

LABOR SYSTEMS, 1492-1850

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Historians have long recognized that the development and transformation of labor systems played a key role in Iberian expansion to the New World, with long-term effects on postcolonial Latin American economies, societies, and cultures. Much of the modern analytical literature hinges on particular understandings of the nexus between labor supply and colonial extraction, often underscoring the importance of extraeconomic coercion as a necessary condition for the large-scale transfer of economic surplus from the Americas to Europe. Over the past quarter century, however, serious challenges to earlier dependency, modes-of-production, and world-systems approaches have introduced a considerable shift in focus, revealing an increasingly diverse agenda of issues and evidence. The new composite picture that emerges, although far from denying the significance of colonial extraction or of extraeconomic coercion in shaping labor arrangements, sheds light on complex regional systems enveloping distinct practices and institutions, whose overlapping and interconnected existence lays to rest the conventional schema of a linear, evolutionary sequence from early forms of compulsory service to a full-fledged wage labor market.

In redirecting attention to local, regional, and interregional labor and commodity markets, current historiographical trends have introduced important new perspectives on the factors determining patterns of labor recruitment and management. Differences in indigenous social structures, political institutions, and cultural practices constitute an

important starting point. Not only did precolonial institutions in many cases play a central role in shaping distinct outcomes, but also postconquest transformations within indigenous polities and societies placed constraints on entrepreneurial options and influenced colonial institutional development. Population change was an important part of this panorama, first through the more obvious effects that the demographic collapse had on the labor supply, and subsequently through patterns of forced and voluntary migration, which have been the subject of a growing number of studies. At the same time, much of the current literature ascribes a greater weight to subaltern strategies of resistance and survival as a critical variable in determining the extent of indigenous participation in colonial labor markets. This approach, which according to Brooke Larson can be described as being “more attentive to the possibilities of social agency, although keeping in mind the constraints of structure”, has cast “serious doubt on the historical determinism of commercial capitalism and the colonial state to effectively harness the labor power of indigenous economies to the mining export sector or to the colonial Exchequer”.¹

Although Larson’s comments refer specifically to the Andean context, they reflect a broader shift in emphasis that casts light on a second set of issues and actors. As Steve Stern argues in his seminal critique of the world-systems approach, the dynamic sectors of the colonial economy engendered significant “regional and supraregional economic spaces”. Rather than constituting colonial “enclaves” simply appended to metropolitan trade, mines and plantations stimulated the development of internal agrarian, pastoral, and urban commercial circuits and thus emerged as “centers of gravity”, whose

¹ Brooke Larson, “Introduction,” in *Ethnicity, Markets, and Migration in the Andes*,

mercantile and property-owning elite often competed directly with metropolitan-based interests. These New World entrepreneurs had a central, if not dominant, role in shaping labor arrangements. According to Stern, they “fused a diverse array of labor relations, including approximations of wage labor, complicated tenancy, share and debt-credit arrangements, and forced labor drafts and slavery, into a single productive process”.² The precise configuration of this “diverse array” varied greatly in time and space, but we do know from an increasing number of studies that workers shifted into and out of the labor market and in between categories often in a very fluid manner. In addition to a core of permanent workers, employers in almost every sector also relied a great deal on temporary, seasonal, and casual labor, recruited from peasant communities near and far, from urban areas, and even from slave plantations. These hybrid systems also developed on a significant scale in regional economies with tenuous ties to the Atlantic world, where institutional arrangements that had died out in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries in the more developed regions persisted well into the eighteenth and even beyond Independence in some cases. Indeed, these colonial “peripheries” have provided one of the most vibrant areas of recent colonial and early postcolonial studies in both Spanish and Portuguese America.

A third basic problem addressed in the literature has to do with the relative importance of extraeconomic coercion and of wages in determining the labor supply. Many authors have highlighted the role of the colonial state in designing an institutional framework through an elaborate sequence of legislation, inspired by moral considerations

Brooke Larson and Olivia Harris, eds. (Durham, 1995), 17-19.

and fiscal imperatives. From the outset, royal policy in both Castille and Portugal insisted that free (that is, nonslave) workers were to receive wages for their services, but they quickly noticed that free Indians, freed slaves, and, later, mestizoes often refused to volunteer their services for wages alone, no matter how high these may have seemed to employers and authorities. Several studies have shown that wage labor often entailed the negotiation of other benefits, including ore shares in silver mining, access to land in agricultural zones, and access to credit (which involves an alternative interpretation of “debt peonage”). Although what some scholars have called the “leverage of labor” varied from place to place and over time, the Iberian crowns and the nation-states that succeeded them frequently intervened to force free persons into the wage labor market, either through direct coercion (labor draft quotas, punishment for crimes or rebellion, and vagrancy laws, among other forms) or indirectly through the assessment of cash tribute or the forced consumption of commodities. At the same time, in spite of strong legal restrictions on Indian slavery, both crowns actively promoted the trans-Atlantic slave trade as a solution for New World demand, and although African slavery developed more fully in association with tropical staples and gold mining, its impact on colonial and nineteenth-century labor markets was widespread. The intricate relationship between slavery and wage labor constitutes an important issue in the current literature, not only in the traditional sense of a transition from slave to wage labor, but more importantly in terms of the overlapping and often ambiguous labor relations that blurred the distinction between slave and free in the production of goods and services.

² Steve Stern, “Feudalism, Capitalism, and the World-System in the Perspective of Latin America and the Caribbean”, in *Confronting Historical Paradigms*, Frederick Cooper, et al. (Madison, 1993), 54.

Drawing inspiration from the recent literature, this chapter offers a broad survey of the principal patterns of labor recruitment, distribution, and management that drew indigenous, African, and mestizo peoples into the colonial and early postcolonial economies, from the early sixteenth century to the extinction of the Atlantic slave trade in 1850. The first section examines different forms of compulsory indigenous labor in postconquest economies. The main focus falls on sixteenth-century developments in the Caribbean, New Spain, and Peru; because of space limitations, this chapter does not discuss patterns of indigenous labor in other regions extending into the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, areas that were substantially different not only because of divergent colonial projects (missions, ranching, and military frontiers, for example), but also due to the specific conditions of interethnic relations. The second section treats the development of hybrid systems based primarily on slave labor, focusing mainly on Portuguese America but also drawing cross-regional comparisons with distinct parts of Spanish America in different periods. In addition to reviewing crucial aspects of recruitment and management on plantations and in mining zones, this section also examines the expansion of slavery in nonplantation agriculture as well as the engagement of the slave population in urban labor markets. The third major component of this chapter addresses the development of hybrid systems based primarily on wage labor, with a special emphasis on silver mining areas, colonial agricultural estates, and urban centers from the late sixteenth century to the eclipse of the colonial period. One of the more important features of the current literature that is stressed here lies in the patterns of spatial, ethnic, social, and occupational mobility that characterized the development and transformation of regional labor systems over the course of this period. The conclusion provides a

retrospective balance from the vantage point of 1850, sketching the colonial legacies and structural continuities that made labor recruitment and control a central issue in the formation of the new nation-states, in a context marked by far-reaching institutional reforms, political uncertainty, and economic change.

Amerindian Labor Systems in Postconquest Economies

Caribbean Origins of New World Institutions

The first stage of Spanish expansion into the Caribbean introduced labor practices and policies that were to shape the relations between Europeans and Amerindians in many ways, with important ramifications for the subsequent conquests of dense, mainland populations. Much of the prevailing literature underscores how the relatively low rates of return that the labor regime turned over at an extremely high cost in human lives contributed to making this experiment, in the words of Lesley Simpson, “one of the most dismal episodes in the history of exploitation”.³ Recent reassessments, however, although confirming and even refining the contours of the demographic catastrophe, also show that the early history of labor in the Caribbean goes far beyond the destructive impact so dramatically described by Las Casas. On the islands, the Spaniards discovered that the successful recruitment, distribution, control, and extraction of value from indigenous labor would require a delicate mix of force, negotiation, material incentives, and institutional engineering.

³ Lesley B. Simpson, *The Encomienda in New Spain*, rev. ed. (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1966).

During the decade that followed Columbus's first voyage, a few Spanish adventurers initially attempted to develop a slave trade, sending a number of hapless Arawak and Carib captives back to the Iberian Peninsula. As many as 1700 Amerindians were shipped to Spain between 1492 and 1511, but this early trans-Atlantic traffic failed to unfold on a larger scale for a number of reasons, foreshadowing the obstacles that were to challenge the development of indigenous slavery within the Americas as a whole. Perhaps most importantly, the arrival of Amerindians in chains immediately raised doubts concerning the moral underpinnings of slavery, inaugurating a long, drawn-out discussion that was to involve jurists, ecclesiastics, and crown officials for many decades. Until Isabella's death in 1504, the crown took a firm stand against the indiscriminate enslavement of these potential vassals and tribute payers, and many of the captives taken in the early years were set free. By 1501, as a major expedition under the Comendador Mayor Nicolás de Ovando set out to develop a more permanent settlement on Hispaniola, the crown began to establish guidelines outlining the conditions for apportioning indigenous workers among the colonists. The Catholic Monarchs' instructions remained vague on how these distributions were to take place, but they did provide an opening statement on the principle underlying compulsory wage labor: "Since it will be necessary, in order to mine gold and to carry out the other works which we have ordered, to make use of the services of the Indians, you will compel them to work in our service, paying them the wage which you think it is just they should have".⁴

Arriving on Hispaniola in 1502, Ovando along with some 2,500 members of his expedition found that the task of compelling the Amerindians to work for them was not

⁴ Quoted in Simpson, *The Encomienda in New Spain*, 9-10.

so simple, as they encountered the organized resistance of several Taino *cacicazgos*, whose leaders refused to supply the Spaniards with either provisions or labor. During his tenure as governor, Ovando promoted two basic forms of supplying workers to the colonists, both of which already had been adopted as early as the mid-1490s: through the capture and enslavement of rebellious groups, and through the distribution (*repartimiento*) of the crown's vassals. The first form of recruitment garnered legal support from a sequence of crown legislation, first excluding the Caribs (deemed "cannibals") from the general prohibition of slavery (1503), then upholding the ideal of Just War as a form of punishing groups that openly rejected Catholicism (1504), and finally accepting that individuals purchased in *rescate* (ransom) operations could be held as legitimate captives (1506). These measures by the crown in effect adjusted to the demands and practices already under way in the Indies. In order to meet the immediate needs of the settlers who crossed the Atlantic with him, Ovando authorized and outfitted expeditions against the *cacicazgos* of Xaragua, on the west coast of Hispaniola, and Higüey, on the eastern end of the island. The raids on Higüey involved an element that was to play an important role in labor recruitment in frontier areas throughout Latin America for centuries to come: the expeditions took the form of private ventures, called *entradas* or *cabalgadas*, organized in paramilitary outfits reminiscent of the militias that conducted raids during the Reconquest and similar to the contemporaneous expeditions that plied the Canaries and the Barbary Coast for captives.

The second and most important form of labor recruitment and distribution grew into the institution known as *encomienda*, which also had medieval precedents that were reconfigured under these historically new circumstances. The origins and early

development of the *encomienda* as a social institution and as a labor regime remain somewhat unclear, as there is some confusion in the literature between the terms “repartimiento” and “encomienda” as they appeared in the Caribbean at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Although Las Casas asserted that Ovando had “invented the cruel and tyrannical repartimiento”, the Comendador Mayor in effect institutionalized a practice first introduced by Columbus himself around 1496, when he had assigned caciques to certain Spanish settlers. The details of these arrangements remain nebulous, but most likely this form of recruitment rested primarily on alliances between Spaniards and indigenous leaders, who channeled workers on a temporary basis to the yucca grounds (*conucos*) and prospecting areas of the newcomers. By delegating these privileges to the first generations of Spanish settlers in the New World, the crown sought, in effect, to reward the adventurers for their efforts, to convert the Indians to Christianity, and to generate wealth through their labor. However, perhaps the main reason leading to this alternative mode of distribution was to be found on the islands, for as Spanish demands upon indigenous resources increased with the sudden invasion of 2,500 fortune-seekers in 1502, native leaders became less and less cooperative in channeling workers to the colonial productive sphere. The Spaniards came to understand early on that the cooperation of the caciques was a key to the extraction of native labor, a realization that was to pattern later attempts to organize an indigenous workforce in both Spanish and Portuguese America.

The first concerted effort to assess and distribute the human resources of the island came only in 1505, when Ovando supervised the first *repartimiento general*. At some point, however, possibly during the assignment of the repartimiento Indians in

1505-06, colonial authorities began to grant these Indians expressly “in encomienda” to individual Spaniards. Quite different from the sporadic access to workers assigned to specific tasks for limited time periods, the encomienda entailed a broader set of rights and responsibilities that formally entrusted groups of Indians to Spanish guardians. In return for the privilege of collecting tribute in specie, in kind, or in labor from the crown’s newest vassals, encomenderos were charged with seeing to the conversion and protection of the Indians. This practice was consolidated under the *repartimiento general* conducted by Rodrigo de Albuquerque in 1513-14. As “*repartidor* of the Caciques and Indians of this island Hispaniola”, Albuquerque distributed 729 encomiendas with a total of 26,289 Indians among Europeans who had petitioned for grants. Each grant specified the cacique’s name and gave some details on the number of Indians subject to labor obligations, whether as *aborías* or as *indios de servicio*. The designation *aborías de repartimiento* inaugurated another important labor procedure, which involved the reconfiguration of precolonial categories to fit the demands of the emerging Spanish economy. In the early distribution, *aborías* were to be held by their Spanish beneficiaries until a new repartimiento took place. With Albuquerque, however, they were subject to the same stipulation as other Indians held in encomienda, which directed them to serve the encomendero and his heirs for two lifetimes, after which the encomienda would revert to the crown to be redistributed to another beneficiary. Needless to say, under the terrible conditions contributing to the demographic catastrophe, including the massive smallpox epidemic that broke out in 1518, very few if any *aborías* or *indios de servicio* outlived their initial encomienda obligations.

From the Spanish perspective, grants in *encomienda* severely restricted both the distribution and the mobility of the indigenous labor force. *Encomiendas* were distributed according to the beneficiary's status, privilege, and service to the crown, which meant that some royal officials and prominent settlers received much larger shares than most other grantees. In the 1514 distribution, less than 12% of the *encomiendas* included over 44% of the total number of Indians. The crown retained a moderate share of available Indian labor, presumably for service in public works: four *encomiendas* with a total of 1,503 Indians went to El Rey, including the largest single grant in the Albuquerque distribution, the 967 Indians of Santo Domingo. The Columbus family also held an important share, with 1,148 Indians in four *encomiendas*. Most colonists received much smaller stakes in the labor force, with an average size of around 23 Indians per grant, less than one-tenth the size of the average distributed to the Columbus clan.

Although the *encomienda* has been analyzed as an institutional alternative to slavery, it in fact contributed to the growth and expansion of an interregional Amerindian slave trade and the development of different forms of bondage. Indeed, the unequal distribution of grants conspired with population decline to stimulate the organization of raiding ventures that acquired captives by legal and illegal means. Recognizing this problem following the first *repartimiento* of 1505, Ovando sent a petition to the crown requesting permission to outfit expeditions to the Lesser Antilles ("useless islands nearby") to bring Indians back to replenish Hispaniola's already dwindling population. The *entradas* and *cabalgadas* gained the stature of *armadas de rescate*, and as the demographic catastrophe was replicated on Puerto Rico and Cuba, colonists on these islands also outfitted expeditions of their own. By 1515, in addition to the smaller islands,

Spanish raiders began to ply the coasts of Central and South America in an effort to restock depleted labor forces. Eight *armadas de rescate* set out from San Juan in 1516 alone, most to the mainland and some producing hundreds of slaves. Not all captives became chattel slaves, however, because ecclesiastical and administrative officials drew a distinction between slaves and *aborías perpetuos* based on the legality of their capture. Even colonial authorities had trouble understanding the difference between *aborías perpetuos* and slaves, and at one point a royal magistrate ordered the *aborías* of Cubagua Island to be branded in order to be identified, although unlike slaves, who were branded on their cheeks, *aborías* were to be branded on their arms. There was, however, a very significant distinction in that *aborías* could not be sold, which foreshadowed other forms of native bondage that appeared throughout the Americas in the centuries to come.

