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Herman W. Konrad*

Urban Influences in the Formation of Colonial Mexican Agriculture

Viewed from the perspective of the 1980s Mexican colonial society was very much of an agrarian phenomenon. Taking 1811 as a reference point for conditions at the end of the colonial era we find a total population of roughly six million, the bulk of which was located in rural hamlets, villages, and towns. Despite being the largest urban center in the Americas, with a population of 168,846, Mexico City had only 2.8 percent of the total population. Of the ten other important cities throughout the colony, only two --Puebla and Quéretaro-- had populations approaching 50,000, while most of the others had less than half that number.[1] This meant that the majority of the population was essentially rural and engaged in some sort of agrarian pursuit as a livelihood.

Despite the rural characteristics of colonial Mexico urban influences were of great importance. This urban factor was introduced along with the Spanish conquest. Once the early sixteenth-century military battles had been fought and the sovereignty of the Spanish Crown assured, Spanish colonization strategy decreed that Spanish identity and entry into the colony would be via urban rather than rural institutions. Starting with Cortés, who legitimized his right to conquer the Aztec empire with the authority vested in him by a town council,[2] those that followed him founded the Spanish towns, villas, and cities that superceded the existing indigenous urban centers. Spanish settlements were thus to dominate most aspects of colonial life, and the pre-conquest city-states were engulfed by the Spanish political state, which paradoxically still lacked a capital city of its own.

This analysis of the influence of urban factors upon agricultural development is, at the same time, therefore, a look at the structure and process of colonial formation. At its most fundamental level colonial society in Mexico was the by-product of the coming together of two distinct systems, that of the Europeans and that of the original Mexicans. Though one became dominant and paramount, the other was not eliminated but forced to give way -by degree and geographical regions- to the new patterns introduced by the Europeans. Many aspects of indigenous agriculture survived relatively intact, such as the traditional, kinship-based form of producing what we refer to as the 'Sacred Trilogy' of subsistence (maize, beans and squash). Other aspects, such as long-distance trade and merchandizing (á la the pochtecas) were dismantled and replaced by European forms.[3] Since the agricultural systems of both societies and the economies that produced them were manifestations of forms of cultural evolution in the larger historical context, a sort of preface is called for prior to examining the specific colonial developments.

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[1]Urban population figures vary, depending upon sources used. For Mexico City I have used John E. Kicza, *Colonial Entrepreneurs: Families and Business in Bourbon Mexico City* (Albuquerque, 1983), p.2; and for the regional centers Doris M. Ladd, *The Mexican Nobility at Independence, 1780-1826* (Austin, 1976), p. 40. Ladd lists the most populous cities, after Mexico City, as follows: Puebla, Quéretaro, Zacatecas, Guanajuato, Guadalajara, Oaxaca, Valladolid, Durango, San Luis Potosí, and Veracruz. Peter Gerhard, *A Guide to the Historical Geography of New Spain* (Cambridge, 1972), has the most comprehensive coverage.

[2]See Hernando Cortés, *Five Letters of Cortes to the Emperor, 1519-1526*, trans. J. Bayard Morris (New York, 1962), pp. 17-20.

[3]Charles Gibson, *The Aztecs Under Spanish Rule: A History of the Indians of the Valley of Mexico, 1519-1810* (Stanford, 1964), is still the most comprehensive treatment of Spanish impact. William Taylor, *Landlord and Peasant in Colonial Oaxaca* (Stanford, 1972) and *Drinking, Homicide, and Rebellion in Colonial Mexican Villages* (Stanford, 1979), and Nancy Farriss, *Maya Society Under Colonial Rule: The Collective Enterprise of Survival* (Princeton, 1984), are excellent examples of regional studies.

The Historical Context

If we accept, as I do in this paper, that the indigenous agrarian component of colonial Mexico was largely restricted to the peasant sector and that the Spanish-introduced agrarian component was a by-product of European mercantilism, the evolutionary status of both needs to be compared. The Mesoamerican peasantry evolved gradually, as did peasantries everywhere. Though agriculture was practiced in Mexico as early as 5, 000 B.C., and sedentary agricultural villages became common in Mexico by 1,500 B.C.,[4] actual peasant sectors did not develop until there were urban-based political states.

The archaeological evidence[5] suggests a gradual transition from hunting and gathering to the cultivation of domesticated plants, and the simultaneous evolution of the types of settlements we associate with urban society. These two major developments --the Agricultural Revolution and the Urban Revolution-- preceded the emergence of a dependent and differentiated (socially, politically, economically) agrarian sector we call a peasantry. One explanation of how and why this differentiations took place focus attention upon the Irrigation Revolution,[6] which stimulated the emergence of diverse social strata for the purposes of organizing production and servicing the administrative, defensive, and redistribution needs of larger concentrations of populations in urban settings which were still dependent upon rural food supplies. In Mesoamerica the rural food-producing sector was incorporated by the political state, increasingly associated with an urban locale, occupational stratification, and specialization. The type of city-state encountered by the Spaniards when they arrived in Mexico was the product of 6,500 years of evolution. The relatively recent embellishments, resulting from cycles of imperial dominance by different cultural groups (Teotihuacán, Toltec, Aztec) merely provided the particular cultural configurations existing in the early sixteenth century.

The macehualli, or peasant citizen in the Aztec scheme of organization, represented the greatest single demographic element, meaningfully linked, or integrated, into the larger picture. Aside from being the primary food producer the peasant citizen could also become a soldier or a religious functionary by virtue of merit. Social mobility was not closed off and the peasant's obligations (service, tribute) represented meaningful involvement with the ideological and political objectives of the larger society. This meaning was radically re-shaped when the Spaniards decapitated the Aztec societal pyramid and imposed their own economic and political order. Yet in terms of numbers the peasant sector, before and after the conquest, was in the majority.[7]

The evolutionary developments found in Mesoamerica were also taking place in other parts of the world, including Mediterranean Europe, although within different time

[4]For an overview of developments in Mexico and Mesoamerica, see the articles by Kent V. Flannery and Richard S. MacNeish in Peter J. Ucko *et.al.*, eds., *Man, Settlement and Urbanism* (London and Cambridge, 1972); and see also R. S. MacNeish, "Ancient Mesoamerican Civilization", Science, 143 (1964), pp. 531-537, and William T. Sanders and Barbara J. *Price, Mesoamerica: The Evolution of a Civilization* (New York, 1968).

