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Spanish Colonial Officials – Experts Striving for Globalization and Development or Inept Individuals out for Personal Profit?

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The idea of globalization is not a modern invention, even though in the Spanish colonial period examined in the following the world was viewed differently from today (see for instance Knight 2001).[1] It was one of the goals of the Spanish Crown to export the Spanish social, religious and administrative system to the New World, while at the same time attempting to extract wealth from the continent. These goals were considered perfectly ordinary then though they do seem contradictory today. "Paternalism and interest in converting the indigenous population were not incompatible with economic exploitation and imperial defense", as William Taylor has summed up the Spanish attitudes (Taylor 1979:17). Patricia Seed concurs: "Pursuing gold and God at the same time appeared entirely reasonable." (Seed 2001:69, Lynch 1969:170) Quite obviously, none of these and other aims could be met successfully governing purely from a distance, from Spain. Therefore, representatives were needed in the New World.[2]

It was the responsibility of these men to implement the policies of the Crown especially with regards to the indigenous populations of the Americas. And the outcome to a significant extent depended on the way they did their job, the manner in which they pursued globalization in the sense of hispanicization. In this way, they were indeed meant to do something similar to what development experts are doing nowadays and for what the latter are called colonizers every now and then by the local population. [3]

But were they really "development experts", in the strict sense of the term? Were they trying to further development in the Americas? And were they experts? Did they face similar

[1] "It is well known that Spaniards came to America with very specific and rigid ideas on what constituted civilisation. In essence, they adhered strictly to the etymological origins of the word, *civis* meant, in Latin, city." (Patch 1993:48)

[2] In the following, the lower ranks of colonial administrators in Spanish America will be examined - with the exception of the example of Peruvian viceroy Toledo – before and after the Bourbon reforms. Walter K. H. Hoffmann examines colonial experts as well, also following the question if and how they were predecessors of today's development experts. However, Hoffmann concentrates more on the training of these people (see Hoffmann 1980). For a discussion of the methodological framework and common problems of such undertakings, see Eckert (1997:35-60). The criticism included about the lack of research concerning administrators applies to colonial Latin America as well.

[3] Today development experts play a major role in disseminating knowledge and in translating development strategies and concepts into action. It is hypothesised that the development consultancy business will expand and that the demand for international and for local experts will expand further. The invention and dissemination of development concepts and strategies seems to be comparable with processes in colonial times. Development experts and their organisations accept these concepts and strategies, combine them with past experience ("lessons learned") and translate them into advisory services for their partners in the developing world. The translation of concepts and strategies takes place within the global discourse of epistemic communities of experts, but also within the social and cultural context of developing countries. Those processes have been optimised through an appropriate knowledge management. It is evident to us that the study of the globalisation of knowledge, strategies and concepts should start with the colonial period.

problems and challenges as today's experts are forced to tackle? Have matters and procedures been improved since the days of these proto-development experts? These are the main questions the article will discuss by examining the available literature on the subject - but in a new light and by drawing on new research on modern development experts.

Before a real colonial system was set up and before colonial officials were sent to the New World or while there were only very few, it were the *conquistadores* to take over their tasks. They were the first Spaniards present. Instead of pay they received land grants and *encomiendas*, contingents of Indians supposed to serve them as a temporary labor force and to pay tribute.[4] These *conquistadores* and also *encomenderos* were supposed to educate "their" Indians in the Catholic faith in return for their labor. This education was a first step to the ultimate object, their hispanicization.[5] The Spaniards considered themselves, their culture, and their way of life to be infinitely superior to that of the "savages" they encountered in what is today called Latin America.[6] So there were amateurs with ulterior motives at work, pushing hispanicization as an earlier form of globalization, before the "real" experts, the administrators were present in larger numbers in the New World.[7] And even after the latter had finally arrived it was deemed that they needed help with their task.[8] Therefore, the assignment of introducing Indian communities to the Spanish way of life was frequently delegated to missionaries, who were exclusively dedicated to that task. But how successful were the ones who were really supposed to be in charge of the tasks outlined above, the Crown's officials? How did they work? How did the Indians respond to the new introductions, to the transformation of their accustomed world into a New World? How did officials and Indians interact? What elements were crucial for a colonial official to perform

[4] Reportedly, the underlying assumption to the *encomienda* was that Indians could only be of service through their labour (see Service 1954:44). For a brief but thorough general discussion of *encomienda* see Gibson (1987:366-368).