This initial Amerindian slave trade to the Caribbean lasted to the middle of the sixteenth century, after the Spanish crown had taken various measures to proscribe Indian slavery in the 1540s, in part as a response to humanitarian pleas but also because of the reformulation of policies intended to distribute labor to a broader base of colonists. Although many slave traders obtained substantial profits in these ventures, the Spanish soon found the Indian slave trade to be an unattractive economic proposition, because the survival rate of slaves taken from one disease environment to another proved disastrous and the possibility of importing African slaves showed greater promise. By 1530, Indian labor – indeed, the indigenous population as a whole – had lost its importance on Hispaniola. As Spanish entrepreneurs developed the New World's first sugar mills, which flourished until the Brazilian sugar boom of the late sixteenth century shut them

out for almost two centuries, the composition of the island's labor force shifted rapidly to African slaves. Although some 200 indigenous workers toiled on Hispaniola's 18 largest mills, they were outnumbered by African slaves (1,870) and even by Spanish wage earners (427). The situation on Cuba and Puerto Rico showed a similar tendency, although a greater number of Indian slaves and *aborías* appeared in the comprehensive list of San Juan's labor force compiled by the Lieutenant Governor that same year: the report enumerated 1,998 blacks (1,656 males), 751 Amerindian slaves, and 333 *aborías*, possibly including encomienda charges.

The publication of the New Laws in the early 1540s had a bittersweet impact on the Caribbean, as this initial triumph of Spanish justice over settler excesses came too late for the countless thousands of slaves, *aborías*, and encomienda Indians who had perished in the preceding half-century. By that time, the focus of colonial extraction had shifted radically following the conquests of the Triple Alliance and of Tawantinsuyu, but the early Caribbean phase had laid bare the painfully clear correlation between labor systems and population decline. It also provided a map for subsequent colonial initiatives, some achieving positive and constructive results, but others producing the same disastrous consequences as this truly dismal episode in Latin American economic history.

Encomienda, Indian Slavery, and Mandatory Labor Drafts in New Spain

The fall of Tenochtitlán in August, 1521 signaled a new phase in Spanish activities in the New World, which was to involve the struggle for control over vast human and material resources. From Mexico to the Andes, the conquistadors and their indigenous allies toppled empires, city states, and chiefdoms with surprising swiftness, but the transformation of early postconquest "economies of plunder" into systems designed to

extract colonial wealth proved a much more daunting task. Early on, the vanquishing armies drew heavily on their Caribbean experience, because *encomienda* grants along with the Indian slave trade remained the primary means of access to indigenous labor. Indeed, once the Aztec capital had been subordinated to Spanish control, Hernán Cortés immediately proceeded to distribute *encomiendas* among his most prominent soldiers, entrusting conquered *señoríos* (lordships) and their respective subordinate populations to individual Spanish guardians, reserving “the best and most important provinces and cities” for the crown. Although wary of the emergence of an excessively powerful and independent group of *encomenderos*, the crown found it convenient – perhaps even necessary – to transfer the costs of controlling substantial native populations and of enforcing tribute collection through the delegation of property rights and privileges to the conquistadors.

Unlike their Caribbean precedents, however, *encomienda* allotments in the Valley of Mexico and, later, in the heart of Tawantinsuyu were impressive in size, with many individual grants involving thousands of tributaries, in spite of royal legislation establishing a much lower limit. At the same time, recipients of *encomiendas* had to adjust this institution to existing structures of tribute exaction and mass labor recruitment. Although many of the constituent units of the precolonial system were deeply affected by the violent upheaval of the conquest and by subsequent outbreaks of epidemic disease, they provided a basic framework supporting the burgeoning Spanish demand for porters, construction workers, agricultural laborers, miners, and domestic servants. To an even greater degree than on the islands, mainland *encomenderos* depended on the traditional authority of native rulers to guarantee tribute payments and to channel labor to European

economic activities. Although this meant that many indigenous communities maintained a certain measure of control over their resources, in effect the *encomienda* introduced arbitrary alterations in the form, periodicity, and amount syphoned from subject communities. As Enrique Florescano has emphasized, the centralized system of labor and tribute extraction developed by the Aztecs and their allies underwent “profound *qualitative* changes”, not only with its fragmentation into individual units commanded by Spanish captains for their private benefit, but also in transforming the scope and meaning of work.⁵ The *encomienda* also redefined the tributary population: in New Spain, it included the conquered *pipiltin* (hereditary nobility), merchants, artisans, and widows, among other social categories that for the most part had remained exempt under Aztec rule.

Indeed, as a mercantile economy became entrenched, the demand for labor expanded rapidly. In Mexico, the decades immediately following the conquest witnessed an intense and chaotic dispute over the services of the *macehuales*, or tributary commoners, involving *encomenderos*, ecclesiastical interests, crown functionaries, native lords, and corporate communities. Personal service obligations of *encomienda* tributaries proved insufficient to meet colonial demands, in part because of the unequal distribution of the grants in the hands of a privileged few, in part because of institutional constraints limiting the commutation of tribute into labor, but also because of the restrictions that caciques and their communities placed on the unbridled exploitation of the tributary population. As the demands for tribute and labor became increasingly burdensome in the

⁵ Enrique Florescano, “La formación de los trabajadores en la época colonial, 1521-1750,” in *La clase obrera en la historia de México: de la Colonia al Imperio*, E. Florescano et al. (Mexico City, 1980), 25, emphasis added.

years following the conquest – a problem magnified by population loss – Indians sought to contest the assessments in court and to demand revisions in the tribute rolls. Spaniards, for their part, began to explore alternative forms of labor recruitment already in the 1520s, including the enslavement of Indians and Africans, as well as the demand for a repartimiento that would extend access to the labor of Indians directly under crown control.

Although Indians continued to be shipped to the islands during this period, Indian slavery also developed on a significant scale in the principal mainland colonies well into the 1540s, when royal sanctions significantly curtailed the institution. The internal slave trade provided a source of labor not only for settlers who did not receive encomiendas, but also for the encomenderos themselves, as they sought to expand their command over available labor resources. Large encomenderos, such as Cortés, owned hundreds of Indian slaves who toiled alongside Africans, encomienda Indians, convicted criminals, and free wage workers in mines, sugar mills, and textile workshops. In New Spain, the legal enslavement of native peoples derived basically from two sources: Indians purchased in the form of *rescate* (ransom) from their native masters and captives taken in warfare. Royal legislation strictly regulated the enslavement of war captives, seeking to enforce Just War precepts and to guarantee the crown's share of one-fifth of the captives. Authorities branded slaves on the cheek, with marks distinguishing whether they had been redeemed from indigenous masters or taken in punitive expeditions on the frontier. However, because frontier wars were carried out primarily by private bands with their indigenous allies, the capture and sale of slaves often generated dubious situations. Even in the more densely settled regions of Central America, Spaniards who were disappointed

with the poor prospects of obtaining instant wealth organized private ventures to raid peasant villages, capturing and branding Indians. The severe population decline suffered by several areas of Chiapas, Guatemala, Honduras, and especially Nicaragua most likely derived more from illegal and indiscriminate enslavement than from disease.

In New Spain, the specific demand for Indian slaves increased with the exploitation of gold and silver deposits beginning in the late 1520s. In principle, *encomienda* tributaries could not be sold, rented, relocated, or used in specific kinds of service; the crown repeatedly sought to curb certain practices, including the overexploitation of *tamemes* (porters), often associated with high mortality rates. Slavery did not present such formal restrictions. Cortés, for example, transferred the work force from his failing Tehuantepec enterprise to the more promising Taxco deposits, which was possible to do because these workers were slaves. As Robert Haskett has shown in his study of the Taxco mines, Cortés and other slaveowners acquired captives from a wide range of locations, some from the Gulf Coast and others from as far away as Guatemala. However, in examining an inventory of Cortés's *hacienda de minas* from 1549, Haskett demonstrates that most slaves working in those mines had been sold into bondage within central Mexico, and very few had been captured in anything resembling Just Wars, except, perhaps, the Indians of Texcoco who were branded and sold following the capitulation of the Triple Alliance. Furthermore, over half of the Indian slaves listed in the inventory were women, which raises interesting questions not only about the origins of these slaves, but also about the organization of production in the mines and on the estates during this early period. Unfortunately, relatively little information on slave prices and markets has survived for this period. In the existing records of slave transactions that

have been studied by Silvio Zavala and others, values fluctuated wildly, though Indians were usually assessed low prices. Rather than reflecting abundant supply, the comparatively low values attributed to Indian slaves in effect often revealed slaveowners' modest expectations in terms of productivity and, especially, longevity. Indian slaves entailed significant risks, especially when transferred from one disease environment to another. In addition to this negative "relocation cost", other factors increased risk and affected prices, including ethnic origins as well as propensity to flee or to rebel.⁶

Mandatory labor drafts, sanctioned by the crown and commanded by royal authorities, constituted a third strategy for supplying indigenous labor to Spaniards in the wake of conquest. Even before the formal establishment of New Spain's repartimiento in 1549, tributary communities directly subordinated to the crown provided substantial inputs in the form of labor services, channeling *cuadrillas* (gangs) to public works projects and distributing *indios de servicio* to private interests for specified periods of time. Collective labor drafts drew on pre-Hispanic forms of distribution and organization, readapting the Nahuatl term *coatequitl* to the colonial setting. Under Aztec rule, *coatequitl* labor obligations formed a complex system of rotating drafts based on vigesimal tribute counts, as gangs from different *tlaxilacalli* (neighborhood units) rendered services either to the ruling group or for public works, toiling on roads, buildings, hydraulic projects, or agricultural plots. In short, the system sought to maximize collective labor power while affecting villages minimally. Spanish authorities and employers retained some of the essential collective and corporative features of the

⁶ On relocation costs, also an important element in the African slave trade, see Ralph Schlomovitz, "Forced Labor: an Overview", in *A Historical Guide to World Slavery*, Seymour Drescher and Stanley Engerman, eds. (Oxford, 1998).

system, adopting vigesimal counts and deploying community craft specialization, especially in the construction of cathedrals, monasteries, and even private residences. In Tlaxcala, the most populous *señorío* that was never entrusted to encomenderos, royal authorities and native lords established that in exchange for the annual tribute payment of 8,000 fanegas of maize, the *tlaxilacalli* units would provide 800 workers each week on a rotating basis, to be distributed among the Spaniards or to execute public works in the early 1530s.

Tlaxcala's special status, which derived from its role in the Conquest, made this early experiment possible, but by the 1540s several factors had conspired to favor this system of labor recruitment and distribution over the others. Opposition to Indian slavery and to abuses associated with forced labor under the *encomienda* raised the intensity of the labor issue, as the weighty opinions of Bartolomé de las Casas and Vasco de Quiroga moved the crown to introduce a broad range of institutional reforms. Beginning with the New Laws of 1542 and culminating with the establishment of the *repartimiento* in 1549, the crown cut deep into the privileges appropriated by the first generation of conquistadors, by abolishing Indian slavery and stripping encomenderos of their unbridled access to the labor of their charges. By the 1550s *encomienda* benefits in New Spain in effect had been reduced to an increasingly modest annuity based on a head tax set by a crown inspector. However, although the "struggle for justice" certainly played an important role in guiding Spanish policy, it does not explain the full range of the crown's intentions. The New Laws also responded to pressures by the encomenderos, who revindicated the perpetuity of their grants (which were restricted to two lifetimes), and to the growing needs of nonencomenderos, who clamored for access to native labor,

especially in the expanding mining and agro-pastoral sectors of the colonial economy. Furthermore, two critical contingent factors also shaped the outcome of this process of projected reforms. First, between 1545 and 1548, the native peoples of central Mexico fell victim to the *hueycocoliztli*, a “great sickness” that claimed countless lives and had an immediate impact on land, labor, and production, far more striking than the institutional adjustments the crown was promoting. Around the same time, the discovery of major silver deposits on the sparsely settled frontier to the north and northwest of Mexico City created an even greater demand on increasingly strained human resources.

Beginning around 1550, royal authorities began a major overhaul in the tribute and labor system in New Spain. Curiously, however, as Charles Gibson has suggested, the centralized repartimiento appeared first to restore ethnic boundaries and labor drafts according to patterns established before the arrival of the *encomenderos*. Indeed, whether to revise tribute schedules or to organize public works for flood control, governors and *corregidores* relied on the memory of ethnic *señoríos*. But the introduction of the repartimiento and other reforms also proved disruptive in significant ways. By establishing direct control over mandatory labor distribution and tribute collection at this critical juncture, the crown firmly asserted its political presence and authority in the Americas, while creating new possibilities for channeling wealth to the royal exchequer. At the same time, policies designed to protect the Indians from abusive treatment in the hands of private interests in effect promoted the development of the colonial economy. The resettlement (*congregación*) of indigenous communities increased Spanish access to land, labor drafts selectively subsidized production, and tribute obligations in specie and in maize rather than in multiple commodities forced Indians into the wage labor market.

The precipitous population decline and the mining bonanzas of the 1540s further sparked the rearrangement of productive resources, as European enterprises began to replace indigenous communities in supplying foodstuffs and textiles to Spanish towns and mining zones.

Instituted in 1549 to replace *encomienda* labor obligations, the *repartimiento* began to function on a significant scale already in the 1550s. Based on revised tribute schedules (*tasaciones*), local officials responsible for recruitment would present the designated number of workers on a weekly basis to the *repartimiento* district authority, the *juez repartidor*, who in turn was responsible for assigning work crews to serve different Spanish employers for specified tasks or periods. The objective was to provide a steady supply of labor to qualified mine owners and *labradores* (Spanish farmers) without affecting the Indian communities very much. As part of the crown's policy of protecting its indigenous vassals, the *repartimiento* system required employers to remunerate workers with cash wages, while limiting the length of time that Indians were to be forced to work. Workers served in weekly shifts, receiving wages at the end of each tour of duty at rates fixed by crown authorities. Agricultural quotas varied on a seasonal basis: communities were to cede 2% of their tributary population (a quota called *dobla*) during weeding, harvesting, and irrigating periods, and 1% (*sencilla*) for the other periods. The actual percentages fluctuated as a result of population changes and of specific arrangements with different towns, but remained fairly constant through the third quarter of the sixteenth century. Authorities summoned larger drafts on an emergency basis, but even then the immediate impact on indigenous communities probably was not significant. For example, during the flood of 1555, the viceroy drafted some 6,000

workers to construct an enormous dike, at a time when the potential tributary labor force was over 2 million.⁷ In urban areas, especially Mexico City, indigenous neighborhoods faced greater difficulties in meeting quotas, not only because of population decline but also because of a greater demand for skilled workers, especially in large-scale public works. Authorities rented African slaves and assigned condemned criminals to make up for part of this demand, but they also diverted drafts from other communities in outlying areas.

The importance of repartimiento drafts for mining areas in New Spain varied greatly in space and over time. Some of the most prosperous silver mines were located in sparsely settled areas on the northern frontier, whose native populations proved difficult to recruit into a reliable source of labor. At the same time, unlike their Peruvian counterparts, royal authorities in New Spain restricted the range of repartimiento service, so mines such as Zacatecas fell beyond the legal geographical limit of the densely settled areas. Nonetheless, even in that region the repartimiento proved necessary to supply workers for the salt mines, which were essential to the patio process used to refine silver, but which failed to attract free labor as easily as the silver mines. Silver mines closer to dense populations, such as Pachuca and Taxco, relied on labor drafts to a greater extent than Zacatecas. But mine owners in these places also turned to African slavery and free wage labor early on as their principal source of workers, which meant that repartimiento inputs served primarily as subsidies, which were important enough to be part of the constant complaints voiced by mine owners to the crown, seeking greater concessions to help defray rising production costs. After all, repartimiento wages were set well below

⁷ These figures were derived from Charles Gibson, *The Aztecs Under Spanish Rule*

the rates paid on the free labor market. Finally, as Robert Haskett shows, indigenous communities were sometimes successful in revindicating adjustments and exemptions, which suggests that Indians spent more than sweat and blood in shaping the labor system. As we shall see below, these factors favored the development of a mixed system of wage labor and ore-sharing arrangements.

