). *Código Florentino, siglo XVI*. Imprenta de Francisco Díaz de León. Hipólito Vera, F. (1981). *Itinerario parroquial del arzobispado de México y reserva histórica, geográfica y estadística de las parroquias del mismo Arzobispado*. Biblioteca Enciclopédica del Estado de México.

14 Documents as Archivo General de la Nación-Boletín del AGN, 1960, 2° serie, I (1), Ramo Tierras, 7, doc. 2, pp.9-55 could be useful for this research.

15 Ahuka, O. L., Toko, R. M., Omanga, F. U., & Tshimpanga, J. (2006). Congenital malformations in the North-Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo during Civil War. *East African Medical Journal*, 83(2), 95–99.

16Czermak, A., Fernández-Crespo, T., Ditchfield, P. W., & Lee-Thorp, J. A. (2020). A guide for an anatomically sensitive dentine microsampling and age-alignment approach for human teeth isotopic sequences. *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, 173(4), 776–783. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ajpa.24126>