Tribute was a head tax levied on male Indians of a certain age or heads of families. Yet in practice, this tax was a thing that concerned the entire community. It had its origins in a Spanish tradition, the payment of *pecho*, but many Indians had also paid tribute pre-conquest (see Gibson 1987:379).

[5] In the context of postcolonial and development studies this can be viewed as an euro-centric perspective on modernization. The critical debate on global knowledge management is currently questioning again to what extent local knowledge systems and local cultures are recognized and integrated, and multiple modernities possible. For a summary on this discussion, see Evers, Kaiser and Müller (2003).

[6] This paper is dedicated to the study of Spanish America only, without attempting to include the Portuguese realm.

[7] The lower ranks of officials received mostly standardised instructions (see Pietschmann 1980b:130).

his task well, to be an expert? Were the problems civil servants encountered back then different from the ones development experts face nowadays?

These are questions, which have rarely been asked in the past.[9] Thus there are no easy answers, especially not since many of the sources which could have shed light on the matter have often been lost. But these questions also take us back to Spain's first ventures into in the New World. While certain parts of Spain's colonial enterprise have been researched thoroughly and in much detail, the daily interactions between colonial officials and Indians have received very little attention so far. These interactions have been somewhat more in the focus of studies on the missions. The issue as such, however, has been a prime focus of globalization studies. Therefore, while the Spanish colonial system in general has been explored fairly deeply, quite often one gets the impression that Spanish colonial policy took place in an empty space.

When Christopher Columbus chanced upon the American continent and mistook it for India, this "first" encounter brought about such deep and far reaching consequences that the place was indeed so much changed that it was turned into a new world, even for its traditional inhabitants. After this "discovery", Spain was confronted with the organization and the administration of its New World possessions and found itself with a host of problems to solve. The main problem was how to deal with the indigenous population of the newly found continent. This was a matter of much discussion and many disputes and not only in the early phase of the Spanish presence in what today is called Latin America.[10] Finally, the Spanish Crown adopted a credo, the so-called doctrine of discovery, which will be briefly sketched in the following.[11] In many ways, even the successor states followed these colonial attitudes and practices.

The Spaniards believed that the Europeans had pre-eminent rights to the "pristine"

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[8] The missions are not a topic of this paper. They are investigated in another research project of the Bielefeld Institute for Global Society Studies directed by Hartmann Tyrell on "Christian world missions in the nineteenth and twentieth century. Protestant missionary societies as global organisation from 1790 – 1960".

[9] For a more general criticism of a lack of studies of Native Americans in Spanish America, see Gibson (1987:361-363).

[10] Among the most outspoken critics of the treatment of the Indians in Spanish America was Bartolomé de las Casas.

[11] For a very detailed discussion of the doctrine of discovery and claims to territory in Colonial America, see Green (1989). For more details on sovereignty, especially in US law and concerning Native Americans, see Schultz, Haynie, McCulloch, Aoki (2000:691-692).

lands of the New World.[12] In addition, they thought themselves obligated to bring the infidels over to Christianity, getting their land and labor force in return. Wars could be waged against the native inhabitants as long as they were deemed "just" by the Europeans.[13] The Spanish considered the lands found as already theirs, even prior to occupation. Also, a document, the *requirimiento*, informing the natives about this and other matters, was read to them upon contact, asking them to submit, justifying military means should this not be the case (Pagden 1995:91). Otherwise, the Spaniards were occupied with titles to labor, the *encomiendas,* more than with land titles. In this system, the master, the *encomendero*, was entitled to Indian labor in exchange for a small wage, the duty to protect them, and instruction in the Christian doctrine.

Consequently, the Spaniards saw no need to regulate their affairs with the indigenous peoples through treaties.[14] They considered their obligations towards them mostly met by educating them in the Christian faith. The Spanish *conquistadores*, arriving in the early sixteenth century, with a view to find gold and silver saw the locals as more than just a nuisance to be subjugated.[15] After some discussion if the Indians were human at all or maybe members of the lost tribes of Israel, the Spaniards quickly found out the possibilities of putting the natives to use.[16] Initially, they were enslaved but the Spanish Crown put an end to that practice in 1500 (see Pieper and Luetjens 1994:578). From then on, even the former slaves were considered to be subjects of the Crown, with the same rights and duties as mainland Spaniards – at least in theory. Yet while the Indians were considered humans, they were also viewed as child-like, "fit only to be used for pleasure or profit." (Turner 1968:25, Borah 1983:28-30) They were therefore time and again subject to colonial paternalistic laws –

[12] For a detailed discussion of the British and Spanish ideologies see Pagden (1995: chap. 2 and 3).