As Gibson notes, the agricultural draft functioned well so long as the Indian population remained sufficiently large and the number of Spanish employers sufficiently limited. However, when a second great sequence of epidemics struck a severe blow to the indigenous population of Central Mexico between 1576 and 1581, the relative capacity of native communities to meet growing Spanish demands reached a critical point. By the end of the sixteenth century, labor quotas had increased dramatically, with the harvest period *dobla* requirement leaping from 2% to 10% of the tributary population in some communities in the Valley of Mexico. This new disruption in the supply of involuntary labor moved hacienda and mine owners to seek workers through other means. Although some of the larger estates could turn to African slavery – indeed, the number of slaves introduced into New Spain grew rapidly in the final years of the century – most employers sought to guarantee their share of Indian and mestizo labor through private contracts, in spite of rising wage rates. At the same time, the crown sought to curb some of the more notorious abuses within the system at the beginning of the seventeenth century by prohibiting the use of repartimiento labor in agriculture and public works, maintaining the system as a source of supply for the mines. Although the crown expected for a smooth transition to a labor arrangement governed by private contracts between Spanish employers and indigenous workers, many of the earlier practices continued to

(Stanford, 1964), 225.

exist, and after more decrees the repartimiento was finally abolished in 1632, except in mining districts. Not unlike so many other abolitions that took place throughout Latin American history, the 1632 decree did not reorganize the labor system, rather it simply consolidated a process well under way since the late sixteenth century. As Charles Gibson shows, the supply of workers to private employers through the repartimiento drafts had declined to almost nothing by the early 1630s in the Valley of Mexico.

Encomienda, Yanacónaje, and Mita in the Rise of the Andean Mercantile Economy

The development of postconquest labor systems in the Andes followed a trajectory somewhat different from New Spain's, especially with respect to the reconfiguration of precolonial social categories and forms of recruitment. Prolonged civil strife between encomenderos, the relative weakness of royal authority in the region before the 1560s, and the persistence of indigenous control over key productive and distributive processes meant that the timing and impact of institutional change would take on distinctive characteristics. As in Mexico, the fall of Tawantinsuyu led to the immediate assignment of encomienda grants, which conferred authority over *kurakas* (native lords) and their subjects. During the early years, the encomienda in Peru constituted what Karen Spalding has called a "more institutionalized form of plunder", but by the 1540s, a structured mercantile economy began to blossom, rapidly increasing the demand for indigenous labor. The discovery of the Cerro Rico at Potosí in 1545 had an enormous impact on the development of a regional economy, one not only dedicated to silver production in itself but also to supplying a burgeoning European population with wheat, sugar, olives, wine, and livestock, as well as providing abundant supplies of coca leaves to the armies of miners who stripped the silver mountain. In the northern part of

the former Inca empire, where the Spanish established their viceregal capital, control over indigenous resources unfolded more rapidly than in the Andean heartland to the south, with the rapid development of rural estates specialized in European products and a more pronounced decline in the indigenous population. Facing the same legal restrictions as in Mexico and concentrated in the hands of relatively few Spaniards, *encomienda* labor proved insufficient to meet the growing needs of these fledgling enterprises. More importantly, *kurakas* placed further constraints through their critical role as mediators in colonial labor relations, not only controlling recruitment but also safeguarding the collective interests of their communities. As a result, successful *encomenderos* tapped into community resources and labor power through the preservation of reciprocal relations rather than through the use of force. Others, however, sometimes with the collusion of *kurakas*, subjected their charges to abusive practices and derived additional benefits by illegally renting Indians, especially to nonencomenderos competing on a labor-scarce market.

Population decline affected the Andean labor supply in differential patterns from north to south during the sixteenth century, although not on a scale comparable to New Spain, where the severe epidemics of the 1540s and 1570s constituted veritable watersheds. As Steve Stern points out in his study of Huamanga, during this critical period of readjustment “the colonial economy continued to depend for goods and labor almost wholly upon the Andean social system, managed and controlled by Andean social actors, relationships, and traditions”.⁸ Producers linked to regional and international markets explored other arrangements, including African slavery and early forms of wage

labor, establishing private contracts with individual workers or with *kurakas* who recruited workers from their own communities. Although a regular flow of African slaves did not set in until the end of the sixteenth century when the *asiento* system was firmly in place, colonial entrepreneurs in most activities began to import modest amounts of relatively expensive African slaves already at mid-century, often for specialized or domestic functions. However, the main source for directly controlled workers derived from the reconfiguration of a precolonial category, that of *yanacona*. Before the Spanish, *yanas* comprised, in the words of Ann Wightman, “a social group characterized by a special, inherited relationship of service and subordination to the state, as personified in the emperor or the local elite”.⁹ Following the conquest, many *yanaconas* and their families attached themselves to the Spanish, serving as retainers on expeditions or as workers on estates and in textile workshops, among other activities. The Spanish considered their status to be hereditary, and not unlike the Aztec bondsmen subject to *rescate* in New Spain, they became the dependents of Spanish lords, who often treated them as personal property, renting out their services and even selling them to others. Members of one special category, the *yanaconas del Rey*, remained as direct dependents of the crown, subject to labor drafts when summoned by royal officials. Over time, *yanaconaje* grew into a significant form of rural and urban labor, and as Indians began to avoid tribute and labor obligations by migrating from their communities, the presumed hereditary status of *yanaconas* became diluted and the category assumed a more generic meaning. Following Toledo’s reforms, the term had become the equivalent of any non-

⁸ Steve Stern, *Peru’s Indian Peoples and the Challenge of Spanish Conquest*, rev. ed. (Madison, 1993), 40.

community Indian who was not subject to the mita draft, although *yanaconas* did have to pay an annual tribute of one peso to the crown.

During the first phase of silver mining at Potosí in the 1540s and 1550s, *yanaconas* were cast in a somewhat less dependent role. Although Spanish entrepreneurs secured rights to mining claims, they did not control the productive process entirely, especially at the refining stage. Mine owners established contracts with *yanaconas*, who came to be known as *indios varas* (in reference to the veins – *varas* – they exploited). These contracts usually included specific quotas to be turned over to the mine owner, which meant that the miner retained a variable portion of the ore he carved from the mountain. The bulk of the mining workers was made up of unskilled carriers, called *apiris*, and the Spaniards relied primarily on *kurakas*, who organized drafts based on precolonial practices, to supply these workers. The refining process involved large inputs of skilled labor, as the prehispanic technique using *guayras* (wind ovens) to separate molten silver from ore prevailed. This technology proved effective as long as high-grade ore was easily accessible, and as many as 15,000 *guayras* remained active until the early bonanza showed signs of exhaustion already in the 1550s. As Jeffrey Cole argues, by the early 1560s the downturn in production paradoxically led to a labor shortage, caused more by the refusal of workers to toil for lower wages and decreasing shares than by the decline in population. In 1561, according to Cole, some 20,000 Indians lived in Potosí but only 300 were employed in the mines. Some mine owners resorted to African slaves with only partial success, however, since the cost of introducing slaves remained high and because the crown restricted the number of slaves to be brought through the *asiento*.

⁹ Ann Wightman, *Indigenous Migration and Social Change* (Durham, 1990), 17.

Furthermore, a common belief held that African workers fared poorly in the highlands because they were especially susceptible to respiratory diseases, a sort of mirror image of the poor performance of highland Indians as workers in the humid lowlands.

The labor crisis was at the heart of a larger movement, which Stern has identified as an “historical watershed”: the outcome involved the effective consolidation of the conquest, subordinating Andean communities to the colonial state. As in Mexico, the crown intervened at this point both to mediate conflicts as well as to take direct control over tribute collection and labor distribution. Wary of the growing dispute over scarce labor, encomenderos pressed the crown for greater privileges, seeking to transform their *encomiendas* into perpetual grants. *Kurakas* countered with proposals of their own, at one point offering to pay a handsome sum to Philip II to abolish *encomiendas* altogether, as Thomas Abercrombie has shown.¹⁰ Although this was an example of how native leaders sought to negotiate directly with the crown, *kurakas* also took a more direct confrontational stance by refusing to supply required labor, while at the same time the emergence of manifestly anticolonial resistance movements posed an even greater threat to the survival of Spanish Peru. Within this context, writers with extensive colonial experience, especially Juan Polo de Ondegardo and Juan de Matienzo, drafted detailed reports and suggestions in an effort to solve the labor problem, taking into account not only the demands of the colonial economy but also the resilience of Andean structures and traditions, which could provide useful keys for reinvigorating the stagnant silver mining economy. The most prominent feature of the new system entailed the expansion and centralization of rotating labor drafts, involving medium to long-range migrations.

¹⁰ Thomas Abercrombie, *Pathways of Memory and Power* (Madison, 1998), 223.

Reminiscent of the preconquest term *mit'a*, denoting service rotations – literally “turns” – performed within communities or for the Inca, the hispanicized *mita* constituted a form of *repartimiento*, whose primary function was to distribute mandatory labor draft workers to private colonial entrepreneurs in unequal shares. Although the primary beneficiaries were mining interests, *mita* drafts also rationed workers among agricultural and urban manufacture units, especially in areas beyond the reach of the major silver and mercury mines. However, the Andean *mita* differed considerably from New Spain’s *repartimiento* in terms of size, scope, function, and longevity.

Consolidated with the reforms instituted by the Viceroy Francisco de Toledo in the early 1570s, the *mita* gave the mining economy an enormous boost, providing abundant and inexpensive labor to a sector that was entering a boom phase. The new amalgamation process, which allowed for the processing of lower-grade ores and introduced significant gains in productivity, required steady supplies of mercury as well as the construction of water-driven stamp mills. During the early years of the Toledan *mita*, a considerable portion of the mandatory labor force toiled in the construction of these mills and in associated hydraulic projects, although most entered the ranks of the *apiris*, ore carriers who faced dismal working conditions and heavy production quotas. The Potosí *mita* drew workers from a far greater geographical range than that permitted in New Spain, covering roughly the precolonial imperial quarter of Qullasuyu. Sixteen units, called *capitanías*, were to send one-seventh of their tributary population for annual tours of duty, replicating the broad outline of the *mit'a* system used by the Inca, but introducing radically different implications. Native lords served as *capitanes de mita* and were responsible for delivering workers to the mines and supervising the organization of

work shifts. By 1578, slightly more than 14,000 workers composed the total draft labor force (called the *mita gruesa*), which was divided into three equal parts, with each shift (called the *mita ordinaria*) serving for one week and resting for two. Drawn from eleven *capitanías*, a smaller force served rotations in the Huancavelica quicksilver mines, with around 2,200 Indians assigned each year. These mercury mines, with high death and disability rates, became more dependent upon forced labor drafts than the silver mines, as they failed to attract sufficient numbers of voluntary migrant laborers no matter how high the wage, and – unlike Potosí – *mitayos* refused to stay on beyond their mandatory terms.

During Potosí's boom period (c.1575-c.1615), the *mita* afforded the mineowners a cheap alternative to free wage labor for the heaviest and most dangerous tasks. The division of labor between *mitayos* and *mingas* (voluntary wage laborers) is sketched in the well-known “Descripción de la Villa y Minas de Potosí” of 1603. According to this anonymous report, of the more than 19,000 workers directly involved in the mining sector, 4,000 were listed as *mitayo* miners, mostly *apiris*, while only 600 *mingas* worked inside the mines, perhaps mostly as *barreteros* (pickmen). These numbers were directly inverted for refinery work, that is, only 600 *mitayos* are listed against 4,000 *mingas*.¹¹ This clearcut distinction between *mitayos* and *mingas* can be somewhat misleading, however, since individual workers often shifted between categories. Indeed, another important feature of the rotating draft was that it increased the pool of free laborers, insofar as *mitayos* often hired on as *mingas* during the rest period (*huelga*) between mandatory shifts. The presence of family members accompanying *mitayos* during their assignments further increased this “off-duty” *mita* labor force. Over the course of the

¹¹ Figures extracted from Jeffrey Cole, *The Potosí Mita, 1500-1700* (Stanford, 1985).

seventeenth century, the *mita* declined steadily as a source for labor, although it retained its importance as a subsidy for mining operations. Although community obligations remained high, many *kurakas* either failed to deliver full quotas of workers or presented cash payments in lieu of *mitayos*. In some cases individuals hired replacements to serve their shifts, whereas in others, hacienda owners or mining entrepreneurs who did not receive quotas advanced cash payments to secure workers otherwise committed to *mita* obligations. Under these circumstances of evasion and commutation, the character of the *mita* shifted from a subsidy in labor to a money rent extracted from tributary communities, as Enrique Tandeter shows in his meticulous study of this system. The crown attempted to enforce, reform, or even abolish this institution on different occasions during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as the Potosí *mita* survived into the nineteenth century. But the essential contours of a hybrid labor system had been established even before Viceroy Toledo had returned to Europe. Mandatory drafts directed by the colonial state played a strategic role in reorganizing the mining sector but colonial entrepreneurs – including beneficiaries of the *mita* – came to rely primarily on private arrangements to guarantee a steady and stable supply of workers.

African Slavery

Patterns of New World Demand

African slavery became an increasingly attractive labor option for colonial entrepreneurs over the course of the sixteenth century, as several factors converged to fuel the expansion of a trans-Atlantic trade. The precipitous decline of Amerindian populations created the need to import workers from other regions, especially in areas where sugar,

tobacco, cacao, and other tropical staples began to show promise as sources for colonial wealth. The forced relocation of indigenous peoples from neighboring regions, whether as slaves, drafted workers, or residents of missionary settlements provided significant inputs especially in the early stages of European expansion, but high mortality, indigenous resistance, and moral opposition to dismal conditions rendered forced native labor an increasingly costly and unreliable expedient. Indeed, at certain critical junctures, African slavery held distinct advantages over other available forms of labor from the slave buyer's perspective. For example, as Stuart Schwartz demonstrates in the case of Brazilian sugar plantations in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, planters and mill owners turned increasingly to African slaves because slavery entailed a clear comparative edge over various forms of coerced and free native labor.

Although New World labor demands go a long way in explaining the origins, growth, and consolidation of African slavery in the Americas, the option of slavery also derived from other considerations. Slaves, after all, as Franklin Knight remarks, “were commodities of exchange as well as potential units of labor”.¹² Buyers in the Americas acquired African bondsmen primarily as labor inputs, but slaves also provided an interesting alternative both as a rent-producing investment and an outward sign of social distinction, especially in the urban areas of Spanish America. On a broader scale, the Iberian monarchies actively encouraged the slave trade, not only because of its potential as a source of fiscal revenues, but also because it ostensibly provided an acceptable alternative to the forms of forced native labor that had elicited growing waves of moral

¹² Franklin Knight, “Slavery and Lagging Capitalism in the Spanish and Portuguese American Empires, 1492-1713”, in *Slavery and the Rise of the Atlantic System*, B. Solow, ed., (Cambridge, 1991), 65-66.

outrage. Although a few faint voices clamored against the immorality of this human traffic as well, African slavery raised few objections – except from the slaves themselves – until well into the eighteenth century, and remained a crucial labor arrangement in different parts of Latin America almost to the end of the nineteenth century.