[5]The literature is very extensive. Useful references include: E.B.W. Zubrow, *et.al.*, eds., *New World Archaeology: Theoretical and Cultural Transformations* (San Francisco, 1974); Ruth Tringham, ed., *Ecology and Agricultural Settlements: An Ethnographic and Archaeological Perspective* (Andover, 1973); Robert J. Braidwood and Gordon K. Willey, eds., *Courses Towards Urban Life*, (Chicago, 1962); Robert MacC. Adams, *The Evolution of Urban Society: Early Mesopotamia and Prehispanic Mexico* (Chicago, 1966); Gordon V. Childe, *Man Makes Himself* (New York, 1951); Daniel Glyn, *The First Civilizations: The Archaeology of their Origins* (New York, 1970); Darcy Ribeiro, *The Civilizational Process*, trans. B. Meggers, (Washington, 1968); Julian Steward, *Theory of Culture Change* (Urbana, 1955); and Elman R. Service, *Origins of the State and Civilization: The Process of Cultural Evolution* (New York, 1975).

[6]There seems to be a general agreement that hydraulics resulted in intensification of production, increased stratification, and differentiation between urban and rural sectors; the argument still going on is about how and why these processes came about. Karl Wittfogel, *Oriental Despotism: A comparative Study of Total Power* (New Haven, 1957), suggested a class conflict model, resulting in despotism. Richard B. Woodbury, "A Reappraisal of Hohokan Irrigation", *American Anthropologist*, 63 (1961), pp. 550-560, and Robert M. Adams, "Early Civilizations, Subsistence, and Environment", in Carl H. Kraeling and R.M. Adams, eds., *City Invincible: A Symposium on Urbanization and Cultural Development in the Ancient Near East* (Chicago, 1960), rebut the coercive aspects. See also Ribeiro, *The Civilizational Process*, pp. 55-65, and Service, *Origins of the State*, pp. 273-275.

[7]For Central Mexico see Gibson, *The Aztecs*, pp. 9-31 and 136-275.

frames. What was significantly different in the society represented by the Europeans was that this part of the world had undergone additional evolutionary processes, related to pastoralism and technology, and was in the process of embarking on another, the Mercantile Revolution.[8] The Pastoral Revolution had provided the Spaniards with domesticated livestock, their *ganado mayor* (horses, cattle, donkeys, mules) and *ganado menor* (sheep, goats, hogs). The Metallurgical Revolution, as well, had resulted in the perfection of iron forging for the manufacture of tools, wheels and axles, axes, weapons, and ploughshares. Coinage, phonetic writing, and decimal numeration had been integrated into the Europeans' conduct of commercial exchange. Improved vehicles for transportation (terrestrial and maritime) and warfare provided greater capacities for long-range commerce. And hydraulic engines, water-powered mills, rotary millstones, derricks, and windlasses provided more efficient ways of mass processing and extraction of raw materials.[9]

What was to have such an overwhelming impact upon colonial society was the manner in which the pastoral and technological aspects of Spanish culture were applied in Mexico, and the guiding force here would be mercantilism. Despite (and alongside) the ideological legacy of the Reconquista crusade and the missionary zeal of a reawakened Catholic Church, it would be secular, economic concerns related to political power that would dominate. Without entering into the debate regarding feudal 'drag' factors [10] or capitalist 'stimuli' factors,[11] we may assert that agricultural and commercial activities were clearly oriented towards the enhancement of the mother country or, within the colony, towards that sector most closely linked to it. If in conflict, the interests of the mother country dominated and the colony nevertheless served to support the welfare of Spain. Thus, in theory and in practice, the balance-sheet of exchange was consistently tilted to favor the interests of the Spanish Crown. The accumulation of bullion was an expression of that objective --keeping in mind that throughout the colonial period 80 percent of the exports from the American colonies to metropolitan countries were yielded by the mining sectors,[12] and at the end of the colonial period 75 percent of Mexican exports to Spain were represented by bullion[13] -- and remained the central feature of mother-country/colony relationships.

Divergent evolutionary processes had thus produced very different types of societies in Spain and in Mexico. Their coming together to form a new one provided the backdrop for the urban and agrarian aspect of colonial development. Once the Spaniards had successfully dismantled the superstructure of the Mexican city-states, what they left relatively intact was the local peasant sector, but it was a peasantry cut adrift from its social, ideological, and economic meaning. The Spaniards did not transport their own peasant sector --which is not to say that Spanish peasants did not come to Mexico-- when they transported their animals, plants, and strategies of exploitation developed in Europe. The grafting of this system was not guided by locally tested or ecologically sound principles, but by the commercial doctrines of mercantilism,[14] doctrines developed largely within an urban setting, despite the rural application. Seen in this light, the urban influence on the formation of colonial Mexican agriculture can now be examined in terms of specific processes.

[8] As described by Ribeiro, *The Civilization Process*, pp. 64-98

[9] *Ibid.*, pp. 64-65.

[10] Marcello Carmagnani, *Formación y crisis de un sistema feudal: America Latina, del siglo XVI a nuestros días* (Mexico, 1976).

[11] Andre Gunder Frank, *Capitalism and Under development in Latin America* (New York, 1967) and *Mexican Agriculture, 1521-1630: Transformation of the Mode of Production* (New York, 1970); Enrique Semo, *Historia del capitalismo en México: Los orígenes, 1521-1763* (Mexico, 1973).

[12] As Chevalier observes, in "An Interview with François Chevalier", *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 64 (1964), p. 429.

[13] Kicza, *Colonial Entrepreneurs*, p.66.

[14] For an interpretive synthesis of these developments see Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World System*, Vol. I: *Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century* (New York, 1976' Vol. II: *Mercantilism and the Consolidation of the European World-Economy, 1600-1750* (New York, 1980).

The Urban Basis of Agricultural Expansion

In his outstanding synthesis of the historical geography of New Spain, Peter Gerhard indicates that:

> In the first half of the seventeenth century, Nueva España was in a sense urbanized, with compact Spanish towns and cities and hispanized Indian villages, separated by vast stretches of deserted land, a pattern visible today.[15]

The urbanization Gerhard mentions has more than a geographical significance: it also has a structural one which identifies what was central and what was peripheral. Such a center/periphery dichotomy indicates both implicit and explicit strategies of development. In ecological terms urbanization has always represented much more than the concentration of human populations and decision-making power: it involved a set of adaptive strategies towards the totality of surrounding environment. The maximization of population densities as a consequence of urbanization (clearly seen in what is taking place in Mexico City today and less evident in pre-conquest and colonial times) dramatically affects the surrounding environment. In modern industrialized contexts the phenomenon of intensified urbanization of global populations has been made possible by increasing extraction and exploitation of natural sources (organic and inorganic), representing a type of ecological imperialism. Urban society creates its own 'man-made' environment through intensified technology and energy usage. The resultant reshaping of the physical environment alters existing patterns of adaptation and resource usage.[16]