[13] The term "just war", which conferred upon the aggressor a right to wage war, was governed by a set of rules. The Romans originally used the concept for defensive wars only. According to Spanish attitudes, a Christian prince could also go to war to defend the Christian *civitas*.

[14] This was what the British and later on the Americans did. On colonial attitudes, rights to land acquisition, the papal bulls on lawful conduct towards the Indians, and the implications these factors had on the latter, see Churchill (1993:35-36).

Uninhabited lands were considered to be the property of the Crown. Title to inhabited lands belonged inherently to the indigenous peoples living on it but, with discovery, the Crown had exclusive rights to extinguish this title.

[15] Fernando Cortés arrived in 1519 in the southern part of what today is called Mexico, on the island of Cozumel. The British came for trade and agriculture, though only when they did not find gold and silver (see Pagden 1995:68-69).

[16] In 1537 the papal bull "Sublimis Deus" had declared the Indians to be human beings and capable of reason. Woodrow Borah argues that, had the natives seriously been regarded as animals, the Spaniards involved in sexual relations with them would have been severely punished (see Borah 1983:27). For a discussion of the

and to mistreatment.[17] This seems somewhat contradictory, but, as Woodrow Borah points out, it is hard to find "clear lines in royal policy because there were few explicit formulations of it." (Borah 1983:31)

The *conquistadores*, who were at least in theory the first Spanish civil servants, saw cheap labor much needed to extract the riches and to feed the people.[18] And they and their successors did exploit this cheap labor force intensely in the years to come. "At first, especially in mining and agriculture, Indians supplied the labor, generated some of the capital, and provided much of the necessary technology and social organization for the production of goods." (Cockcroft 1990:9)[19] Often, the *conquistadores* managed to play the Indians against each other, thus causing the comparatively rapid fall of what was once known as "high cultures", like the Aztec/Mexica, Inca and Maya empires (Gibson 1987:385). Let it suffice here to say that their advanced organization worked against them (see Pagden 1995:65). Once subjugated, they were fairly easy to govern, the Spaniards drawing and building on pre-Conquest institutions.[20] For instance, collection of tribute was conducted via traditional authorities, *caciques* or *curacas*, who also profited from the arrangement (Gibson 1964:1997 and 211).[21] The general procedure was for the *cacique* to collect the tribute, which was then handed to the administrator, and eventually went into the *Caja Real* (see O'Phelan Godoy 1985:48). "To a significant degree, ... Indians – through their gifts, labor, and forced tribute – paid for their own conquest." (Cockcroft 1990:24, Pietschmann 1980a:77) This was one reason why there were not serious attempts to destroy all parts of native government (Gibson 1966:149).[22] But it quite obviously also meant that the people officially in charge of tribute collection and other matters, the colonial officials, were removed from the people they were

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intellectual problems connected with the conquest, see Borah (1983) and also Hanke (1935: especially 3-25).

[17] And these paternalistic attitudes were and are slow to change. For instance, John Lynch explains how, after the introduction of the intendant system, these newly appointed officials still kept discussing the nature of Indians with the old terms and concepts (see Lynch 1969:1999).

[18] Simpson (1934) shares our opinion on the conquistadores being the first officials.

[19] Cockcroft (1990:9). Indian slavery existed, though only for a short period. It was abolished by the Crown in 1500 (see Pietschmann 1980b:176).

[20] To explore this in greater detail would take too long to include and is not the objective of this work. A fair number of monographs have already been written on these societies, also including the Conquest, its aftermath and effects. See for example the previously quoted books by Wolf (1982), Gibson (1987, 1964), and Pagden (1995).

[21] The term *cacique*, an Arawak word brought by the Spaniards from the West Indies, took the place of other terms. Sometimes the term replaced older ones and was used for leaders elected under new rules (see Gibson 1987:370). Karen Spalding also points to the attempts of *caciques* to obtain higher offices (see Spalding 1968:207). James Lockhardt points out how limited these possibilities were with the case of don Martín (see Lockhardt 1968:213-215).

supposed to govern and guide, to hispanicize.

The native peoples causing much more serious and enduring problems to the *conquistadores* were the smaller enclaves of "less civilized societies", which held out much longer. These communities, formerly often termed primitive, proved to be much harder to subjugate, even in the long run. Ironically, these societies initially were neglected by historians who instead turned to their more "advanced" neighbors. Thus the successful resistance put up by these societies was often discarded. Only fairly recently has an interest developed in this indigenous resistance at all.