The first African slaves in the Americas most likely arrived with Ovando's fleet in 1502, but this early generation was employed only sparingly in mining and agriculture. Most of the early slaves came to the Caribbean from the Iberian Peninsula, where they had acquired the linguistic and occupational skills that accompanied them to America, serving primarily as domestic servants, artisans, and soldiers. The first contract established between the Castilian crown and a private slave trader coincided with the outbreak of the disastrous smallpox epidemic around 1518, and although it is not clear whether the contract in effect involved direct shipments from West Africa to the Caribbean, by the 1520s pioneer sugar planters in Santo Domingo and Puerto Rico began to rely primarily on enslaved Africans, who toiled alongside dwindling numbers of Amerindians and salaried workers from Europe. Following the conquest of the mainland empires and chiefdoms, which involved the significant participation of African slave-soldiers, Spanish American demand for African labor grew at a modest rate at first, but its scale and intensity picked up considerably during the final years of the sixteenth century, in part as a response to the decline of the indigenous population and to the changing forms of appropriating Amerindian labor, but also because it bolstered specific segments of the Spanish economy in the New World. African slaves and free blacks came to play a crucial role on sugar, wine, and wheat estates, in some of the silver and gold mines, in urban domestic service, in the shipbuilding industry, and in a wide range of

specialized crafts. Toward the end of the sixteenth century, Africans outnumbered Europeans in most Spanish American cities, although they continued to account for only a modest proportion of the colonial population as a whole.

During the colonial and early national periods, the demand for African slaves shifted considerably in spatial terms and over time, primarily in response to the emergence of new economic sectors and to the relative availability and desirability of alternative labor inputs. In Mexico, different waves of sugar production were tied to imports of African slaves, and significant plantation zones emerged especially in Veracruz. The slave population of New Spain reached its peak of about 35,000 (less than 2 percent of the Viceroyalty's total population) in the mid-seventeenth century, and declined steadily thereafter, although the plantation economy of Córdoba, Veracruz enjoyed a brief period of expansion in the eighteenth century. In the Viceroyalty of Peru, African slaves constituted an important part of the colonial population by the late sixteenth century, especially in urban areas near the Pacific coast, but also in the coastal valleys where sugar plantations and wine estates developed, involving around 100,000 slaves by the mid-seventeenth century. Unlike Mexico, the demand for slaves remained relatively constant through the colonial period, and at the end of the eighteenth century there were still some 90,000 slaves in the Viceroyalty. Other regions in northern South America responded to more punctual demands, such as the gold mining zones of Barbacoas and Chocó, or the cacao producing areas of Venezuela. Finally, in the La Plata region, African slaves constituted a significant part of the urban population even before the establishment of the Viceroyalty, and played an important role in the early development of sugar estates, vineyards, and cattle estancias, offering an alternative to

encomienda labor, especially in Córdoba and Tucumán. As the region became more dynamically integrated into the Atlantic commercial circuit in the late eighteenth century, an increased supply of slaves bolstered the urban labor market and furnished some of the larger estancias on both sides of the estuary with a steady flow of bondsmen.

In the Spanish Caribbean, early slave imports had waned by the final quarter of the sixteenth century as the sugar industry lost markets to producers in Mexico and Brazil. Africans continued to be imported in fits and starts throughout the seventeenth century, when they performed mainly urban and military functions, but it was not until the second half of the eighteenth century that the islands became decisively integrated into the Atlantic economy once again. The rebirth and meteoric growth of the sugar industry in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and, to a lesser extent, Santo Domingo were characterized by the rapid expansion of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the intensive exploitation of slave labor. From an entrepreneurial perspective, African slavery presented itself as the best alternative by far. The islands' population of free whites and mestizoes, creole slaves, and *manumisos* (freedmen) could not be transformed into a plantation labor force easily, as most slaves were occupied in urban professions and much of the rural population was engaged in small property agriculture. Sugar and, subsequently, coffee production received an additional boost from the outcome of the successful slave revolution on St. Domingue. Facing growing international pressure, the slave trade to the Spanish Caribbean reached its peak in the 1830s, and although slaves continued to be delivered clandestinely until the early 1860s, planters began to entertain alternatives to both African slavery and free labor. Following the pattern of neighboring sugar islands, they first attempted to fill their needs with contract labor brought from Asia, and as many

as 100,000 Chinese workers entered Cuba in the middle decades of the nineteenth century. But they also drew from remote traditions harking back to the early years of the sixteenth century, as they received a few thousand Maya Indians, who had been reduced to bondage as punishment for their participation in the Yucatecan “caste war”, which ended in 1847.

The greatest demand for slaves originated in Portuguese America, because Brazil received the lion’s share of the slaves shipped across the Atlantic from the mid-sixteenth century to 1850. Recent revised estimates suggest that as many as 4,000,000 Africans were sold in Brazilian slave markets, with well over half of that number arriving during the final century of the trans-Atlantic trade and a disproportionate number (c. 1.15 million) in the final three decades alone. The expansion of the sugar industry in the northeastern captaincies provided an initial impetus for slave imports; the discovery of alluvial gold deposits in Minas Gerais at the close of the seventeenth century and the development of coffee plantations in the nineteenth century also created a strong demand for slave labor. But slave purchases did not remain restricted to these sectors and as subsidiary economic activities emerged, including food production, cattle ranching, and urban services, slavery expanded accordingly. During most of the colonial period, buyers in Brazil enjoyed a great advantage over their Spanish American counterparts, because supply to the Spanish colonies remained under the constraint of *asiento* terms. Although the Portuguese crown imposed heavy duties on slaves and established monopoly companies in an effort to promote the use of African slavery in the northern colonies of Maranhão and Grão Pará, for the most part the trade remained open to any Portuguese subject who could outfit a voyage. The resulting elasticity of supply made slaves

accessible to a broad range of buyers through the duration of the trans-Atlantic trade. By the mid-seventeenth century, many if not most of the slave ventures set out from Salvador or Rio de Janeiro rather than Lisbon, and this complementary integration of reproductive and productive zones configured Portuguese colonialism in the South Atlantic, as Luiz Felipe de Alencastro has argued.¹³

Although the structure of the trans-Atlantic slave trade has been carefully studied in terms of its entrepreneurial organization, its demographic characteristics, and the distribution of slaves over time and space, the actual functioning of slave markets within Spanish and Portuguese America is less well known. A long sequence of observers, from the Jesuit Alonso de Sandoval in the early seventeenth century to British and French travelers of the nineteenth century, described in detail the squalid conditions of waterfront warehouses and the inhumane practice of buyers inspecting their prospective purchases, but they were somewhat parsimonious in their reporting of prices and transaction procedures. In effect, slaves were bought and resold in a number of ways, ranging from the grotesque public auctions of newly arrived Africans in open marketplaces in Cartagena, Veracruz, Salvador, or Rio de Janeiro, to the more private transactions between individual owners who processed their bills of sale in notary offices. Slaves purchased at the port of entry often faced a second journey, sometimes longer and even harsher than the Middle Passage, to distant mines, plantations, or urban areas where they were sold once again. Some larger enterprises, like the British St. John d'El Rey Mining Company in Brazil during the first half of the nineteenth century, sent their own agents to purchase slaves directly at the bayside warehouses.

¹³ Luiz Felipe de Alencastro, *O Trato dos Viventes* (São Paulo, 2000).

In slave economies, the labor market responded primarily to the interests of plantation owners and mining entrepreneurs. Large slaveholders made decisions based not only on the constant need to replace incapacitated, runaway, or deceased slaves, but also on their assessment of market conditions for their product. A few mill owners and mine operators participated in slaving ventures, but most relied on commercial intermediaries, which involved an increasingly intricate credit system. In mining zones, traders usually sold slaves for cash, not only because it was readily available but also because of the relative difficulty of collecting debts in frontier regions. In the more settled zones of staple production, where mill owners and planters had considerable stakes in lands, improvements, future crops, and, especially, slaves, merchants proved more willing to sell slaves on credit. In addition, although the slave trade often followed commercial and political trends set in Africa, buyers in the Americas developed certain preferences in terms of age, gender, and provenance, which were often reflected in differential prices for slaves of distinct ethnic origins. In each region of the Americas, slaveowners established particular classifications based on ideas about resistance to disease, physical strength, productivity, skills, and general adaptability, often pitted against notions concerning the tendency of different slaves to flee, commit suicide, or rebel. During the first centuries of New World slavery, slaveowners accumulated experience in observing and categorizing differences, but by the nineteenth century, these perceptions also began to echo a growing body of scientific and pseudoscientific literature on race. A popular guide for coffee planters in nineteenth-century Rio de Janeiro, for example, classified different ethnic origins according to physical and behavioral traits, associating these with relative work capacity. According to Ira Berlin

and Philip Morgan, “[s]uch mixtures of rational calculation and baseless stereotyping guided the construction of the labor force in various slave regimes”.¹⁴

With regard to slave markets, the best data for Latin America comes from Cuba and Brazil, although the most systematic collection and analysis of prices focus on the final years of slavery, between the eclipse of the slave trade around 1850 and the final abolition in the 1880s. Even so, much of the information fails to reflect real transactions, because it is based on appraisals made for probate inventories or tax purposes and adjudications in legal disputes over debts. This is significant, for as David Galenson has shown in his study of Barbados slave auctions, the enormously complex composition of slave prices in effective transactions responded to an intricate web of both conjunctural and contingent factors. A few studies have emerged, however, culling prices from sales transactions recorded in notary registers, the most complete of which covers some 23,000 sales between 1790 and 1880 in three Cuban districts. Although this is a meaningful sample with abundant information on ethnic origins and gender composition, the data presented by Bergad, Iglesias, and Barcia probably reveal more about urban slavery than plantation labor, because information on occupations was not sufficiently detailed to determine the destination of purchased slaves. In any case, the price series and its analysis do “represent general slave market conditions in colonial Cuba”, as the authors

14 Ira Berlin and Philip Morgan, eds., *The Slave Economy: Independent Production by Slaves in the Americas* (London, 1991), 11.

assert, introducing a promising agenda for future research in other regional slave markets.¹⁵

For Brazil, part of this agenda has been carried out by Laird Bergad, in his study of slave price trends in Minas Gerais over a period of nearly 150 years. Relying primarily on data from probated estates, Bergad identifies three broad periods and offers different explanations for price behavior in each of the three. During the boom-and-bust cycle of gold and diamond extraction (1715-1780), slave prices initially reacted to problems of supply and high transportation costs relative to other areas competing for slave labor, achieving a certain stability as the international slave trade readjusted its volume to meet mining demand. Indeed, whereas during the second half of the seventeenth century an annual average of around 7,000 Africans were shipped to Brazil, this number jumped to over 17,000 slaves per year by the 1740s. Following the decline of mining fortunes, slaves prices during a second period from 1781 to 1817 experienced surprising stability, considering the great upheavals that took place in the international context. According to Bergad, this can be attributed to a lessened dependence on slave imports, due not only to the economic downswing in gold production but also to the internal reproduction of the slave population. Finally, a third period corresponded to the expansion of coffee production (although not in the areas studied by Bergad), which along with pressures to end the slave trade drove up prices, which doubled during the 1820s. Perhaps the most suggestive aspect of this analysis establishes a relation between prices and profitability, showing not only that high profit enterprises (newly settled diamond mines or coffee

¹⁵ David Galenson, *Traders, Planters, and Slaves: Market Behavior in Early English America* (Cambridge, 1986); Laird Bergad, Fe Iglesias García, and María del Carmen Barcia, *The Cuban Slave Market, 1790-1880* (Cambridge, 1995).

zones, for example) correspondingly offered higher bids for prime slaves, but also that the competition between economic sectors or regions could drive up prices even in the less profitable zones. This dimension of the slave market has yet to be studied in greater detail, but much of the evidence suggests that regional and sectoral differences in the concentration and composition of slaveholdings may have as much to do with market and price variables as with questions of occupational specialization.

Organization and Management

New World slavery constituted an extraordinarily diversified and complex system of social relations, but in virtually all of its variations, work remained its central organizing feature. A substantial body of literature shows that many factors shaped particular arrangements under slavery in different places and at different times: the technical and organizational requirements of specific crops or minerals, the vicissitudes of the slave trade, relative factor proportions (especially in relation to land), the size of slaveholdings, and the life cycles of both masters and slaves, among others. At the same time, an increased focus on the importance of slavery in nonexport activities and on the slaves themselves has produced a much revised view of an institution that used to be measured by the dual images of the plantation complex and the master-slave dichotomy. Synthesizing current views, Dale Tomich writes: “Slave societies [...] involved two interrelated and overlapping economies: one organized by and for the master, although

contested and constrained by the slaves; the other by and for the slaves, although contested and constrained by the master”.¹⁶

Although masters enjoyed an obvious advantage through their near-monopoly of violence and through legal institutions that protected their often arbitrary control over their property, slaves gained increasing leverage in their unyielding defense of customary rights they had acquired over time. Indeed, more and more studies, whether on Brazil, the Caribbean, or the Old South, have recognized the existence of customary practices that moderated the pace and intensity of work rhythms in slave economies. Profit-maximizing masters may have pushed their slaves hard, especially during periods of favorable prices for their product, but they always faced the slaves’ refusal to produce beyond established conditions. With little institutional space for negotiation, these workers wielded other weapons that checked the excesses of most masters: frequent expedients included work slowdowns and stoppages, truancy, and flight. Less frequently they turned to outright violence, including the murder of overseers and even masters, as well as the threat of insurrection, sometimes carried out to bloody consequences.

Slavery, in principle, involved a reciprocal relation. Masters were entitled to extract labor from their slaves, but in return they were supposed to provide food, clothing, shelter, and religious instruction. These obligations constituted part of early modern Iberian legal codes and religious norms, but although no slaveowner was known to refuse his slave’s labor, many proved lax in feeding and clothing their bondsmen, especially as long as the trans-Atlantic trade continued to offer slaves at attractive prices.

¹⁶ Dale Tomich, “Une Petite Guinée: Provision Ground and Plantation in Martinique, 1830-1848”, in *The Slave Economy: Independent Production by Slaves in the Americas*, Ira Berlin and Philip Morgan, eds. (London, 1991), pp. 68-9.

However, no matter how much the legal and institutional framework favored masters, allowing them to dispose of their property pretty much in any way they pleased, slavery also involved a delicate set of relations that developed historically in the workplace within the Americas. Over time, the strict dependency that the master-slave bond theoretically entailed had been transformed, and in addition to rations and Catholic baptism, masters found themselves distributing provision grounds and permission to observe alternative religious practices. Perceived by the masters as discretionary concessions and by the slaves as acquired rights, these elements rarely became codified within formal law but very often were an important part of the recommendations detailed in treatises on management. Although it is tempting to view these features as the development of an independent slave economy and culture, in effect they constituted central elements of New World slave systems.

Northeastern Brazil in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries provided the first setting for the full development of a plantation complex based primarily on African slavery. Although planters and mill owners had experimented with different forms of forced Indian labor, it rapidly became clear that any future expansion was to be inextricably bound to the steady supply of slaves from across the Atlantic. In all of its different stages, sugar production required intensive labor inputs, and as a result, the acquisition and maintenance of a stable slave force constituted one of the main investments that a planter needed to make. The deliberate shift to African labor brought certain advantages, especially in terms of resistance to the epidemic surges that repeatedly decimated indigenous populations, but it also entailed new risks and costs. Slaveowners faced considerable expenditures with the initial outlay needed to purchase

slaves, with varying costs of coercion and maintenance, and with unpredictable turnover rates. At the same time, forms of resistance posed a constant threat: flight from the plantations, for instance, occurred relatively frequently, not only hampering production but also creating the need to subsidize paramilitary forces to catch runaway slaves and to squash *quilombos* (maroon communities).