In ecological terms the colonial Spanish cities represented heightened degree of environmental disruption. This is not to say that Teotihuacán and Tenochtitlán-Tlaltelolco did not have a similar impact but in pre-Hispanic times the capacity for rapid ecological damange was more restricted. The long period of urbanism in the Valley of Mexico had allowed for the incorporation of checks and balances (hydraulic works to control water levels, chinampa agriculture to intensify food production) and the development of sound legislation --in the case of the Aztecs-- designed to minimize ecological damage.[17] The building of Mexico City by the Spanish, on the other hand, coincided with the rapid deforestation of the Valley of Mexico, increased soil erosion, and a constantly decreasing pool of flora and fauna to draw upon as food sources. European technology (e.g., metal tools) and livestock introduced by the conquest played a large part in making this intensification possible.[18]

During the encomienda phase of colonial formation most Spaniards were restricted to residence in Spanish urban settlements. In theory this would have allowed for the incorporation of the existing indigenous systems of agrarian production, but since the encomenderos brought along their own plants and animal, and techniques of agricultural production, they orchestrated the livestock invasion of the countryside despite their urban base.[19] The urban centers, in this sense, became the focal point from which the initial phases of Iberian

[15]Gerhard, *A Guide*, p. 27.

[16]For a comprehensive statement on environmental impact, see M. Taghi Farvar and John B. Milton, *The Careless Technology: Ecology and International Development* (Garden City, NY, 1972). Paul R. Ehrlich, *et. al.*, *Human Ecology: Problems and Solutions* (San Francisco, 1973), provide a basic overview of the ecological approach. J. Donald Hughes, *Ecology in Ancient Civilizations* (Albuquerque, 1975), presents an overview of state society-generated ecological changes in the Mediterranean basin, and for a recent summary of urbanization processes in ancient times see Dora Jane Hamblin, *The First Cities* (New York, 1973).

[17]Eli de Gortari, *Historia de la ciencia en México* (México, 1964); for the Valley of Mexico, Gibson, *The Aztecs*; and for a comparative overview, Friedrich Katz, *The Ancient American Civilizations* (London, 1969).

[18]Gibson, *The Aztecs*, pp. 257-334, presents a thorough coverage of what happened in the Valley of Mexico, and Elinor Melville's "The Pastoral Economy and Environmental Degradation in Highland Central Mexico, 1530-1600" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1983) documents the sequence of conversion from rich agricultural land to scrub pasture, due largely to overgrazing.

[19]François Chevalier, *La formación de los grandes latifundios en México: tierra y sociedad en los siglos XVI y XVII*, Antonio Alatorre, trans. (México, 1956)

agricultural practice were implanted in rural Mexico. The owners of the herds of livestock which multiplied so prodigiously in the first few generations were urban-based, their overseers received direction from the urban centers, and the economic benefits of livestock and European cereal grain production accrued to them.

The establishment of the Spanish urban settlements, including the residences of the encomenderos, had as a consequence the imposition of a new agrarian regime upon the native peasantry, and the attempted elimination of encomienda through the New Laws of 1542 only served to intensify the process. What the encomenderos had gained, in return for service to the crown, was an apparently endless source of goods and services from the existing systems of production without the necessity of capital investment. This easy source of wealth and the power it implied blinded them to the demographic catastrophe, and its potential economic repercussions, in the Indian-dominated countryside. Despite the emphatic protests of the encomenderos the broader vision prevailed, and the Crown insisted that a royal bureaucracy monopolize the granting of access to the Indian population in economic matters while the Church was given responsability for spiritual access. The new rural economic opportunities offered by the New Laws would be based on property with legal title. Private ownership of land, based on the ability to utilize it productively in a commercial sense, established the necessity of investing capital to build ranches, farms (*labores*), processing facilities, and residences. In short, financial status rather than meritorious service became a pre-condition for agrarian sources of wealth. Since legal title was also offered to Indian communities, the indigenous nobility, or anyone who could successfully negotiate the legalities of title adquisition, the competitive aspect of access to rural property was introduced.[20]

The impact of the New Laws during the second half of the sixteenth-century was profound. One result was the legalized introduction of Spanish systems of agricultural production into the countryside precisely when rapidly declining Indian populations were leaving available land they had previously utilized. The local peasant system of production now also had a legal (Spanish) basis for continuance, but large areas and many individuals were either replaced by, or integrated into, the production of Spanish livestock and cereal grains.

A second result was massive speculation in rural properties by Spanish colonists and crown officials--a real estate boom in which agricultural properties became a source of capital.[21] This allowed the wealthier urban residents to accumulate the large numbers of smaller properties necessary to create estates, a process which through time led to the emergence of large hacienda complexes. A third result was the movement by Spaniards from urban centers to fixed residences in the countryside, on private property. Although the successful large estate owners, including religious institutions (particularly the Jesuit colleges),[22] remained in the urban settlements, the owners of small ranches and farms became permanent residents in the rural areas. A fourth result, and perhaps the most important, was the normalization of procedures which allowed for the economic absorption of agrarian resources into the Spanish system of production. These resources --agricultural land, pastures, water, forests, and Indian labor-- were the raw materials of agricultural endeavor.

The Mexican colonial economy took its basic form by 1700. Though that economy was structured around the European demand for bullion, particularly silver, the agricultural sector produced the commodities that allowed the mines to function and the urban centers to sustain growth and expansion.[23] Apart from peasant communities relying largely on

[20]Gibson provides an excellent overview in his Valley of Mexico study, *The Aztecs*, and another overview in "The Transformation of the Indian Community in New Spain, 1500-1810", *Journal of World History*, 2 (1955), pp. 581-607. For a recent synthesis, see Colin M. MacLachlin and Jaime E. Rodríguez, *The Forging of the Cosmic Race: A reinterpretation of Colonial Mexico* (Berkeley, 1980), pp. 144-195.

[21]Chevalier, *La Formación*, provides many examples while Gibson, *The Aztecs*, and Herman Konrad, *A Jesuit Hacienda in Colonial Mexico: Santa Lucía, 1576-1767* (Stanford, 1980), describe selected cases.

[22]Konrad, *A Jesuit Hacienda*.

