Response to Shawn Austin's Review of *Demographic Change and Ethnic Survival Among the Sedentary Populations on the Jesuit Mission Frontiers of Spanish South America, 1609–1803: The Formation and Persistence of Mission Communities in a Comparative Context* (doi: 10.1163/22141332-00301005-05).

I normally do not respond to reviews of my monographs. If another scholar has a different interpretation, so be it. However, I do take exception to misrepresentations, particularly when they are significant. This is the case with the review of my book *Demographic Change and Ethnic Survival Among the Sedentary Populations on the Jesuit Mission Frontiers of Spanish South America, 1609–1803: The Formation and Persistence of Mission Communities in a Comparative Context* written by Shawn Austin and that appeared in the *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 3, no. 1 (2016): 103–4.

In his review Austin wrote that “comparing the two frontier zones of the Río de la Plata and northern New Spain is a worthy pursuit, but a comparison of demographic trends would be more effective if there were more census data from the Paraguayan missions in the earliest years of colonization, as there are for many of the missions of northern New Spain. The comparative analysis is so easily marred by a teleology that shapes all subsequent conclusions. Comparing mature missions (Paraguay and Chiquitos) to fledgling ones (northern New Spain) seems untenable when the goal is to determine why the *former succeeded and the latter failed* [emphasis added].” This is the first problem with his review. The book analyzes demographic issues, and particularly patterns of mortality and fertility used to test assumptions that scholars have made regarding what have been called “virgin soil” epidemics, the first epidemics that spread through the Americas in the wake of sustained contact with Europeans and diseases such as smallpox and measles. One of the fundamental problems with studies of sixteenth century indigenous demographic patterns is what can be called “fuzzy math,” information on populations that can’t be subjected to more sophisticated demographic analysis or that is recorded in imprecise categories. The core of the study is the reconstruction of the vital rates of discrete populations in such a way that comparisons can be made with other populations. Austin contends that “a comparison of demographic trends would be more effective if there were more census data from the Paraguayan missions in the earliest years of colonization, as there are for many of the missions of northern New Spain.”

There are serious difficulties with this statement. Firstly, and perhaps most importantly, not all censuses lend themselves to the analysis of vital rates of fertility and mortality employed in the study. The Jesuit missionaries did not

standardize their censuses until about 1720. Moreover, among the many pages of quantitative data that the study presents is a comprehensive compilation of population figures from both the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and I used these earlier censuses in the construction of population graphs that appear in the book. That the Jesuits recorded population figures does not mean that these figures prove useful in the analysis of vital rates. A case in point is the 1667 mission census that recorded the number of families and the total population (Figure 1). More useful in my analysis is the 1764 census that recorded total smallpox deaths during the year (Figure 2). The second problem with Austin's comment is the assumption that there were meaningful analytical differences between demographic patterns on missions in earlier or later stages of development. Bacteria and viruses did not and do not discriminate between people living on missions that had existed for longer or shorter periods of time. The "longevity" of a mission or other community is not a useful analytical concept. Moreover, the author demonstrates a lack of knowledge of missions in Mexico. A comparison is made with missions located in the Sierra Gorda region of Queretaro, where the first missionaries entered in the mid-sixteenth century. The study focuses on a group of Franciscan missions established in the region in the 1740s, but the indigenous population in the region had had sustained contact with Spanish settlers for more than two hundred years, which is more important when analyzing demographic patterns. The first Jesuit missionaries arrived in Sonora in the first decades of the seventeenth century, and administered missions in the region until 1767. The indigenous peoples of the region had also been in contact with Spaniards and "Old World" disease for several hundred years. Finally, Austin would like to say that I am comparing why one group of missions "succeeded" and another "failed." Not so. The comparison is between demographically stable communities and communities that could not grow through natural reproduction and experienced virtual biological and cultural extinction.

Austin presents a selective and incomplete summary of what I wrote on page 125. This is at the core of his criticism. It is the introduction to a chapter that analyzes and compares the demographic patterns of other mission populations. I suggested several hypotheses to test to explain differences in demographic patterns. I admit that a "hypothesis" is a rather esoteric concept that young graduate students and recent graduates may not be familiar with, and this may account for Austin's confusion regarding what I wrote. I would add that a careful reading of the book shows that comparison is not the focus, contrary to what Austin apparently believes.

FIGURE 1 A page from the 1667 census of the Jesuit missions. The information contained in the document was limited to the number of families and total population. This document was typical of seventeenth-century mission censuses.

Familias y Almas de los 7. Pueblos de la orravana del Uruguay, y los Pueblos en que estan repartidos Diciembre 31. de 1764.