Whereas some plantations concentrated over 100 slaves, most *engenhos* (plantations with mills) during the colonial period operated with between 60 and 80 resident slaves. The advantage of having a large labor force lay in the possibility of organizing additional shifts, but there was a disadvantage in that it became difficult to keep all the slaves constantly occupied, especially during idle periods in the production cycle. To increase the amount of sugar they produced, mill owners established arrangements with cane growers (*lavradores de cana*), who commanded their own slaves in small holdings (usually around ten slaves) and who ceded half of their crop to the mill owner for the privilege of processing the other half. Although some cane farmers had title to their lands, others leased plots from the *engenho* in different kinds of contractual agreements, usually turning over an even greater share of their cane to the mill owner. These relatively small labor forces could be expanded as needed by renting or borrowing slaves from larger properties. On the *engenhos*, most of the slaves worked as field hands, but the labor force also included a broad variety of occupations, with different degrees of expertise involved, ranging from unskilled or semiskilled cane cutters, cattle tenders, and porters to the highly skilled mill artisans, or to more prestigious occupations such as house servants and even *feitores* (foremen or overseers). This occupational structure was reflected in differential slave prices, and was intimately connected to a rapidly

developing ethnic hierarchy that distinguished recently-arrived Africans (*boçais*) from more “seasoned” *ladinos*, Africans from creoles, blacks from mulattoes, and ultimately slaves from free blacks. In addition to occupational, ethnic, and age divisions, slavery in the sugar industry also involved a sexual division of labor, although men often outnumbered women by as much as 2:1, especially in periods following new African slave purchases. Both men and women served as field hands, although men undertook the heavier tasks, such as clearing the fields for planting and chopping wood for the boilers. Female slaves cut and bundled cane alongside men, often working in pairs with a male counterpart. In the refining stage, this division seemed to obey the same logic, that is, heavier and more dangerous tasks for men, lighter tasks requiring more precision for women. Male slaves thoroughly dominated other activities, though, such as transport, whether by boat, by ox cart, or on their own backs.

Slaveowners employed different strategies in their effort to instill and enforce labor discipline, ranging from positive incentives to strict supervision to harsh corporal punishment. Although theories and practices of slave governance were designed to enhance productivity and profitability, they also had to take into account the ever-present specter of slave resistance in its various forms. As Gavin Wright remarks, “[t]he economic essence of slavery involved the ability of the owner to control the allocation of labor time between market and nonmarket activity”.¹⁷ Masters sought to keep their slaves occupied as much as possible, which was a considerable challenge in situations where seasonal rhythms of planting and harvesting dictated sharp oscillations in the demand for manpower. In periods of little demand in the agricultural sphere, slaveowners reoriented

¹⁷ Gavin Wright, *The Political Economy of the Cotton South* (New York, 1978), 6.

their slaves' activities to other collective tasks, which included clearing roads, constructing and restoring buildings, and working for hire on other properties.

On the larger units in both agriculture and mining, two basic organizational systems prevailed: gang and task. Gang labor involved an investment in close supervision, whereas the task system afforded slaves a certain measure of autonomy, as long as the slave met his quota on time. Each had distinct advantages and disadvantages, and in some cases, both forms could appear on a single production unit either simultaneously or seasonally. Both systems played a crucial role in the sugar production complex, as slaveowners deployed gangs to prepare the ground for cultivation and to weed the cane fields during the growing season, both activities involving strenuous and unpleasant work. The task system seemed to be preferred in the cutting, bundling, and delivery of cane to the mill. On both the large estates and cane farms, cane cutters worked in pairs, alternating between chopping and binding their daily quota, or *tarefa* (which also means "task"). Assigned quotas apparently varied over time: the evidence available suggests that in the seventeenth century, slaves were required to turn over as much as seven *mãos* ("hands", units with fifty bundles), or 4,200 canes per day. By the eighteenth century, slightly smaller amounts were required, probably as a result of the adjustments the system went through as it achieved a certain stability. The size of quotas certainly remained a central feature in the organization of labor time and discipline. Equivalent to the task system in other plantation zones in the Americas, the magnitude of the *tarefa* not only determined how heavy the work load was to be, but also established how much "free" time the slaves would have on their hands. This additional time often was filled by other demands around the plantation. But it could also be used by slaves to tend their own

gardens or to fish, especially as provision grounds (*roças*) became widely disseminated. In one notable example, reducing the size of the *tarefa* was a basic demand presented by the rebellious slaves from the Santana plantation at the end of the eighteenth century, in the conditions they proposed in order to go back to work.

But this exceptional case was far from the rule. Although there is no doubt that slaves played a crucial role in the development of slavery, they did so against the grain of conditions set by the slaveowners and sanctioned by royal laws. The task system certainly meted out a measure of autonomy, but the entire work process was always subject to strict supervision. The concession of provision grounds to plantation slaves constituted another part of this larger process involving the struggle between masters and bondsmen over the control of time. Provision ground cultivation probably developed early on within the sugar economy, as slave owners found this to be an effective way to reduce costs, although at the same time offering an incentive to slaves. Some historians and anthropologists have contended that this practice constituted a “peasant breach” within the rigid system of plantation agriculture, where slaves carved out an independent productive sphere as “proto-peasants”. Although piecemeal evidence does show that slaves organized food production independently and even marketed surpluses, provision ground cultivation remained an integral part of the plantation insofar as the estate owners continued to wield the ultimate authority over the slaves’ access to time and land. However, as the practice developed from an arbitrary concession to a consolidated right, slaves gained a certain amount of leverage in their struggle to reduce the effective amount of labor time dedicated to producing wealth for their masters.

Slavery Beyond the Plantation

Although plantations and mines directed their output primarily to external markets, they also generated an internal demand for goods and services, which resulted in the expansion of slavery to other economic sectors, both rural and urban. The development of internal markets in Portuguese America has received a great deal of attention in recent years and, correspondingly, a modified picture of slavery has emerged. Several studies have pointed to the widespread presence of slavery in nonexport activities, although at the same time showing the broad diffusion of slaveholding, which meant that a large percentage of households possessed slaves, even though in many cases they may have possessed only one slave. By the second half of the eighteenth century, although commercial agriculture tied to the Atlantic economy continued to attract the lion's share of slave imports, patterns of slaveholding seem to suggest that the plantation model was more an exception than a rule. On the fringes of the major sugar and coffee producing zones as well as in urban areas, most slaves experienced slavery either on smaller units of production or in urban labor markets where they competed with other slaves and free persons for work.

In his study of the composition of the slave labor force in the Recôncavo area of Bahia in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Bert Barickman observes that mill owners and cane producers did not monopolize slaveholding, although greater concentrations predictably were to be found in sugar growing parishes. Even in parishes dominated by "poor man's agriculture", that is tobacco and manioc (cassava) farming, slaves made up as much as one third of the total population during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Although economic historians traditionally have established

cleavages between non-export and export sectors, as well as between units of peasant production and slave-based plantations, detailed studies based on probate records and population rolls offer revealing insights into patterns of slaveholding and rural labor distribution. In the cases studied by Barickman, for example, one finds not only that most tobacco producers (around 90%) employed significant numbers of slaves, but also that even *roceiros* (small food producers), often labeled “subsistence producers” in the literature, also owned slaves. Indeed, 78 percent of the farmers listed as *roceiros* in Jaguaripe in 1781 held at least one slave.

Although the use of slaves in what appears to be peasant agriculture at first sight may seem contradictory, slavery and the rise of peasantries constituted an articulated process in more ways than one. Slave economies, whether agricultural or mining, gave rise to subsidiary food-producing economies, sometimes interwoven within the plantation zones, but at other junctures resulting in regional specialization. The sugar-producing zones of northeastern Brazil included a mix of both strategies, as slaves maintained provision grounds while plantations also purchased manioc flour and other foodstuffs from neighboring regions and meat from ranches in the interior. Both the foodstuff and cattle zones employed slave labor, although indigenous workers also formed a significant part of the workforce throughout the entire colonial period. What distinguished slave from nonslave units of production was their degree of commercialization, because income needed to be generated even to purchase a single slave. Under the conditions of low land values and relatively easy access to slaves, small agricultural units expanded rapidly throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Responding to favorable conditions, such as the increase in cotton prices or the growing urban demand for

foodstuffs, family units of production could increase their participation in internal (and even export) markets by acquiring a few slaves in addition to taking on other kinds of dependent workers, including *agregados*, which refers to nonfamily household members who were “attached” to the domestic unit in some way. The increasingly direct linkage between Brazilian and African markets also accounts for part of the expansion of slavery beyond the plantation. Tobacco, in particular, was tied to the Atlantic economy not so much as an export to the metropolis but especially as an essential commodity in the slave trade, which helps explain why even poor tobacco farmers had access to slaves.

This widespread presence of slavery beyond the fringes of export agriculture also has been noted by Guillermo Palacios in his study of peasant agriculture in late colonial Pernambuco, as well as by Herbert Klein and Francisco Vidal Luna in their study of São Paulo before the rise of coffee plantations. A third region that has received considerable attention is Minas Gerais, where agricultural production and rural labor barely were noticed by the historians whose main focus was on the meteoric rise and decline of the mining economy over the course of the eighteenth century. In a seminal article that generated considerable debate, Roberto Borges Martins and Amílcar Martins Filho asserted that in spite of the decline of mining fortunes, the slave population continued to grow steadily in Minas Gerais after 1750, especially during the first half of the nineteenth century, and that this growth was linked primarily to the development of local and regional markets and to the natural reproduction of the slave population. Although the Martins brothers tended to view the postmining development of slavery in Minas Gerais as isolated, autonomous, and, above all, unnoticed – “growing in silence”, as it were – a critique by Robert Slenes suggests that Minas remained strongly articulated to the

Atlantic economy, with the continued development of the diamond and gold mines, both sectors employing substantial numbers of slaves well into the nineteenth century, along with the emergence of commercial agriculture in the Zona da Mata region, first supplying the coffee plantations of the Paraíba Valley with foodstuffs and later (after 1850) dedicated to coffee themselves. Douglas Libby adds to this picture by showing how an avant-la-lettre import substitution complex of industrial and protoindustrial units of production employed large quantities of slave labor. From a macroeconomic perspective, then, the Minas economy could continue to absorb slaves. In addition, Libby argues elsewhere (as do the Martins brothers) that although the slave population in Minas Gerais was not as dependent on the slave trade as other regions due to natural reproduction, it continued to receive an important share of slave imports during the first half of the nineteenth century. In any case, as an increasing number of studies on the demographic and economic history of slavery demonstrates, Minas Gerais provides an important example of how the internal market (as opposed to export markets) sustained slavery: between 1819 and 1872, the number of slaves in the province increased more than two-fold, from 169,000 to 370,000, increasing the region's share of the total Brazilian slave population from 15 to 24%.

The expansion of urban slavery involved still other slaveholding patterns and labor arrangements. As we have seen, African slavery played an important role in Spanish American cities already in the sixteenth century, whereas in Portuguese America, in spite of low levels of urbanization before the eighteenth century, specific patterns that distinguished urban slavery had emerged in Salvador, Recife, and other towns by the mid-seventeenth century. Toward the end of the eighteenth century, with the expansion of

the slave trade to Spanish America and the growth of urban centers in Portuguese America, slaves dominated certain segments of the urban labor market, controlled sectors of petty commerce, and generated income for an increasingly broad segment of small property owners. As Christine Hünefeldt shows in her study of Lima and environs during the first half of the nineteenth century, and as Maria Odila Dias demonstrates in her study of São Paulo, urban slaves in some cases were part of more extensive slaveholdings of owners with rural and urban properties, whereas in others they belonged to single women or widows, who acquired one or more slaves and hired them out to bring in a more or less steady income. Although these owners could outfit their slaves with tools or saleable wares, they left it to the slaves to secure work or buyers in a frequently competitive market. In exchange, slaves would turn over a fixed sum to their owners, retaining anything else they might have earned for themselves. Beyond the stipulated payment to their masters, slaves could save toward the purchase of their freedom or use their earnings in a range of other social and devotional activities.

The specific arrangements between masters and slaves were part of the broader development of a market for services in which slaves competed for wages. Some masters rented their slaves directly to urban employers, and in Rio de Janeiro at least, a few slaveowners actually became specialized in offering slaves for rent. But the most common and abundant source of urban labor in Brazil resided in the availability of *escravos de ganho* or *ganhadores* (slaves for hire), also significant in several Spanish American cities even after Independence. Skilled slaves could find constant employment, but most slaves for hire faced a volatile and often highly competitive market interested primarily in casual labor. But the relative success of the system depended on the slave's

own initiative as well as on the master's own circumstances. A single slave belonging to a relatively poor master usually enjoyed more space and leverage than a slave whose master had other sources of income. Against this portrait of slave initiative and leverage, there is a darker side to the story, especially in cases where slaves were not able to find work or successfully hawk wares but had to hand over the daily sum that their masters required nonetheless. Hünefeldt reproduces the dramatic testimony of a free Angolan woman, whose husband (a slave) had just hanged himself because he could not meet his obligations. Earning money on an irregular basis as a water carrier, the slave and his family often had to beg or borrow to come up with the six *reales* that his master required, not to mention the rent that he was charged by the same master for living quarters.¹⁸

In some instances, slaves for hire adopted specific strategies to establish greater control over the uncertainties of the labor market. Seemingly unstructured and undisciplined, the urban labor market increasingly came under the scrutiny of city officials attempting to regulate services. However, as João José Reis has shown in his study of labor gangs in nineteenth-century Salvador, the *ganhador* not only “moved about freely in the streets looking for work” but also “organised his own work time – the time, pace and even amount of his labour”, especially because employers paid for specific tasks rather than units of time. In spite of this individual leeway, urban slaves in Salvador became organized in ethnic-based *cantos*, an ambivalent term meaning both “song” and “corner”, which referred both to the work songs that accompanied tasks and to the territorial domain of each work group. *Capitães-de-canto* (canto captains) served

¹⁸ Christine Hünefeldt, *Paying the Price of Freedom: Family and Labor among Lima's Slaves, 1800-1854* (Berkeley, 1994).

as leaders, whose main function resided in mediating the terms of service between urban employers and the *ganhadores*.¹⁹

In addition to ethnic and occupational structures, urban slavery also included a clear sexual division of labor, where women occupied strategic roles not only in domestic services but especially as vendors, whether carrying their wares through the streets or selling them from a fixed stall. In the mining towns of Minas Gerais during the eighteenth century, what began essentially as a male-dominated activity – probably because of the profoundly skewed sex ratio in the population as a whole – by the end of the century was controlled primarily by women. As Mary Karasch notes in her study of nineteenth-century Rio de Janeiro, the distinction between domestic service and street hawking was blurred by the fact that many house slaves spent part of their day on the streets selling food and other goods for their owners. In Lima during this same period, slave women often marketed produce from their owners' truck gardens, which in turn were worked by slaves in the rural area. This regular movement between the countryside and the city, also a characteristic of produce markets in Brazil, challenges assumptions based on a rigid contrast between rural and urban slavery.

From a theoretical standpoint, slaves for hire present an anomalous situation, where wage labor remained intertwined with chattel slavery, seemingly antithetical relations. Some historians have proposed that this practice constituted a “wage breach” analogous to the “peasant breach” identified in plantation provision grounds. However, even though wages were set primarily by market forces, the slave by definition could never aspire to be a free laborer, unless, of course, he purchased his own freedom. As

¹⁹ João José Reis, “‘The Revolution of the *Ganhadores*’: Urban Labour, Ethnicity and the

Leila Algranti points out, slaves for hire negotiated their labor power in a competitive market, but their first and foremost obligation was to their owners, who collected a fixed amount and held discretionary if not arbitrary power over their charges. Nonetheless, the distinction between unskilled workers slave and free was not always so clear, not only in economic terms but also in social ones, because they often shared urban neighborhoods and lodgings. Slavery, after all, in spite of its seemingly tight institutional contours, also represented something of a hybrid labor system.