[23]See Ida Altman and James Lockhart, *Provinces of Early Mexico: Variants of Spanish American Regional Evolution* (Los Angeles 1976).

traditional methods complemented by the incorporation of European livestock and farm crops, the rest of the colonial society --including the new miscegenated sectors (mestizos, mulattos, alobados)-- derived its agrarian products from systems of production introduced by the colonizers. In effect it was one system with variations adapted according to types of agricultural product, and controlled and operationalized via institutionalized forms of corregimiento, hacienda, repartimento, slave labor, and wage labor. The system itself was no longer Spanish, but rather one which they had developed in Mexico, and despite its extensive penetration into rural Mexico it remained firmly linked and responsive to urban stimuli.[24]

Mexico City remained the administrative, political, and financial center of the economy and was linked in turn with the mining centers and ports. By the eighteenth century we see, in effect, a series of geographical centers of rapid economic growth (Mexico City, Puebla, Querétaro) with connecting corridors to the mineral producing areas (Zacatecas, San Luis Potosí, Guanajuato) and principal ports (Veracruz, Acapulco). Lockhart, for example, finds in this configuration a 'silver trunkline' for which "Mexico City-Puebla-Veracruz constituted a metropolitan complex"[25] of primary importance. The concept is a useful one and lesser trunklines can be identified for the export of staples such as sugar (in the early colony before other sources undercut its economic importance), which linked Morelos and other fertile producing zones to the capital and port of Veracruz.[26] At a later period we find the tobacco export.[27] Other indigenous export staples (cocoa, cochineal, indigo) relied more heavily upon native labor, but production and transport systems followed the trunkline pattern.[28] There were other extensive commercial networks, as well, related to the import of goods from European, Asian, and other sources. The net effect of these economic developments was a series of inter-related trunklines linking areas of production to the main urban settlements and to the ports through which connections continued to Europe, other colonies, and Asia.

It was along these trunklines -economic corridors developed for expansion of a mercantile economy- that one finds the greatest concentration of European settlers, who almost everywhere attempted to establish types of activities and modes of production unknown by local populations prior to conquest. It was here that one found the greatest concentration of imported African slaves,[29] the emerging miscegenated sectors (*las castas*), and Indians who by choice or otherwise had left their traditional zones of residence. The core areas of Spanish-introduced agrarian production, particularly those agricultural activities which became the focus of hacienda production, were located in these corridors. At the same time, in regions of the colony isolated from the trunklines but not representing any neat geographical pattern of proximity to urban settlements, the indigenous land-use strategies remained in place to a much greater degree and for much longer periods.[30]

If mercantilistic objectives played the central role in shaping and expanding urban settlement, opening up new frontiers, and integrating the colony into an economic framework, it was the great estate that represents most completely its rural expression. Colonial usage of the term "hacienda" was most apt, since it included the idea of productive economic activity in two important ways. On the one hand, it meant finances whether applied to property, production, processing, or marketing. One the other hand, it was a term applied to a specific type and system of agrarian production. Far from being a

[24]This generalization did not apply so *clearly* to the northern and southeastern frontiers of New Spain; see Peter Gerhard, *The North Frontier of New Spain* (Princeton, 1982) and *The Southeast Frontier of New Spain* (Princeton, 1979).
[25]Altman and Lockhart, *Provinces*, p.5.
[26]Ward Barrett, *The Sugar Hacienda of the Marqueses del Valle* (Minneapolis, 1970).
[27]David L. McWatters, "The Royal Tobacco Monopoly in Bourbon Mexico, 1764-1810" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Florida, 1979).
[28]Brian R. Hamnett, *Politics and Trade in Southern Mexico, 1750-1821* (Cambridge, 1971).
[29]This is evident from the demographic data provided by Gerhard in his three studies.
[30]For a more detailed discussion, see Konrad, *A Jesuit Hacienda*, pp. 8-10.

transplant of European feudalism, as suggested by Chevalier, it was a institution created in the colonies; the recent evidence produced by case studies demonstrates this overwhelmingly.[31]

The Hacienda as an Instrument of Agrarian Production

In colonial Mexico the hacienda was an urban-controlled, rural-based economic institution dedicated to producing livestock, food crops, and cash crops. It was not distinct from what some writers refer to as the plantation when the term was applied to agrarian, capital -and labor- intensive, export-oriented units of production.[32] As I have shown in my study *A Jesuit Hacienda in Colonial Mexico* (1980), what was involved regardless of the agricultural items produced was a strategy of production, and different products implied varying procedures and consequences.

Livestock production, with its extensive use of land and dispersed pasture and water resources, was a new feature introduced by the Europeans. It was essential for the colonial economy, providing the raw materials in this Age of Leather (containers, equipment parts, protective clothing, even housing), light (tallow), energy (animal traction), transport vehicular, equestrian, freight (mule trains), food (meat, cheese), clothing and textiles (wool), and other animal-derived products. Livestock production played a crucial role in sustaining mining activities, urban settlements, and the networks linking them with each other and the ports through which goods and services moved between the colony and the

[31]A number of useful surveys of recent literature exist, including Magnus Mörner, "The Spanish American Hacienda: A Survey of Recent Research and Debate", *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 53 (1973), pp. 183-216; Charles Gibson, "Writings on Colonial Mexico", *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 55 (1975), pp. 287-323; and Eric Van Young, "Mexican Rural History Since Chevalier: The Historiography of the Colonial Hacienda", *Latin American Research Review*, 18 (1983), pp. 5-61. The list below provides a good sampling of case studies dealing directly or indirectly with agrarian matters. For the southern regions we have John Chance, *Race and Class in Colonial Oaxaca* (Stanford, 1978); Brian Hamnett, *Politics and Trade in Southern Mexico, 1750-1821* (Cambridge, 1971); and William Taylor, *Landlord and Peasant*. For Central America, there are Murdo MacLeod, *Spanish Central America: A Socioeconomic History, 1520-1720* (Berkeley, 1973); Manuel Rubio Sánchez, *Historia del añil o xiquilite en Centro América*, 2 vols. (San Salvador, 1976); and William Sherman, *Forced Native Labor in Sixteenth-Century Central América* (Lincoln, 1979). For the Puebla-Tlaxcala region we have Ursula Ewald, *Estudios sobre la hacienda colonial en México: las propiedades rurales del Colegio Espíritu Santo en Puebla* (Wiesbaden, 1976) Isabel González Sánchez, *Haciendas y ranchos de Tlaxcala en 1712* (Mexico City, 1969) Herbert Nickel, *Soziale Morphologie der Mexikanischen Hacienda*, (Wiesbaden, 1978); Hans Prem, Ursula Dyckerhoff, and Güenter Miehlich, *Milpa y Hacienda: Tenencia de la tierra indígena y española en la cuenca del Alto Atoyac, Puebla, Mexico, 1520-1650* (Wiesbaden, 1978). For the central plateau, including the mining areas, see Peter Bakewell, *Silver Mining and Society in Colonial Mexico: Zacatecas, 1546-1700* (Cambridge, 1971); Ward Barrett, *The Sugar Hacienda of the Marqueses del Valle* (Minneapolis, 1970); Jan Bazant, *Cinco Haciendas mexicanas: tres siglos de vida rural en San Luis Potosí, 1600-1910* (México, 1975); David Brading, *Miners and Merchants in Bourbon Mexico, 1763-1810* (Cambridge, 1971), and *Haciendas and Ranchos in the Mexican Bajío: León 1700-1860* (Cambridge, 1978); Francisco Canteral Martín, *Vida y Obra del primer Conde de Regla* (Sevilla, 1975); Enrique Florescano, *Precios del maíz y crisis agrícolas en México (1708-1810)* (México, 1969); Silvia Galicia, *Precios y producción en San Miguel el Grande, 1661-1803* (México, 1975); Bernardo García Martínez, *El Marqués del Valle: tres siglos de régimen señorial en Nueva España* (México, 1969); Luis González, *Pueblo en vilo: microhistoria de San José de Gracia* (México, 1968); Antonia Heredia Ferrera, *La renta del azogue en Nueva España, 1709-1751* (Sevilla, 1978); J.I. Israel, *Race, Class and Politics in Colonial Mexico, 1610-1670* (Oxford, 1976); Doris Ladd, *The Mexican Nobility at Independence, 1780-1826* (Austin, 1976); Alejandra Moreno Toscano, *Geografía económica de México, siglo XVI* (México, 1968); Claude Morin, *Michoacán en la Nueva España del siglo XVIII* (México, 1979); Peter Rees, *Transportes y comercio entre México y Veracruz, 1519-1910* (México, 1976); James Riley, *Hacendados Jesuitas en México: El Colegio Máximo de San Pedro y San Pablo, 1685-1767* (México, 1976); G. Michael Riley, *The Estate of Fernando Cortés in the Cuernavaca Area of Mexico, 1522-1547* (Albuquerque, 1972); Ramón María Serrera Contreras, *Guadalajara ganadera: estudio regional novohispano, 1760-1805* (Sevilla, 1977,) Edith Couturier, *La hacienda de Hueyápan, 1550-1936* (México, 1976); Colin Palmer, *Slaves of the White God: Blacks in Mexico, 1570-1650* (Cambridge, Mass., 1976); John C. Super, *La vida en Querétaro durante la Colonia, 1531-1810* (México, 1983); and Eric Van Young, *Hacienda and Market in Eighteenth-Century Mexico: The Rural Economy of the Guadalajara Region, 1675-1820* (Berkeley, 1981). And for the far north we have María Elena Galaviz de Capdevielle, *Rebeliones indígenas en el norte del reino de la Nueva España: siglos XVI y XVII* (México, 1967) Phillip Hadley, *Minería y sociedad en el centro minero de Santa Eulalia, Chihuahua, 1709-1750* (México, 1975); and Charles Harris, *A Mexican Family Emire: The Latifundio of the Sánchez Navarro Family, 1765-1867* (Austin and London, 1975).