	Familias	Almas		Familias	Almas
<i>De S. Angel</i>			<i>De S. Lorenzo</i>		
En su Pueblo	0311.	1310.	En su Pueblo	0282	1149
En S. Xavier	0244.	0911.	En S. Lgn. miri	0002	0011
En los Martyres	0054.	0381.	En Nra S. de Fe	0004.	0013
En la Concepcion	0077.	0354.		<u>0288</u>	<u>1173</u>
En Loreto	0028.	0127.			
En S. Lgn. miri	0009.	0029.	<i>De S. Luis</i>		
	<u>0726.</u>	<u>3112.</u>	En su Pueblo	0546	2381
<i>De S. Juan</i>			En S. Lgn. miri	0002	0010
En su Pueblo	0360.	1508.	En el Jesus	0102.	0545
En los Martyres	0002.	0003.	En la Trinidad	0122.	0607
En el Corpus	0030.	0317.	En S. Carlos	0005.	0032
En Itagua	0189.	0886.		<u>0217.</u>	<u>3573.</u>
En Loreto	0092.	0316.	<i>De S. Nicolas</i>		
En S. Lgn. miri	0161.	0770.	En su Pueblo	0682.	3925.
	<u>0884</u>	<u>3805.</u>			
<i>De S. Miguel</i>			<i>De S. Borja</i>		
En su Pueblo	0634.	2679	En su Pueblo	0466.	2738.
En Nra S. de Fe	0010.	0047.	En S. Lgn. miri	0002.	0010.
	<u>0644.</u>	<u>2726</u>	En el Jesus	0010.	0032.
			En la Trinidad	0011.	0063
				<u>0489.</u>	<u>2893</u>

Muertes de la Epidemia de las Viruelas en este año de 1764.

En S. Lgn. Guazu	0012.	En S. Nicolas	0341.
En Nra S. de Fe	0019.	En S. Luis	0420.
En S. Rosa	1596.	En S. Lorenzo	0234.
En Santiago	1305.	En S. Miguel	0470.
En Anguá del Pueblo		En S. Juan	0005.
En S. Ang. y de S. J. A.	0003.	De S. Ang. en la Concep.	0188.
En S. Joseph	0398.	En los Martyres	0149.
En S. Carlos	0021.	En S. Xavier	0001.
En los Apostoles	0682.	En S. Borja	0153.
En la Concepcion	0364.	En S. L. Home	0570.
En los Martyres	0808.	En la Cruz	0007.
En S. Maria	0668.		<u>2538.</u>
	<u>4876.</u>		<u>4876.</u>
		<i>Suma</i>	<u>7414.</u>

FIGURE 2 The second page of the 1764 mission census that recorded the total number of smallpox deaths during the year.

Later in the review Austin complains that “[the book] does not go far enough to explain why social stability and indigenous leadership thrived in the missions.” Austin attempts to use this point as a “red herring” in the tautology he constructs. The purpose of the book is clear, and it is not what he would like the reader of his review to believe. Comparative history has a foundation in the

evaluation of parallel experiences. Austin's angst regarding my hypothesis of a "kinder and gentler" colonization of the Guaraní when compared to the historical experiences of other mission populations "ignores the cultural and social transformations that mission inhabitants experienced" is mute without the comparative point of reference of the parallel historical experience. These differences are also apparent in demographic terms.

There is no question that the Guaraní and other indigenous groups experienced social and cultural changes that at times were very stressful. However, there is one point that differentiates the historical experience of the Guaraní from other populations of frontier missions that experienced similar social, cultural, and demographic disintegration. There were moments of extreme crises for the Guaraní residents of the Jesuit missions such as the one Austin mentioned in his review, namely the *bandeirante* raids of the 1620s and 1630s on the missions of Guairá (Parana, Brazil), Tape (Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil), Iguazú, and Itatín (northern Paraguay). A second was the series of mortality crises that occurred in conjunction with ecological and political crises in the 1730s. Some 86,000 Guaraní died in a period of seven years. A third was the war and diaspora from the seven missions located east of the Uruguay River following the signing of the Treaty of Madrid in 1750. The Guaraní missions did not disintegrate in the face of these crises, and they did not abandon their alliance with the Spanish and the Jesuits. The same was not the case of missions on other frontiers, and particularly the north Mexican frontier.

In sum, I would suggest that the way that Austin constructed his review reflects his own conceptual limitation that appears to be framed by his own research on the historical experiences of the Guaraní in the sixteenth and early seventeenth century. This can also be seen in his comment regarding the use of seventeenth-century mission censuses that only record total population figures. Many scholars believe that demographic analysis consists of compiling population figures. This, for example, is one criticism I made in my review of Sarreal's book that Austin prominently mentioned in his review (*The Guaraní and Their Missions: A Socioeconomic History* [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014]). In a larger comparative context the Guaraní missions more closely resembled the *pueblos de indios* in central Mexico and other areas, and not missions on frontiers such as that of northern Mexico. For example, the Guaraní were not the only indigenous peoples that readily relocated to new sites at their own instigation, or that of the missionaries or royal officials. A case in point is Yucundáa located in the Sierra Mixteca of Oaxaca, Mexico. The indigenous population abandoned the hilltop location of the city that they had occupied for centuries and relocated to a valley site at the request of the

Dominican missionaries. The indigenous rulers allocated labor to build a new city that also included the large Dominican *doctrina* and the residence of the indigenous ruler known today as the *casa de la cacica*.

Robert H. Jackson

independent scholar, Mexico City

robertvianey@gmail.com

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