Wage Labor and Its Variants

Over the course of the colonial period, wage labor occupied an increasingly important position in the configuration of colonial labor markets. In its broadest outline, the history of labor systems appeared to evolve in the direction of relations mediated by a wage labor market, but the development of specific wage labor forms must be approached with some caution. Arnold Bauer, for example, describes this movement as “the gradual, patchy, and sporadic progression to freer forms of labor”.²⁰ In effect, formal coercion through *encomienda* obligations and mandatory drafts, which drew labor from declining indigenous populations, proved insufficient to meet the growing demands of a colonial economy, especially in mining, commercial agriculture, and urban trades. Employers, especially those who did not receive allotments of native workers, began to recruit free workers from among categories that were not formally attached to Indian communities, including *naboríos* in New Spain, *yanacunas* and *forasteros* in the Andes, as well as a growing mestizo population, which began to expand at a more rapid pace by

African Strike of 1857 in Bahia, Brazil”, *Journal of Latin American Studies* 29 (1997), 455-493.

the eighteenth century. At the same time, Indians subject to tribute and labor obligations also entered the free labor market, as colonial employers recruited their services in between mandatory shifts or, in some cases, hired on Indians through contractual agreements that included the liquidation of tribute obligations, which were paid outright by the employers.

How free was the free labor market? Before examining this question in some detail, it is worth noting that studies of colonial and early postcolonial labor markets lag far behind scholarship on institutionalized forms of coerced labor. As Lyman Johnson observes, “[d]espite more than forty years of intensive interrogation of [Spanish America’s] economic development in the late colonial period, there are only a handful of wage and real wage studies”.²¹ One of the reasons for this neglect has to do with the fact that nominal wages often remained constant over long periods of time, because they usually were set by colonial authorities rather than by the market. Yet the idea that wages changed little over time leaves a false impression, according to Richard Garner, because wages were not static; rather they remained subject to conjunctural fluctuations in supply and demand for labor, although real wages fluctuated in relation to oscillations in grain prices.²² At the same time, labor recruitment often involved a variety of both formal and informal modes of coercion, which quite possibly depressed wage levels. For example, in

²⁰ Arnold Bauer, “Rural Workers in Spanish America: Problems of Peonage and Oppression”, *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 59:1 (1979), 35.

²¹ Lyman Johnson, “Slave and Free Labor in Buenos Aires, 1770-1815”, *International Review of Social History* 40 (1995), 410.

²² Richard Garner, “Prices and Wages in Eighteenth-Century Mexico”, in Lyman Johnson and Enrique Tandeter, eds., *Essays on the Price History of Eighteenth-Century Latin America* (Albuquerque, 1990), 76.

communities affected by the forced sale of commodities, Indian peasants were “forced” to seek wages in order to meet the quotas thrust upon them through the *reparto de mercancías*. At other junctures, especially in the late colonial and early national periods, enlightened and liberal states introduced various kinds of “vagrancy laws”, which sought to force “idle” and “shiftless” Indians, mestizoes, and freed slaves into the labor market. Furthermore, employers sought (and often succeeded) to restrict the mobility of workers through a combination of contractual agreements (*asientos* or *conciertos*), ties of personal dependency, and credit-debt relations. And finally, workers themselves sought to avoid becoming entirely dependent upon wages, by maintaining ties to peasant communities and by negotiating share arrangements, which included access to land in the rural sphere and access to ore scraps in the mining zones.

The development of wage labor in the silver mines of the Andean region and of Mexico illustrates some of these trends. In Potosí, *mita* labor drafts provided a basic corps of workers at low wages, usually deployed by mine owners for the heaviest and most dangerous tasks. Even when the number of *mitayos* sent to the mines diminished, either because of evasion or of commutation in the form of cash payments, the *mita* functioned as a subsidy that lowered the cost of free labor. The mines depended on the constant availability of *mingas*, hired workers whose wages not only were somewhat higher than the fixed rate for *mitayos*, but whose benefits usually included the right to retain ore scraps that could be sold in the *qhatu*, an Indian market, and subsequently processed in the surviving *guayra* ovens. During the early years when *mita* drafts supplied around 14,000 workers annually, mine owners recruited *mingas* from among the *mitayos* during their *huelga*, or rest period between shifts. In other words, the differences

between *mitayos* and *mingas* basically were circumstantial, because the same person could shift from one status to the other, much in the same way as the distinction between unskilled and skilled labor could break down as workers shifted in and out of different functions depending on whether they served as draftees or as voluntary hired labor. In the mining economy, although wage arrangements became the prevailing form of labor recruitment, wage labor did not separate workers completely from the means of production. Whereas *mitayos* worked for wages because they were forced to, the *mingas* accepted to toil at a slightly higher wage scale only because they managed to retain rights to ore that they coaxed out of the mines on their own time. During the boom years of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, few workers depended fully on wages for their livelihood, because most miners maintained ties to their communities of origin, which allowed them to shift into and out of working for wages. The labor market in Potosí thus proved somewhat volatile, although at first sight the burgeoning city of over 100,000 inhabitants seemed to provide a steady supply of free labor. This explains the survival of traditional rights to ore scraps (called *la corpa*, or *cajchea*), which the *mingas* could sell in the marketplace to supplement their earnings. As Carlos Sempat Assadourian has shown, whereas *la corpa* cut into entrepreneurial profits at a tolerable level, it represented a significant increase in income for individual *mingas*, who supplemented their wages by about 80% on the average. As in the Mexican mines, where ore sharing became an informal prerogative, labor in the Andean mines constituted a hybrid form in which money wages account for only part of the story.

Because the *mita* system served primarily Potosí's silver mines and Huancavelica's mercury deposits, other major mining zones, especially Oruro, depended

almost entirely on the recruitment of free labor. Without a comparable subsidy, mining entrepreneurs in Oruro faced high labor costs, because they had to attract workers with better wages than those offered in Potosí. As Ann Zulawski demonstrates in her study of labor in colonial Oruro, the rise of a free labor supply was intimately associated with patterns of voluntary migration, which derived not only from strategies of evasion of labor and tribute obligations but also from the attraction of higher wages (often paid by the day and not by the task, as in Potosí) and ore share relations. According to Zulawski, in spite of these conditions, “labor was not entirely commodified”. Indeed, in her analysis of the Duke of La Palata’s 1683 census, which sought to revive and restructure the *mita* from Quito to Tucumán, she notes that most of the men categorized as *forasteros* (Indians no longer residing in their communities of origin) and a good portion of those listed as *yanacunas* did not possess a discernible occupation. This was because “their work was in some sense casual”, either because they worked for different employers, because they only worked in periods of increased demand for labor, or because they changed occupational categories regularly.²³

In Mexico, although labor drafts continued to subsidize mines by providing a supplementary quota of workers into the eighteenth century, free wage labor had been firmly established at an early date. Located in areas with sparse and often rebellious indigenous populations, the mining bonanzas of northern Mexico offered wages to attract free labor from the more densely populated heartland, especially after experiments with Indian slavery proved to be an insufficient solution. At the end of the sixteenth century, the bulk of the work force (over 68%) was made up of *naboríos* in these areas, whereas

²³ Ann Zulawski, *They Eat from their Labor: Work and Social Change in Colonial*

the *repartimiento* contributed only 17.7% of the total labor force, completed by slaves of African origin (13.8%). By the eighteenth century, unlike the Andes, where the bulk of the miners was made up of Indians, the working population in the northern Mexican mines was predominantly mestizo. In her analysis of the Zacatecas mines, Frédérique Langue provides a detailed cross-section of the ethnic composition of the labor force employed in different sectors. According to a list composed in 1781, 8.9% of the work force in the mines were Spaniards in specialized and supervisory positions, 28.6 were Indians, 14.7 mulattoes, and 47.8 mestizoes. In other sectors, however, this composition was quite different. *Haciendas de beneficio* (ore refineries) broke down as follows: 14.5% Spanish, 33% Indian, 22.1% Mulatto, and 30.9 mestizo. On rural estates, however, the ethnic composition proved quite distinct: 15% Spanish, 44.5% Indian, 20.4% mulatto, and only 16.1% mestizo.²⁴

Doris Ladd, in her study of the mining “strike” at Real del Monte in 1766, provides a lively description of labor conditions and structures in the silver mines of northern Mexico. Aside from the “bitter wages” of death and disability, either by silicosis or mining accidents, the wage system included both cash payments and ore sharing arrangements, called *pepena* or *partido*. In the smaller enterprises, mineowners supplied tools and workers supplied labor, dividing returns 50/50, whereas the larger mines involved more complex relations of ore sharing. Wages varied considerably from one mine to the next and from job to job. Some tasks received a daily rate, although many workers received monthly pay. During the late eighteenth century, daily rates varied from

Bolivia (Pittsburgh, 1995), *passim*.

²⁴ Frédérique Langue, “Trabajadores y formas de trabajo en las minas zacatecanas del siglo XVIII”, *Historia Mexicana*, 40:3 (1991), 463-506.

2 to 6 reales, whereas the monthly scale went from 8 to 12 pesos. However, as in the Andes, money wages in Mexico must be understood within the broader context of local customary practices, which involved other forms of remuneration beyond the preestablished wages. Ordinarily, work crews (*cuadrillas*) composed of pickmen and peons turned over an established amount of ore to the mineowner (a quota known as the *tequío*), retaining for themselves any amount in excess of the *tequío*. In New Spain, despite its deep roots in customary practice, the *partido* came to be recognized formally only after 1777, with the creation of a Mining Tribunal with minute ordinances.

By the second half of the eighteenth century, the mining sector faced a series of challenges that affected labor arrangements and conditions. For example, when the mercury supply tailed off to a trickle in the late 1750s, Zacatecas lost as much as half its working population. In order to offset rising production costs, including labor, mine owners and royal authorities began to introduce measures seeking to “rationalize” the mining economy. This included the concentration of activities into larger units, efforts to cut ore share arrangements, and even attempts to revamp old institutions of forced labor, now couched in the Enlightenment rhetoric of “social utility”. In addition to the *repartimiento*, “vagabonds” and convicts also could be impressed into the labor force: often different mestizo categories, such as *lobos* and *coyotes*, were associated with vagabondage. The conflict between modernizing principles and the persistence of noncapitalist relations in the struggle to preserve ore sharing privileges was at the root of the 1766 episode at Real del Monte. As Cuauhtemoc Velasco has shown, even the technological developments introduced by British companies after independence did not necessarily lead to capitalist relations of production. Miners continued to work for fixed

salaries, *destajos* (payment for specific tasks), *jornales* (daily wages), and ore shares. Although British entrepreneurs were opposed to it, the *partido* persisted into the nineteenth century as a form of incentive to attract free labor. Indeed, as Erick Langer argues, the transformation in relations of production in mining economies did not effectively take place until the second half of the century, resulting from the combination of institutional change, export-led development, the influx of foreign capital, and, in some notable cases, the influx of European immigrant labor.²⁵

In the rural sphere, the rise of commercial agriculture in Spanish America also was associated with the introduction of wage labor, and by the eighteenth century, it represented the most significant sector for employment. Whether on large haciendas or small *labores*, rural labor in Spanish America involved a broad gamut of possible arrangements and spanned an impressive array of categories to describe such arrangements. *Laboríos*, *gañanes*, *inquilinos*, *agregados*, and *peones*, among many others, not only reflected different work relations, but also expressed variants over time and space. Furthermore, distinct categories sometimes reflected either claims of differential status or the degree to which workers were attached to estates as either permanent, seasonal, or casual labor. Recruitment for rural workers also showed significant variation, owing to a number of factors. Population decline, which as we have seen had a different timing and impact in distinct regions, might have pushed up real wages in some instances, but in others either gave rise to new strategies of compulsory labor or moved employers to experiment with other forms of enticing workers, including

²⁵ Erick Langer, "The Barriers to Proletarianization: Bolivian Mine Labour, 1826-1918", *International Review of Social History* 41 (1996), 27-51.

the payment of tribute obligations, rations, credit advances, and sharecropping arrangements.

Although the expansion of rural wage labor developed at a sharper pace with the decline of indigenous populations and the difficulty of supplying estates with regular quotas of draft labor, wages made up a significant part of estate expenses even before this. For many years, Latin American historians accepted the idea that “debt peonage” effectively became the solution for binding an increasingly scarce (and therefore more expensive) indigenous labor force to Spanish estates. Although the use of debt peonage as a form of maintaining and oppressing forced labor became an important expedient in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century – the most notorious cases are the henequén plantations in Yucatán and the rubber extraction economy of the Amazon – the evidence for the colonial period and early nineteenth century is ambiguous at best. The extension of credit to workers was not always a devious system of tricking ingenuous peasants into bondage. Rather, it emerged as a significant strategy for managing wage labor in a cash-scarce economy. The more meticulous studies of actual hacienda accounts show that in many regions and periods, it was the employers who owed back wages to their workers more than anything else. At the same time, however, from the workers’ perspective, it reflected a broader pattern of avoiding a strict dependency on wages. Rural workers, whether temporary or permanent, always sought to negotiate additional benefits and guarantees, before demanding higher wages.

In describing the long-term process of settlement of a permanent labor force on late-colonial livestock haciendas in the Azángaro province of Peru, Nils Jacobsen shows that the debt labor issue goes beyond the relation between employers and workers. For

much of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, estate owners faced a scarcity of labor and had to rely on draft quotas. However, as the *repartos de bienes* (forced sales of goods) became increasingly onerous to indigenous communities, more and more Indians began to work on haciendas to meet their obligations. Thus the corregidores played an important role in recruiting and distributing workers by imposing a debt upon peasants who otherwise were unable to pay for the goods that they were forced to buy. At the same time, by becoming *yanaconas* with fixed residence within hacienda lands, peasants could escape the oppressive burdens of community obligations. This proved to be an interesting solution for hacienda owners as well, because they could take advantage of alternatives to wage labor by paying the *yanaconas* in usufruct rights to agricultural plots and grazing pastures. Although the hacienda owners by law had to pay money wages, *yanaconas* in effect received very little, following deductions for tribute, for advances in rations, and for livestock they may have lost. Although nominally free, these workers faced increasing restrictions in mobility, becoming bound to the haciendas. Some estates enforced these restrictions by hiring “*guatacos* to capture peasants for the estate and *buscadores* to round up escaped colonos”. A *guataco* was an “[e]state employee during the colonial period charged with forcefully recruiting Indian peasants as hacienda laborers”, which reveals the darker side of peasant participation in the labor market.²⁶

As Herbert Klein remarks in his study of the *intendencia* of La Paz in the late colonial and early postcolonial period, labor recruitment for private estates involved a “complex combination of market and nonmarket incentives”. Tribute and mita obligations “pushed” Indians out of their communities and into the colonial economy,

²⁶ Nils Jacobsen, *Mirages of Transition: the Peruvian Altiplano, 1780-1930* (Berkeley,

while the offer of access to private estate lands, payment of tribute, and exemption from mining mita rotations constituted “positive attractions”.²⁷ As in other areas of Spanish America where village communities survived intact, these “push and pull” factors varied in consonance with changing factor proportions, market conditions, and state policy. In both Mexico, following the decline of the *repartimiento* in agriculture, and in Peru, where the *mita* never was significant in supplying rural labor, recruitment took various forms, depending on the kind of relation established between worker and landowner. Most estates maintained a reduced core of resident workers, who along with their families, provided services year round in exchange for living quarters, rations, and wages, which often were absorbed by these other “benefits”. In addition to resident peons, many estates adopted the labor of tenants, who in exchange for access to land (which may or may not have included the payment of rent) would supply a stipulated amount of labor services. Finally, following the rhythms of rural production, estates relied on seasonal or casual labor for regular or specific tasks, such as harvesting, transportation, and construction, among others. Written or verbal contracts established the terms and conditions of seasonal and temporary labor, and contract workers were distinguished from other categories through a variety of local terms, from the *tlaquehuales* of New Spain to the *conchabados* of the La Plata region. As Herbert Nickel points out in his study of recruitment in Puebla and Tlaxcala, employers also resorted to a series of illegal forms of recruitment, often refusing to accept debt settlements or to pay due wages, doctoring account books, forcing descendants of deceased debtors to work, establishing fraudulent contracts of *tlaquehuales* with corrupt caciques or local officials, undermining alternative

1993), 84-85 and 370.

means of survival through the destruction of community crops and expropriation of lands, and enforcing commercial monopolies.²⁸

By the eighteenth century, population growth in both Spanish and Portuguese America not only created a larger demand for agricultural output, but also increased the relative supply of potential laborers, affecting conditions for recruitment. As Eric Van Young argues, the development of markets towards the end of the colonial period had mixed effects: production grew, but productivity stagnated; rising prices led to higher profits but to lower wages; surpluses grew, but food crises persisted because of poor distribution. In Mexico, at least, rural workers faced a picture of “increasing rural proletarianization, declining real wages, [and] growing concentration of property in land”.²⁹ But this picture varied from place to place. In the Mexican Bajío, for example, population pressure changed the terms of negotiation, for rather than enticing workers with landholding share arrangements, landowners began to charge money rents, which meant a need for money wages as well. By contrast, in the backlands of Buenos Aires, the relatively open access to land for peasant production led to a greater demand for slaves, although it did not necessarily result in high wages for free labor. Whereas peasants did engage in contract labor on both a seasonal and casual basis, they did so not necessarily because wages were high, but rather because they had certain limited cash needs (for example, to purchase necessary imports, such as salt) and because of

²⁷ Herbert Klein, *Haciendas and Ayllus* (Stanford, 1993), 14.