[32]Such a distinction was proposed by Eric Wolf and Sidney Mintz, "Haciendas and Plantations in Middle America and the Antilles", *Social and Economic Studies*, 6 (1957), pp. 380-412. This article, which at last count has been reproduced over 25 times, according to Sidney Mintz (personal communication, October, 1984) is a classic case of uncritical scholarly acceptance of what seemed to be a good idea at the time. The authors, Mintz explained, created it one week-end, based mostly on contemporary data from Puerto Rico, with little thought about its application to the colonial period.

international economy. It provided many of the inputs that allowed the colonial society of New Spain to replicate Spanish features while at the same time it became an important vehicle for the transformation of the indigenous sectors. In terms of area occupied livestock production represented the largest and most pervasive intrusion of conquered territory. Being a land-extensive but not labor-intensive form of production it was, apart from diseases, the single most import agent of native population displacement.[33] At the same time, however, it became an important mechanism for the integration of native labor, both because of its scope and because of its relatively benign work regime.

Food and cash crop production, in contrast, was resource- (land, water) and labor-intensive. It impacted more directly and oppressively upon specific geographical areas, resulting in repartimento, large-scale importation of slave labor, and cyclical, annual demands. Although native crops (maize, beans, cocoa) were integrated into the European production modes, the introduced plants (sugar cane, cereal grains, fruit trees) had a more important demand status for the colonists. Wheat and sugar were important commercial crops, vital for the Spanish settlements and of some importance --at least in the early colonial period-- as export items.[34] Maize, the most pervasive and in many ways the single most important agricultural crop in colonial Mexico, initially was less important to the Spanish segment of colonial society than it was to the Indian segment. By the second half of the seventeenth century and throughout the eighteenth, however, maize became an important commercial crop for the Spanish and for the new miscegenated segment as well.[35] By about 1750, therefore, a reversal had taken place. In the early colony native agricultural production helped supply the food resources for the colonists, but by the late colonial period it was the large estates of the colonists which were meeting the increasing food demands of the native populations. This is clearly seen in the amount of land and the size of the storage facilities the great haciendas were devoting to maize production.[36]

Most types of livestock, food, and cash crops eventually diffused to the rural and isolated areas of the colonial countryside. Even the poorest of the Indian peasant *pueblos* managed to incorporate a minimal number of livestock and introduced plants into their subsistence economy, but were unable to produce surpluses of any significance. Small farms and ranches, whether owned by Indians, members of the mixed sectors, or Spanish creoles or recent immigrants, managed to produce surpluses of a limited number of such products in good years. The rancho and labor, as a rule, were not a basis for sustained economic growth and the generation of significant surpluses. The small and medium agrarian estate relied upon low capital investment, a limited labor force, and few urban connections. It dominated when market demands were declining, or when either a specific product or the general economy was in a period of recession. It was the hacienda that proved the most viable and productive instrument for commercialization of agricultural goods and services, and the reason for this was that it was linked in so many ways to regional, colonial, and extra-colonial economic processes.

The Hacienda as a By-Product of Mercantilism

The emergence of the large scale colonial Mexican hacienda coincided with the growth of mining and cities, and the resultant demand for agricultural products.[37] The agrarian empires of elite families described by Harris, Kicza, and Ladd,[38] or of religious corporations such as the Jesuits, resulted from a long process of land and resource accumulation. In the

[33]Melville, "The Pastoral Economy", convincingly documents the long-term displacement impact for the Valle del Mezquital, where during a 30-year period (1560-1590) a rich agricultural valley was converted to marginal arid land.
[34]MacLachlan and Rodríguez, *The Forging*, pp. 51-54.
[35]Florescano, *Precios del maíz*.
[36]For some specific cases, see Konrad, *A jesuit Hacienda*, pp. 296-298.
[37]See Bakewell, *Silver Mining and Society*, and Brading, *Miners and Merchants and Haciendas and Ranchos*.
[38]Harris, *A Mexican Family Empire*; Kicza, *Colonial Entrepreneurs*; Ladd, *The Mexican Nobility*.

case of the Jesuits I have documented the emergence of the Santa Lucia from a rather insignificant sheep ranch in the 1570s to a massive mixed-commodity enterprise by the middle of the eighteenth century. The greatest expansion took place in the eighteenth century when the Jesuits more than doubled its size,[39] and maximum expansion on the whole was a feature of the Bourbon period, and therefore a late feature of colonial society.[40] Apart from ownership distinctions, the differences between the institutional and private estates were minimal. The late colonial hacienda becomes a useful reference point for looking at larger economic processes.