²⁸ Herbert J. Nickel, *Relaciones de Trabajo en las Haciendas de Puebla y Tlaxcala (1740-1914)* (Mexico City, 1987), 25.

dependency or patronage ties to large estate owners. In either case, however, rural workers flowed in and out of the labor market in often irregular patterns, and although wages provided an important part of their income, they could forestall becoming exclusively dependent upon their capacity to sell their labor power on the market.

Contracts, irregular patterns of employment, and patronage relations also marked wage labor in urban centers. As in the mining and agricultural spheres, the urban labor market involved a complex array of possible relations, as employers adopted a mix of formal compulsory labor (*repartimiento*, *mita*, slavery, and the use of convicts), informal compulsory labor (debt servitude), and wage labor. Wage labor, as we have seen, included the ambiguous situation of slaves for hire, not only in Brazil but, significantly, in late colonial and early postcolonial Spanish American cities, most notably Lima and Buenos Aires. Indeed, with the exception of textile workshops (*obrajes*), whose hybrid systems of forced, apprentice, and free wage labor have been studied in detail for cities like Querétaro, Quito, and Cuzco, we are left with the impression expressed by R. Douglas Cope in his assessment of Mexico City in the midcolonial period: “urban labor markets operated on a largely informal basis”.³⁰

The significant presence of women in the urban labor force, especially but by no means exclusively in domestic service relations, further underscores the informal character of the urban employment market. According to Silvia Arrom, women accounted for nearly one-third of the labor force in Mexico City in 1811, totaling 20,500

²⁹ Eric Van Young, “The Age of Paradox: Mexican Agriculture at the End of the Colonial Period, 1750-1810”, in *The Economies of Mexico and Peru during the Late Colonial Period, 1760-1810*, N. Jacobsen and H.-J. Puhle, eds., (Berlin, 1986), 64-90.

³⁰ R. Douglas Cope, *The Limits of Racial Domination* (Madison, 1994).

workers. These figures would be even higher had the census included the Indian women who flooded the capital each day to sell foodstuffs. Although almost all lower-class women “were employed at some point in their lives”, employment was linked in specific ways to life cycles, which adds yet another variable to this picture of workers entering and exiting the labor market in seemingly irregular and informal patterns, not only echoing other spheres of colonial labor, but foreshadowing patterns of the years to come.³¹

1850: The Winds of Change?

Over the first 350 years following Columbus’s landfall in the Caribbean, the history of labor systems in Latin America seems to follow, in its broadest outline, an evolutionary path from early forms of bondage to free labor regulated by market forces. Yet, at the midpoint of the nineteenth century, wage labor markets and capitalist relations of production did not dominate most landscapes, even though decisive steps in that direction had been taken. Slavery remained firmly entrenched in Brazil and in Cuba, and as slaveowners realized that this institution had been condemned to an agonizing death with the extinction of the trans-Atlantic trade, they scrambled to seek alternatives in which indenture contracts, sharecropping, and other forms of dependent relations would forestall the development of a full-blown free labor market. In other parts of Latin America, as the disorder brought on by the wars of independence and their aftermath began to give way to the formation of nation states adopting a varying range of liberal precepts, pressures to transform peasants into proletarians did not usually achieve the

³¹ Silvia Arrom, *The Women of Mexico City, 1790-1857* (Stanford, 1985), 181.

desired results. Protest, resistance, and outright rebellion took on new forms under post-independence conditions, although at the same time employers preferred to rely on time-tested strategies of recruitment – such as the *enganche* practice – and of personal dependency to reduce labor costs and to restrict worker mobility. If debt mechanisms were important during the late colonial period as a mediating feature in labor relations, they came to be used increasingly in the nineteenth century as a new form of coercion, reaching their most extreme examples in tropical plantation agriculture and forest extraction industries.

The early history of labor systems introduced other characteristics with long-term effects on economic, social, and demographic trends in Latin America. Migrant labor played a critical role in colonial times, and not surprisingly has remained to this day a central feature in Latin American labor systems and beyond. Casual and informal labor, often associated with chronic unemployment and underemployment, also characterizes colonial and current trends, not only in the region's major cities, but also in the countryside. Within this context, the persistence of informal relations mediated by ties of personal dependency rather than strict obedience to modern labor codes constitutes another long-term characteristic of Latin American labor systems. Finally, and above all, it is a history that continues to be written less in terms of the invisible hand of the market and more in terms of the actions and strategies, triumphs and defeats of those who most matter to this ongoing story.

Bibliographical Essay

The strategic importance of labor systems in Latin American historiography has deep roots, whether as part of broader works in economic or demographic history, or as studies of labor institutions in their own right. Due to space limitations, this essay focuses primarily on the recent literature, with a deliberate bias towards works published in English. General studies specifically addressing the themes of labor systems and work in Latin America to 1850 include Juan and Judith Villamarín, *Indian Labor in Mainland Colonial Spanish America* (Newark, Del., 1975), which provides a schematic but comprehensive overview, updated and somewhat expanded in their essay in *Para una historia de América*, 3 vols., Marcello Carmagnani et al, eds. (Mexico City, 1999), III:13-72. Another older work with useful insights and an impressive command of the topic is Mario Góngora, “Trends in Colonial History and Changes in the Founding Ideas: The Case of the Native Labour System”, in his *Studies in the Colonial History of Spanish America*, trans. R. Southern (Cambridge, 1975), 127-158. Although focused on Mexico and Central America, papers resulting from a landmark conference held in Pátzcuaro in 1977, published as *El trabajo y los trabajadores en la historia de México*, Elsa Cecilia Frost et al, eds. (Mexico City and Tucson, 1979), established a significant agenda for the field. *La clase obrera en la historia de México: de la colonia al imperio*, Enrique Florescano et al (Mexico City, 1980) also exerted a major impact on the shape and direction of subsequent colonial and early postcolonial labor studies in Mexico and beyond. Two previous Cambridge Histories afford important insights on different aspects of colonial labor systems. *The Cambridge History of Latin America*, vols. 1 and 2, Leslie Bethell, ed. (Cambridge, 1982) includes useful overviews, while *The Cambridge History of the Native Peoples of the Americas, Vol. II: South America*, parts 1 and 2, Stuart Schwartz and Frank Salomon, eds. (Cambridge, 1999), presents ethnohistorical studies with new perspectives on labor relations. David McCreery, *The Sweat of their Brow: A History of Work in Latin America* (London, 2000) offers a general introduction based on a broad sampling of the current bibliography in English. Several of the issues discussed in this chapter were laid out in the critical debate touched off by Steve Stern in “Feudalism, Capitalism, and the Modern World System in the Perspective of Latin

America and the Caribbean”, *American Historical Review*, 93:4 (1988), 829-872, with Immanuel Wallerstein’s reply (873-885) and Stern’s rebuttal (886-897).

The intricate relationship between demographic change and the structuring of labor systems has been a key topic in colonial studies. Two recent surveys frame several of the issues in a useful manner: Noble David Cook, *Born to Die: Disease and New World Conquest, 1492-1650* (Cambridge, 1998), and Suzanne Austin Alchon, *A Pest in the Land: New World Epidemics in a Global Perspective* (Albuquerque, 2003). While much of the literature underscores the primary importance of disease in population decline, *Población y mano de obra en América Latina*, Nicolás Sánchez Albornoz, ed. (Madrid, 1985) and Linda Newson, “Indian Population Patterns in Colonial Spanish America”, *Latin American Research Review*, 20:3 (1985), 41-74, show how specific labor systems also conditioned differential demographic patterns. A more recent focus on the role of migration and itinerant labor in the colonial period has reshaped the discussion: *Ethnicity, Markets, and Migration in the Andes*, Brooke Larson and Olivia Harris, eds. (Durham, 1995) draws together a generation of innovative scholarship, incorporating ethnohistorical sources and insights that shed new light on the formation of colonial labor markets. See, also, Michael Swann, *Migrants in the Mexican North: Mobility, Economy, and Society in a Colonial World* (Boulder, 1989); Ann Wightman, *Indigenous Migration and Social Change: The Forasteros of Cuzco, 1520-1720* (Durham, 1990); Karen Vieira Powers, *Andean Journeys: Migration, Ethnogenesis, and the State in Colonial Quito* (Albuquerque, 1995); and Cynthia Radding, *Wandering Peoples: Colonialism, Ethnic Spaces, and Ecological Frontiers in Northwestern Mexico, 1700-1850* (Durham, 1997).

On postconquest Indian labor, Charles Gibson’s *The Aztecs Under Spanish Rule* (Stanford, 1964) remains a mandatory reference, setting the measure for many other regional monographs. Rebecca Horn, *Postconquest Coyoacan: Nahuatl-Spanish Relations in Central Mexico 1519-1650* (Stanford, 1997), constitutes an excellent study of encomienda, repartimiento, and contract labor in that district, based largely on documents in Nahuatl. Focusing on the Yucatan, Nancy Farriss, *Maya Society Under Colonial Rule* (Princeton, 1984), brilliantly weaves ethnography, history, and the political economy of colonialism, providing a rich context for understanding the development of labor

systems. This approach also stands out in Andean studies: Steve Stern, *Peru's Indian Peoples and the Challenge of Spanish Conquest* (Madison, 1982; rev. ed. 1993), offers an engaging analysis of labor systems in Huamanga during the first century of colonial rule, while Karen Spalding's *Huarocharí: An Andean Society Under Inca and Spanish Rule* (Stanford, 1984) represents a major contribution on the long-term process of change in the Andes. On Alto Perú (Bolivia), Brooke Larson's *Cochabamba, 1550-1900: Capitalism and Agrarian Transformation in Bolivia* (expanded ed., Durham, 1998) and Thomas Abercrombie's *Pathways to Memory and Power: Ethnography and History Among an Andean People* (Madison, 1998) both emphasize the role of indigenous strategies in shaping colonial and postcolonial history in the region, with important insights on labor relations. Two of the most recent contributions to this line of inquiry focus on the colonial periphery, with significant information on slavery, encomienda, repartimiento, mission labor, and free labor in these frontier regions: Barbara Ganson, *The Guaraní Under Spanish Rule in the Río de la Plata* (Stanford, 2003), and Susan M. Deeds, *Defiance and Deference in Mexico's Colonial North: Indians Under Spanish Rule in Nueva Vizcaya* (Austin, 2003).

Studies of Indian slavery, encomienda, and repartimiento have a long and distinguished tradition in Latin American scholarship, including Lesley Byrd Simpson's pioneer work in institutional history as well as the monumental scholarship of Mexican historian Silvio Zavala, especially his *La encomienda indiana* (3rd edition, Mexico City, 1993), first published in 1935, and *El servicio personal de los indios en la Nueva España*, 7 vols. (Mexico City, 1984-95). A more recent general survey of encomienda studies can be found in *Encomiendas, indios y españoles*, Julián Ruiz Rivera and Horst Pietschmann, eds., (Münster, 1996), with a detailed bibliographical essay by Luís Navarro García. Timothy Yeager, "Encomienda or Slavery? The Spanish Crown's Choice of Labor Organization in Sixteenth-Century America", *Journal of Economic History* 55:4 (1994), 842-859, examines the encomienda from a neoinstitutional perspective, while Mario Pastore, "Taxation, Coercion, Trade, and Development in a Frontier Economy: Early and Mid-Colonial Paraguay", *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 29:2 (1997), 329-354, although adopting a similar theoretical framework, arrives at strikingly different conclusions. On the Caribbean, Esteban Mira Caballos, *El indio antillano: repartimiento*,

encomienda y esclavitud, 1492-1542 (Seville, 1997) provides a wealth of new information from the Archivo de Indias. Mira Caballos's study is one of the latest in a long series of carefully documented encomienda monographs produced at the Escuela de Estudios Americanos. Julia Hirschberg, "An Alternative to Encomienda: Puebla's Indios de Servicio, 1531-45", *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 11:2 (1979), 241-264, affords an insight into early public labor drafts. Sander Spanoghe, "Los salarios dentro del sistema del repartimiento forzoso en el Valle de México, 1549-1632", *Anuario de Estudios Americanos*, 54:1 (1997), 43-64, examines the structure, variation, and value of wages associated with labor drafts in different economic sectors. For Guatemala, both Indian slavery and encomienda labor receive detailed treatment in William Sherman, *Forced Native Labor in Sixteenth-Century Central America* (Lincoln, 1978) and Wendy Kramer, *Encomienda Politics in Early Colonial Guatemala* (Boulder, 1994). Nélide Bonaccorsi, *El trabajo obligatorio indígena en Chiapas, siglo XVI (Los Altos y Soconusco)* (Mexico City, UNAM, 1990) offers a brief but original study of Indian slavery, encomienda, and repartimiento in a secondary colonial area. On the Andes, in addition to the works mentioned above, Rafael Varón Gabal, *Francisco Pizarro and His Brothers*, trans. Javier Flores E. (Norman, 1997) provides an in-depth analysis of the importance of encomienda labor in the consolidation of a mercantile economy in early postconquest Peru. On Brazil, while there is no comparable study of indigenous societies under Portuguese rule, three works are especially useful in their specific focus on labor forms: Colin MacLachlan, "The Indian Labor Structure in the Portuguese Amazon, 1700-1800", in *Colonial Roots of Modern Brazil*, Dauril Alden, ed. (Berkeley, 1973), 199-230; Stuart B. Schwartz, "Indian Labor and New World Plantations: European Demands and Indian Responses in Northeastern Brazil", *American Historical Review* 83:3 (1978), 43-79; and John M. Monteiro, *Negros da Terra: Índios e Bandeirantes nas Origens de São Paulo* (São Paulo, 1994).