By the late colonial period mercantile policy was firmly entrenched in colony-metropole relationships. Agricultural commodity production for metropolitan demands, however, was primarily a function of the tropical lowlands consisting of luxury goods (sugar, tobacco, coffee) or raw materials (cotton, indigo) for developing home industries. This was clearly not the production emphasis of the great highland estates in question here. In the Mexican case the overseas demand was for bullion, produced by the silver mines. What the inland Mexican haciendas produced were commodities servicing the demands of the regional and colony economies, and they were thus derivative of mercantilistic practice, with a more local impact and complementary to the larger economic system.

Ladd and Kicza have linked the great haciendas with the fortune and status of the colonial elite resident in Mexico City. Becoming and remaining a member of the economic elite almost invariably involved becoming a hacendado. Ladd has shown that 80 percent of the Mexican nobility had interests in rural properties,[41] while Kicza points out that elite status aspiration required acquisition of landed estates as early as possible, in as many different ecological zones as possible.[42] Control over agrarian resources, considered essential for long-term maintenance of family position, was less of a status indicator (conspicuous display of wealth) than an economic strategy to create and maintain wealth. Consumption of hacienda production was centered in the mining and urban communities and the hacendados attempted to monopolize production. The monopoly they sought, and to a significant degree achieved, was of the colonial economy, and to achieve it they sought to control not only production, processing, and distribution of agricultural goods, but also mineral extraction, finance and credit, markets, and wholesaling and retailing. Hacienda ownership thus represented one facet in a more comprehensive economic strategy, and the hacendado more often than not was also a financier, a merchant, a miner, or a combination of all three. For the wealthy colonial elite the formation of entailed estates (*mayorazgos*) represented a consolidation of the rural aspect of a multi-faceted investment portfolio.[43]

If the great haciendas were part of the arsenal with which the elite sought to monopolize available economic options it should be possible to identify specific tactics in this battle. The one most frequently encountered by colonial investigators was that of control of land and water resources. The great estate owners had an insatiable appetite for land, evident from the progressive enlargement of estate complexes: holding legal title of massive properties signified control over activities carried out on them. Though significant portions of land might be rented to small scale producers, particularly in periods of poor market demand, or resident workers might be given small plots for subsistence needs, the control of production remained largely in the hands of the owners. Holding many types or properties in diverse ecological zones also enhanced ability to shift to new crops or to exploit a wide range of products. In terms of diversity options (most of the large estates

[39]Konrad, *A Jesuit Hacienda*, pp. 87-106. Between 1701 and 1750 the size of the Santa Lucía complex increased by 142 percent.
[40]The trend evident in the Jesuit estate was also evident among the elite and nobility; Kicza, *Colonial Entrepreneurs*; Ladd, *The Mexican Nobility*.
[41]Ladd, *The Mexican Nobility*, pp. 26-28.
[42]Kicza, *Colonial Entrepreneurs*, p. 19.
[43]Ladd, *The Mexican Nobility*, p. 71

were complexes of highly diverse properties) and future potential, the monopoly of land resources served important functions.

I suspect that massive land holdings, though significant, were less important than commodity monopoly. For example, the Jesuits learned as early as the late sixteenth century that large scale production --in this case of sheep and wool-- afforded decided advantages over lesser competitors.[44] They utilized this strategy at Santa Lucia over a period of 200 years while shifting production emphasis from sheep to cereal crops and livestock and eventually to pulque production. By 1764 they had cornered roughly 15 percent of the Mexico City pulque market from one estate complex alone. The Conde de Regla, who added this and other Jesuit states to his missive holdings little over a decade later, increased that percentage considerably.[45] His contemporary the Marques de Aguayo had over 400,000 head of sheep in lands that stretched from Monterrey to Mexico City. Individual estate owners may not have been able to monopolize specific consumption items, but collectively the leading hacendados --reinforcing their decision-making powers via kinship links, and political and economic position-- became them most powerful controlling factors in the supply of meat and other animal products for Mexico City. Ladd argues that titled estate owners "tended to monopolize the meat industry in provincial markets" such as Guanajuato, Orizaba, Puebla, San Luis Potosi, and Veracruz.[46] Offutt's recent thesis indicates that merchant land owners controlled the wheat supply for Saltillo,[47] and other regional studies of Guadalajara[48] and Querétaro[49] show monopoly practices in the supply of agricultural products. What allowed such tactics to flourish was the vertical integration of production into networks of supply and distribution, all controlled by the same economic actors. And the owners of large haciendas, by controlling the transport and marketing within the centers of consumption, absorbed the production of smaller haciendas, ranches, and farms into their own networks.

These networks also moved goods and supplies from the urban to rural areas, and the sale and distribution of all goods and services entering the estate complexes were effected by the same network of marketing agents and hacienda retail outlets. The infamous *tienda de raya*, long associated with an oppressive debt peonage, was a primary vehicle for distributing both hacienda and non-hacienda products to estate workers and non-estate rural populations.[50] In an economy dependent upon credit arrangements and lacking large amounts of circulating currency the hacienda store became the solution that served both the acquisition needs of rural populations and the marketing objectives of hacienda suppliers. It was one link in the commercial network between overseas trade, colonial trade, and local exchange. Overseas goods moved from merchant houses in Mexico City, via retailers and merchants (*comerciantes*), to urban and/or rural outlets (*mercerias, tiendas*).[51] Owners of the great family estates participated economically at all levels. Colonial goods were fed into the network, and the same system that supplied the tienda de raya also serviced the dispersed populations in the countryside through itinerant merchants (*tratantes* and *viandantes*). It was an effective system of supply, but open to

[44]Konrad, *A Jesuit Hacienda*, pp. 40-45.
[45]*Ibid.*, p. 103 and 203.
[46]Ladd, *The Mexican Nobility*, p. 46.
[47]Leslie S. Offutt, "Urban and Rural Society in the Mexican North: Saltillo in the Late Colonial Period" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1982).
[48]Van Young, *Hacienda and Market*.
[49]Super, *La Vida en Querétaro*.
[50]Herbert Nickel's work is particularly insightful on worker economic status: see Nickel, *Soziale Morphologie*; "Peonaje a inmovilidad de los trabajadores agrícolas en México", *Cuadernos de Investigación*, (1980) pp. 12-78; and "Haciendas in Central México from Late Colonial Times to the Revolution", in R. Buve, ed., *Labour Conditions, Hacienda Management and its Relation to the State* (Amsterdam, 1984), pp. 113-159.
[51]This system functioned not only in Central Mexico but also in peripheral areas. For the south, see Hamnett, *Politics and Trade*, and for the north José Cuello, "Saltillo in the Seventeenth Century Local Society on the North Mexican Frontier", (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1982).

abuses (*repartimiento de mercancías*) and vulnerable to the manipulative commercial interests of estate owners.[52]

To summarize, then, the wealthy elite of colonial Mexico used the hacienda as one of its means of producing wealth, and through it they attempted to control resources and produce food and livestock products to supply the cities and mining centers of the colony. In the late eighteenth century cereal grains, pulque, and livestock were the profitable agrarian pursuits. Monopolizing these activities, plus their processing and distribution, though never completely successful, was an attempt to operationalize the economic doctrine of the times. The links between the mother country and the colony, and between the urban and rural sectors of the colony, can most clearly be seen in the activities of the wealthy elite. They not only travelled to Spain, but many also had landed estates there. And in the colony they had palaces in Mexico City, town houses in the provincial capitals, and rural majors on their haciendas.[53] The formation and management of the great estates cannot be divorced from the larger economy: they provided one of its rural expressions.

The Hacienda and the Peasantry

If the hacienda can be seen as a by-product of traditional European mercantilism, it must also be juxtaposed against what was left of traditional Mexican agriculture after conquest and colonization.[54] As pointed out in the beginning of this essay, the bulk of Mexican society remained tied to rural residence and traditions, traditions which became progressively transformed not only by the colonial economy but also by the political and ideological arbitrators of colonial life, the royal bureaucracy and the Catholic Church. Both the royal official and the cleric (the former influenced by royal decree and the latter stimulated by theological conviction) held the view that the indigenous sector should have its place in the economic as well as political and religious life of the colony. The crown's experiment with encomienda, defined by the Laws of Burgos prior to a realization of the scope and importance of the New World possessions, and abandoned once the economic potential of the colonies became evident, was based on the principle that the Spanish Christian subjects of the crown would effect a workable economic relationship between conqueror and conquered. That principle --never totally abandoned in peripheral areas-- was reinforced by granting the religious orders a more powerful voice in everyday local affairs.[55] In the areas of central importance, with the New Laws the crown took more direct control over arbitration of economic relations between the King's 'Indian children' and other subjects, though in both phases labor obligations and tribute payments remained central. In economic terms, the principle of extraction --the extractive nature of the colonial economy and the extraction of goods and services from the indigenous populations-- remained a basic structural reality.

For the rural Indian populations this superimposed Spanish reality was not a fundamental departure from local tradition. What was new was the meaning of the extractive relationship and the conditions under which it was to develop. Under the old order labor service, tribute payments, and military and religious participation had the net effect of integrating the peasantry into the larger society in a meaningful and understood ideological context, but in the new order conflicting and contradictory stimuli emerged. On the one hand, both church and state insisted that the Indian sector was an integral part of the new

[52]Kicza, *Colonial Entrepreneurs*, and Ladd, *The Mexican Nobility*.

[53]*Ibid.*, p. 72.

[54]For an overview of recent research, see Erwin Grieshaber, "Hacienda-Indian Community Relations and Indian Acculturation: An Historiographical Essay", *Latin American Research Review*, 14 3 (1979), pp. 107-128.

[55]Nancy Farriss' recent study of the Yucatán, *Maya Society*, provides an excellent synthesis of conditions under encomienda. Two books edited by Murdo J. MacLeod and Robert Wasserstrom, *Spaniards and Indians in Southeastrn Mesoamerica: Essays on the History of Ethnic Relations* (Lincoln, 1983), and *Spaniards and Indians in Southwestern Mesoamerica* (Lincoln, 1984), provide a series of specific case studies.

Christian economic order, while on the other hand, the economic processes supported by church, state, and private sector actually separated the Indians from both their own and the new systems of agricultural production. Compulsory labor, mediated by repartimiento, or by lack of economic resources (pueblo lands), and regulated by local Indian authorities (*principales, caciques*), depersonalized and monetized agricultural work. Tribute collected by the state or by the clergy in the form of fees for services (baptisms, marriages, burials) became monetized, and hacendado employers, who frequently paid both tribute and ecclesiastical fees on behalf of their laborers, deducted them from earned income. The extraction of such contributions from the Indians by the larger society did not result in closer access or integration, but on the contrary served to define a marginal and subservient socioeconomic status.[56] Members of the indigenous nobility might become integrated by virtue of ceded privileges and intermarriage, but for the mass of the peasantry economic participation resulted in alienation and marginalization, and in the confirmation of a separate, inferior status.

Such a separate status was also envisioned in the legislated provisions for maintenance of indigenous communities, the *república de los indios*. In geographic areas of lesser economic importance, or off the trunklines of commercial agrarian development, the *república de los indios* did become the context for the preservation of traditional values (language, dress, material culture) and production modes.[57] But in regions where the hacienda became entrenched in the rural economy such legislated 'authentic' communities were more fictive than real, and external and internal economic pressures converted the Indian communities into a reserve labor force rather than a separate society. The dual-society model represented by the idea of the two repúblicas (of the indios and the españoles) became in time converted into a single economic community in which the two groups occupied different statuses.[58] Even in the marginal areas where the clergy played a dominant role within the Indian communities, they and the local caciques (who shared the commercial economic values of the larger society), merchants, traders, and other agents of regional and inter-regional commerce linked the two repúblicas in significant ways.

Large scale hacienda livestock and farming activities had an all encompassing impact upon the peasant communities they encountered in their expansion. The influence of hacienda owners with government authorities enabled them to gain title to much of the pueblo land, thereby severely restricting local agricultural production.[59] At the same time their productive activities created alternative employment opportunities, so that the resultant decreased resource base of the pueblos encouraged peasant participation in the hacienda economy through manipulation of community authorities and the prospect of steady employment. Livestock production, though not labor-intensive, provided significant labor opportunities because of the large numbers of animals involved. For the most part these pastoral occupations were well-paid salaried positions eagerly sought by former peasant agriculturalists. Not only did they represent an alternative source of livelihood, but also consistent access to hacienda-distributed goods (tools, textiles, food) and livestock. The practice of incentive stimulation, through allowing the supervisory herdsmen to keep a small percentage of animals, resulted in increased livestock ownership by members of peasant communities. Such small scale herds were maintained on community lands or allowed to graze on hacienda pastures in exchange for payment of fees.[60]

[56]Gibson, *The Aztecs*; Konrad, *A Jesuit Hacienda*.

[57]Taylor's work is most relevant here; see *Landlord and Peasant; Drinking, Homicide and Rebellion*; and "Landed Society in New Spain: A View from the South", *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 54 (1974), pp. 387-413.

[58]In the Valley of Mexico this was clearly the case; see Konrad, *A Jesuit Hacienda*, pp. 267-298, 332-349. See also John Tutino, "Creole Mexico: Spanish Elites, Haciendas, and Indian Towns, 1750-1810" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 1976).