On African and creole slavery in the Americas, Joseph C. Miller's *Slavery and Slaving in World History: A Bibliography*, 2 vols. (Armonk, 1999) is an indispensable tool, updated constantly with annual supplements in the journal *Slavery and Abolition*. Seymour Drescher and Stanley Engerman have edited an excellent encyclopedia, *A Historical Guide to World Slavery* (New York, 1998), which includes solid articles by

Francisco Scarano on the Spanish Caribbean, Stuart Schwartz on Brazil, Douglas Libby on slavery in mining, and Laird Bergad on the historiography of Latin American slavery. Herbert Klein provides a broad overview in *African Slavery in Latin America and the Caribbean* (Oxford, 1986), with editions in Spanish and Portuguese. On the relation between New World demand and the supply of slaves, Russel Menard and Stuart B. Schwartz, “Why African Slavery?”, in *Slavery in the Americas*, Wolfgang Binder, ed. (Würzburg, 1993), 89-114, discusses changes in the labor forces of Brazil, Mexico, and South Carolina with a focus on labor markets. Luiz Felipe de Alencastro, *O Trato dos Viventes: Formação do Brasil no Atlântico Sul* (São Paulo, 2000) recasts the issues of supply and demand within the framework of a South Atlantic system; also see his essay (among others) in *Slavery and the Rise of the Atlantic System*, Barbara Solow, ed. (Cambridge, 1991), 151-176. Laird Bergad, Fe Iglesias García, and María del Carmen Barcia, *The Cuban Slave Market, 1790-1880* (Cambridge, 1995), is a pioneer effort analyzing slave prices and market conditions. For Brazil, Maria José de Souza Andrade, *A Mão-de-Obra Escrava em Salvador, 1811-1860* (Salvador, 1988) provides a detailed, informative study of slave occupations and prices, based mainly on probate inventories, while Laird Bergad, *Slavery and the Demographic and Economic History of Minas Gerais* (Cambridge, 1999) includes a detailed study of price trends and profitability based on the available data. The intimate relation between sugar and slave labor constitutes a central theme in Latin American economic history: Stuart B. Schwartz, *Sugar Plantations in the Formation of Brazilian Society, 1550-1835* (Cambridge, 1985) presents an exhaustive economic, social, and cultural history of slavery in Brazil, while Manuel Moreno Fraginals, *The Sugarmill*, trans. C. Belfrage (New York, 1976) remains a classic reference on technical and economic aspects of sugar plantation slavery in Cuba. Patrick Carroll, *Blacks in Colonial Veracruz* (2nd ed., Austin, 2001) focuses on the relationship between markets and changes in the labor system in colonial Mexico. On gold mining and African slavery, William Sharp, *Slavery on the Spanish Frontier* (Norman, 1976) includes a solid discussion of profitability in the Chocó region of Colombia; Kris Lane, “The Transition from Encomienda to Slavery in Seventeenth-Century Barbacoas, Colombia”, *Slavery and Abolition* 21:1 (2000), 73-95, examines the development of slavery in relation to earlier labor systems in a mining zone; A. J. R. Russell-Wood,

Slavery and Freedom in Colonial Brazil (Oxford, 2002) explores the peculiarities of slave and manumitted labor in Minas Gerais; and Kathleen Higgins, *'Licentious Liberty' in a Brazilian Gold-Mining Region* (University Park, 1999) offers a significant focus on gender in studying labor patterns. Douglas Libby, *Transformação e Trabalho em uma Economia Escravista* (São Paulo, 1988) carries the discussion into the nineteenth century, with important perspectives on industrial slavery, slaves-for-hire, and profitability. Philip Morgan, "Task and Gang Systems", in *Work and Labor in Early America*, Stephen Innes, ed. (Chapel Hill, 1988), and Rafael de Bivar Marquese, *Feitores do Corpo, Missionários da Mente: Senhores, Letrados e o Controle dos Escravos nas Américas, 1660-1860* (São Paulo, 2004) offer solid analyses of management strategies and costs in a comparative framework. The organization of slave labor and the tension between the slaveholders' and the slaves' economies is treated in *The Slave Economy: Independent Production by Slaves in the Americas*, Ira Berlin and Philip Morgan, eds. (London, 1991), especially in the broad, comparative introduction by the editors and Dale Tomich's study of provision grounds; along the same lines, see also *Cultivation and Culture*, Ira Berlin and Philip Morgan, eds. (Charlottesville, 1993). On slavery beyond the plantation, Stuart B. Schwartz, *Slaves, Peasants, and Rebels: Reconsidering Brazilian Slavery* (Urbana, 1992), Bert J. Barickman, *A Bahian Counterpoint: Sugar, Tobacco, Cassava, and Slavery in the Recôncavo, 1780-1860* (Stanford, 1998), and Guillermo Palacios, *Cultivadores libres, Estado y crisis de la esclavitud en Brasil en la época de la Revolución Industrial* (Mexico City, 1998) provide innovative perspectives on the overlapping existence of slave and peasant productive sectors in and around sugar zones. Roberto Borges Martins and Amílcar Martins Filho, "Slavery in a Non-Export Economy: Nineteenth-Century Minas Gerais Revisited", *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 63:4 (1983), 537-568, reflected a shift in focus to internal markets, with important implications for the study of slaveholding patterns. A recent contribution that draws together a generation of scholarship on these issues is Herbert S. Klein and Francisco Vidal Luna, *Slavery and the Economy of São Paulo, 1750-1850* (Stanford, 2003). Finally, urban slavery has drawn a great deal of attention in recent years: Carmen Bernand, *Negros esclavos y libres en las ciudades hispanoamericanas* (Madrid, 2001) offers a general overview, focusing especially on late-colonial Buenos Aires and Lima; Mary Karasch, *Slave Life and Culture*

in Rio de Janeiro, 1808-1850 (Princeton, 1987), presents a richly detailed portrait of all aspects of urban slavery; Leila Mezan Algranti, *O Feitor Ausente* (Petrópolis, 1988) discusses slaves-for-hire in the same city between 1808 and 1821, while Luiz Carlos Soares, “Urban Slavery in Nineteenth-Century Rio de Janeiro”, unpublished D.Phil. Thesis, University of London, 1988, arrives at different conclusions on the role of wages; Frederick Bowser, *The African Slave in Colonial Peru, 1524-1650* (Stanford, 1974) includes a fine discussion of urban slave artisans; Christine Hünefeldt, *Paying the Price of Freedom: Family and Labor among Lima’s Slaves, 1800-1854* (Berkeley, 1994) and Maria Odila Leita da Silva Dias, *Power and Everyday Life: the Lives of Working Women in Nineteenth-Century Brazil*, trans. Ann Frost (New Brunswick, 1995) both are excellent studies of two very different urban settings for a later period; João José Reis, “‘The Revolution of the *Ganhadores*’: Urban Labour, Ethnicity and the African Strike of 1857 in Bahia, Brazil”, *Journal of Latin American Studies* 29 (1997), 455-493, examines formal and informal labor organization among slaves and free Africans. The complex and sometimes ambiguous relation between urban slavery and free wage labor receives solid analyses in Luiz Felipe de Alencastro, “Proletários e Escravos”, *Novos Estudos CEBRAP*, 21 (1988), 30-56, on Rio de Janeiro’s urban labor market, and Lyman L. Johnson, “The Composition of Slave and Free Labor in Artisanal Production: Buenos Aires, 1770-1815”, *International Review of Social History* 40 (1995), 27-51.

The intricate relationship between forced and free labor in Spanish American silver mines has commanded a significant amount of attention among economic and social historians. *Mines of Silver and Gold in the Americas*, Peter Bakewell, ed. (London, 1997), reprints a significant collection of studies covering a broad range of areas and themes. *Diccionario de términos mineros para la América Española (siglos XVI-XIX)*, Frédérique Langue and Carmen Salazar-Soler, comps. (Paris, 1993), provides a wealth of information on terminology, occupational diversity, and labor regimes throughout the Americas. Robert Haskett, “‘Our Suffering with the Taxco Tribute’: Involuntary Mine Labor and Indigenous Society in Central New Spain”, *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 71:3 (1991), 447-475, is an excellent study of early labor forms in Mexican mines. Jorge Chapa, “Wage Labor in the Periphery: Silver Mining in Colonial Mexico”, *Review* 4 (1981), 509-534, discusses the predominance of free wage labor from the end of

the sixteenth century. For the eighteenth century, David Brading, *Miners and Merchants in Bourbon Mexico, 1763-1810* (Cambridge, 1971) remains a standard reference, while Richard L. Garner, with Spiro Stefanou, *Economic Growth and Change in Bourbon Mexico* (Gainesville, 1993) includes a useful discussion of labor in late colonial silver mining. Doris Ladd, *The Making of a Strike: Mexican Silver Workers' Struggles in Real del Monte, 1766-1775* (Lincoln, 1988) provides a detailed account of the labor structure as a backdrop for the 1766 workers' movement; for an alternative view focusing on the defense of traditional privileges, see Noblet Barry Danks, "The Labor Revolt of 1766 in the Mining Community of Real del Monte", *The Americas*, 44:2 (1987), 143-165. Frédérique Langue, "Trabajadores y formas de trabajo en las minas zacatecanas del siglo XVIII", *Historia Mexicana*, 40:3 (1991), 463-506, is an important contribution on late-colonial responses to rising labor costs; see also Langue's larger study, *Mines, terres et société à Zacatecas (Méxique) de la fin du XVIIIe siècle à l'indépendance* (Paris, 1992), which also is available in Spanish. On changes in mining labor during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, see the essays in William Culver and Thomas Greaves, eds., *Mines and Mining in the Americas* (Manchester, 1985); of particular interest is Cuauhtemoc Velasco Avila's study of labor relations in Mexican mines after Independence. On Potosí and the mita, in addition to works cited above, the earlier period is covered in detail by Peter J. Bakewell, *Miners of the Red Mountain: Indian Labor in Potosí, 1545-1650* (Albuquerque, 1984) and Jeffrey Cole, *The Potosí Mita, 1500-1700: Compulsory Indian Labor in the Andes* (Stanford, 1985); Ignacio González Casasnovas, *Las dudas de la corona: la política de repartimientos para la minería de Potosí (1680-1732)* (Madrid, 2000) provides a solid study of mid-colonial reforms; the eighteenth century receives a detailed and innovative treatment by Enrique Tandeter, *Coercion and Market: Silver Mining in Colonial Potosí* (Albuquerque, 1993); and Antonio Mitre, *Los patriarcas de la plata: estructura socioeconómica de la minería boliviana en el siglo XIX* (Lima, 1981) carries the discussion into the nineteenth century. Two studies point to important aspects of mita labor conditions that have not been exhaustively studied: Kendall Brown, "Workers' Health and Colonial Mercury Mining at Huancavélica, Peru", *The Americas*, 57:4 (2001), 467-496, and Bianca Premo, "From the Pockets of Women: the Gendering of the Mita, Migration and Tribute in Colonial Chucuito, Peru", *The Americas*, 57:1 (July

2000), pp. 63-94. Other mining areas less dependent on mita drafts, most notably Oruro, have attracted increasing attention: see, especially, Ann Zulawski, *The Eat from their Labor: Work and Social Change in Colonial Bolivia* (Pittsburgh, 1995) and Concepción Gavira Márquez, "Labour Discipline and Resistance: the Oruro Mining District in the Late Colonial Period", *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, 22:1 (2003), 1-26. Erick Langer, "The Barriers to Proletarianization: Bolivian Mine Labour, 1826-1918", *International Review of Social History*, 41 (1996), 27-51, offers a suggestive study of postcolonial developments and the persistence of pre-Independence traditions.

On rural labor systems in Spanish America, Arnold Bauer, "Rural Workers in Spanish America: Problems of Peonage and Oppression", *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 59:1 (1979), 34-63, outlines a series of problems and challenges that have been addressed in different ways in the subsequent literature. Ward Barrett, *The Sugar Haciendas of the Marqueses del Valle* (Minneapolis, 1970) includes a pioneer discussion of labor costs and administration on commercial estates, while Lolita Gutiérrez Brockington, *The Leverage of Labor: Managing the Cortés Haciendas in Tehuantepec, 1588-1688* (Durham, 1989) examines hybrid forms through a minute study of hacienda account books. The twin issues of debt and worker mobility are addressed in much of the current literature on colonial and postcolonial rural properties: see, especially, Hermann Konrad, *A Jesuit Hacienda in Colonial Mexico: Santa Lucía, 1576-1767* (Stanford, 1980); Eric Van Young, *Hacienda and Market in Eighteenth-Century Mexico: The Rural Economy of the Guadalajara Region, 1675-1820* (Berkeley, 1981); David A. Brading, *Haciendas and Ranchos in the Mexican Bajío: León, 1700-1860* (Cambridge, 1978); and Herbert J. Nickel, *Relaciones de trabajo en las haciendas de Puebla y Tlaxcala (1740-1914)* (Mexico City, 1987). On rural labor and the rise of the hacienda in the Andes, in addition to Brooke Larson (cited above), see Robert Keith, *Conquest and Agrarian Change: The Emergence of the Hacienda System on the Peruvian Coast* (Cambridge, Mass., 1978); Nicholas Cushner, *Lords of the Land: Sugar, Wine, and Jesuit Estates of Coastal Peru, 1600-1767* (New York, 1980); Luís Miguel Glave and María Isabel Remy, *Estructura agraria y vida rural en una región andina: Ollantaytambo entre los siglos XVI y XIX* (Cuzco, 1983); Herbert S. Klein, *Haciendas and 'Ayllus': Rural Society in the Bolivian Andes in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Stanford, 1993); and Nils

Jacobsen, *Mirages of Transition: the Peruvian Altiplano, 1780-1930* (Berkeley, 1993). The late colonial and early postcolonial La Plata region has provided the setting for a “historiographical renaissance” in rural history, although economic historians have not always agreed on patterns of migrant and seasonal labor, debt peonage, African slavery, and proletarianization. In addition to the discussion in Juan Carlos Garavaglia and Jorge Gelman, “Rural History of the Río de la Plata, 1600-1850: Results of a Historiographical Renaissance”, *Latin American Research Review*, 30:3 (1995), 75-105, see Garavaglia’s *Pastores y labradores de Buenos Aires: una historia agraria de la campaña bonaerense, 1700-1830* (Buenos Aires, 1999) and Gelman’s *Campesinos y estancieros: una región del Río de la Plata a fines de la época colonial* (Buenos Aires, 1998). Some of the issues come out in the debate touched off by Ricardo Salvatore and Jonathan C. Brown, “Trade and Proletarianization in Late-Colonial Banda Oriental: Evidence from the Estancia de las Vacas, 1791-1805”, *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 67:3 (1987), 431-459, while Salvatore’s recent book, *Wandering Paysanos: State Order and Subaltern Experience in Buenos Aires during the Rosas Era* (Durham, 2003) presents a solid analysis of the rural labor market during the first half of the nineteenth century.

On urban labor, in addition to the works on slavery mentioned above, Edda Samudio Azpúrua, *El trabajo y los trabajadores en Mérida colonial* (San Cristóbal, 1984), presents a solid discussion of urban labor contracts in the early seventeenth century. R. Douglas Cope, *The Limits of Racial Domination* (Madison, 1994), studies the urban workforce of midcolonial Mexico City, while Sonia Pérez Toledo, *Los hijos del trabajo: los artesanos de la ciudad de México, 1780-1853* (Mexico City, 1996), provides a detailed study of craft workers and guilds for a later period. Silvia Arrom, *The Women of Mexico City, 1790-1857* (Stanford, 1985), includes a richly detailed chapter on urban employment. While not treated explicitly in this chapter, several studies of textile *obrajes* have contributed important new perspectives on protoindustrial labor forms. Manuel Miño Grijalva, *La protoindustria colonial hispanoamericana* (Mexico City, 1993) provides an excellent summary of labor systems employed in *obrajes* throughout Spanish America. Regional and local studies include, notably, John C. Super, “Querétaro Obrajes: Industry and Society in Provincial Mexico, 1600-1810”, *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 56:2 (1976), 197-216; Richard Salvucci, *Textiles and Capitalism in Mexico: an*

Economic History of the Obrajes, 1539-1840 (Stanford, 1987); Robson Tyrer, *Historia demográfica y económica de la Audiencia de Quito: población indígena e industria textil, 1600-1800* (Quito, 1988); and Neus Escandell-Tur, *Producción y comercio de tejidos coloniales* (Cuzco, 1997), which offers a detailed study of recruitment and the division of labor in the Cuzco textile industry during the colonial period. On Brazil, see Douglas Libby, "Protoindustrialisation in a Slave Society: The Case of Minas Gerais", *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 23:1 (1991), 1-35.