[59]The land retained, or titles obtained, by the Indian nobility must be seen --in my view-- as land no longer available to the pueblos. Taylor, in his *Landlord and Peasant* and "Landed Society", for example, views this type of holding as an indication of retention, whereas I view such holdings as no longer accesible to the pueblos because this sector was integrated into the conquest society in very significat ways.

[60]*Ibid.*: and see also the works of Gibson.

Livestock activities thus served to integrate part of the rural peasantry into wage labor activities while fostering the increase of small scale livestock production. During periods of low demand and prices it was the small scale ranchers who expanded their activities while hacendados were content to rent out large sections of their estates in return for a constant economic income from rent.

To a lesser extent cereal grain production had a similar impact, resulting in a partial transformation from subsistence agriculture to commercial production. An even more striking example of this can be seen in the eighteenth century in the central Mexican highlands when pulque production became highly profitable. This type of activity was particularly conductive to small scale production by a great number of renters whose production flowed into the transport and redistribution networks of the hacienda owners.[61] But the bulk of the labor required for cereal grain production was seasonal, concentrated in relatively short periods of soil preparation, seeding, weeding, and harvesting, which meant that this type of production required a continuous and massive labor force for hardly more than two months of the year. It was here that the labor reserve represented by pueblos with limited land resources became a strategic advantage for the hacienda operators. Large labor gangs of peones either came daily from nearby villages or became temporary residents on the estates. Coercive tactics were common, as was the employment of large numbers of women and children for the labor-intensive, unskilled task. Reluctance by villagers to engage in this type of work could be offset by tying village access to hacienda land and pastures to participation on demand. Cereal grain production thus represented the more coercive aspect of integration into commercial production.[62]

Whether coercive or voluntary, economically beneficial or harmful, the hacienda served as a vehicle for the economic integration of peasant sectors into the larger economy. Reciprocal advantages for both the pueblo and the estate existed, since peasant communities gained access to land resources, and hacienda-controlled goods and services, while at the same time the haciendas extended their economic control over the peasantry by monopolizing commercial transactions in areas where they were located. There were few disadvantages for the haciendas but a great many for the peasant sector, which became dependent upon external factors over which became dependent upon external factors over which it had no control. Although many estates had significant numbers of permanent resident workers, particularly to service maintenance and support facilities, the hacendados had little vested interest in maintaining larger than essential populations. A policy of obligatory residence and forced, enduring debts (debt peonage) was not in the interest of the hacienda apart from its utilization in areas without an available local pueblo labor source, nor was it practiced to the extent previously thought.[63] In any case, the profit orientation of commercial estates and the careful credit-debit balancing acts of its owners would not have encouraged it.

The patterns of hacienda-peasant interactions described above had restricted geographical range. On the outer fringes of the great haciendas, and beyond, the peasant pueblos remained much more closely tied to traditional agricultural practice. This kept them firmly linked to past indigenous societal traditions concerning household and field ritual, and a kinship-based mode of subsistence production. The extractive impulses of mining and urban settlement --the urban-dominated and mercantilist-stimulated aspect of the colonial economy-- involved only a minority of the total colonial population, yet it was the central feature and driving force of the colonial economy. As it underwent periods of expansion and recession, so did its transforming impact upon the colony as a whole. Though much less affected, the vast majority of the peasantry in the countryside communities did not remain untouched. The Mesoamerican traditions of more ancient times retained much of their vitality

[61]Konrad, *A jesuit Hacienda*, pp. 203-208.
[62]*Ibid.*, pp. 197-203 and 225-232.
[63]Lockhart has even suggested that the term be discarded (personal communication). MacLachlan and Rodríguez, *The Forging of the Cosmic Race*, pp. 158, stress the elite status of hacienda workers.

in the colonial period, as they still do in lesser and lesser degree, but their interaction with the European-introduced agricultural production created a dynamic or dialectical confrontation which provided both form and substance to the shape of colonial Mexican society.

Conclusions

In this overview I have attempted to provide a synthesis of some of the main features of colonial agricultural developments. The emphasis has been on the structural relationships between what was brought to the colony by the Spanish, how they adapted it to the Mexican setting, and how it interacted with the local traditions. The focus has been deliberately selective, emphasizing the urban dimensions of agricultural formation so as to highlight this source of influence. Since I have described the details of large scale hacienda production elsewhere, these have been largely left out here. Also largely ignored have been the specifically export staple commodity production activities associated with sugar, tobacco, cocoa, and other items of significant demand in metropolitan areas. The question of slavery and the import of large scale captive labor has not been dealt with, nor have the internal dynamics of peasant village society. The concentration of focus has also had geographic limitations, being restricted largely to the role of the great landed estates in highland Central Mexico.

Hacienda formation and development were not unaffected by the factors that have been left out here --they were, in many subtle and fundamental ways but the great estates were a key force in the structuring of colonial society. Their study allows us to identify the shape and direction of the economic thrust of the colonial enterprise. What was happening in Mexico was of course not unique. The recent study of Andean America by Karen Spalding comes to a very similar conclusion:

> The colonial economy of the Andes was structures around the overseas demand for precious metals, and the economic structures of colonial society --haciendas, manufactories, etc.-- were by products of the export-oriented dynamism generated by the mines.[64]

There were differences between colonial Mexico and the Andean area, to be sure. In New Spain the primacy of Mexico City was greater than that of Lima. In the Andean area haciendas were of a somewhat lesser significance and mining of greater significance, with Potosí becoming a more populous city than Lima. There were fundamental differences, as well, between the Inca and Aztec types of pre-conquest economic organization. Yet the parallels are more than incidental: they were the by-product of the same mercantile European pressures.

The European mercantile system had a distinct set of elements linking it intimately with urban evolutionary processes. Europe was about to enter into its industrial revolutionary phase while society in Mexico was structurally more closely tied to an agrarian base. The pre-industrial urbanism that developed in colonial Mexico, nevertheless, reshaped the indigenous rural-oriented local societies. In moving across the Atlantic the Spaniards largely detached themselves from their own rural underpinnings, creating in the Americas an urban base from which they significantly transformed the ecological landscapes they encountered. Thus it should not be surprising, as found even in remote Saltillo in the late colonial period, that urban-rural distinctions were largely artificial.[65] Beyond the effective reach of the economy of Saltillo or any other significant settlement in colonial Mexico, however, the indigenous systems and the processes that developed them remained relatively intact, not only in the colonial period but much beyond it.

[64]Karen Spalding, *Huarochirí: An Andean Society Under Inca and Spanish Rule* (Stanford, 1984), p. 297.
[65]This is the finding of Leslie Offutt, "Urban and Rural Society", which she attributes to the mercantile nature of conquest society.