Initially, the Indians were divided among the *conquistadores*. This system was legalized in 1503 and developed into the more formal one of the *encomienda*, giving a contingent of Indians varying in size to individual Spaniards, who could be considered the second wave of Spanish civil servants.[23] The *encomenderos* were entitled to the work force of these people but at the same time were obliged to educate them in the faith, among other things.[24] Since they were not owned by the *encomenderos*, the Indians were still considered to be free (Gibson 1987:402). This system, described in the Laws of Burgos in 1512, was designed for the extraction of wealth from the continent.[25] It was legally discontinued in 1542. The loss in lives of that time was largely due to diseases, but not helped by the hardships suffered in the *encomienda* was considerable, if hard to quantify (see Wolf 1982:133, see also Gibson 1987:403).

As to the matter of land ownership, the Spanish Crown considered the (vacant) lands as already theirs, even prior to occupation, according to a papal charter (Gibson 1987:407, Pietschmann 1980b:59). In accordance with the doctrine of discovery, only the Crown could distribute lands, to individuals as well as to communities. It did, however, also to an extent accept indigenous ownership of lands, which it alone by right of discovery was entitled to

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[22] Gibson sees this survival as crucial for the little opposition encountered.

[23] On difficulties of definition with regard to the *encomienda,* see Pietschmann (1980b:82).

[24] The Indians were considered minors and thus in need of education (see König, 1989:107). Underdevelopment or being uncivilized was and is constructed as an authoritative discourse by the invaders in those days as today in the field of development aid.

In the most common form of the *encomienda*, the master, the *encomendero*, was entitled to Indian labour in exchange for the duty of protection and instruction in the Christian doctrine (see Pietschmann 1992:579, see also Gibson 1964:58).

The term *repartimiento* was often used synonymously (see Pietschmann 1980b:83).

[25] The *encomienda*, which had its roots in the *reconquista,* existed until the middle of the 18th century. It was replaced in 1635 by the *encomienda de tributos*, which authorised the *encomenderos* to the collection of tributes only (see Pieper and Luetjens 1994:580).

distinguish, usually by consent of the Indians in question (Pietschmann 1994:242). “But in practice this principle was not adhered to“, as historian Charles Gibson (1987:407) has correctly pointed out.[26] The manners in which the Indians’ lands were usurped were multifold (Gibson 1987:408-11, see also Gibson 1964:274-76). “The land-granting authorities of the Spanish colonial government – *cabildos,* viceroys, and their agents – characteristically gave higher priority to Spanish interests than to Indian interests.” (Gibson 1987:388) Yet “because the subordinate inhabitants of ... lands were immune from early *encomienda* tribute, it lay within the interests of the early *encomenderos* to reject the claims of private Indian possession in the *encomienda* areas.“ (Gibson 1964:264) The Spaniards also tended to “simplify” other Indian landholdings that way, whenever they failed to understand the underlying system (Gibson 1964:264). They also resorted to falsification, threats, and other illegal practices (Gibson 1987:390). Those Indians who could afford legal steps often did so but the Spaniards were in the more favorable position in the long run. For the time being, the Spanish colonists were more preoccupied with labor than with land (Gibson 1987:408).[27] They considered themselves obligated to bring the infidels over to Christianity, and conveniently were getting Indian labor and also Indian land in return.

The Spaniards were very successful in obtaining both. “As mining flourished and more people moved to the mining areas, the demand for agricultural goods increased, as did the need for labor. Both led to a reduction of Indian lands.” (Cockcroft 1990:29) In 1542/43, the New Laws *(Leyes Nuevas)* among other things forbade the further allocation of Indian lands to colonists.[28] They also abolished the inheritance of *encomiendas,* and stipulated them to revert to the Crown upon the death of the *encomendero.* But great parts of these laws soon proved to be impossible to enforce by colonial officials and consequently were revoked as early as 1545. The benefits for the Indians, who were described as vassals of the Crown, were

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The Laws of Burgos were a collection of all laws regarding Indians. They were the first laws exclusively passed for the New World (see Pieper and Luetjens 1994:579-581).

[26] For instance, what could be called hunting territories were assumed to be vacant and ceased by the Spaniards. The same was the case with communal areas.

[27] Gibson (1987) assumes the reason to be that land at that time was not available due to Indian landholdings. This only changed when the massive depopulation set in (see Gibson 1964:406). Also, initially the Spaniards felt more drawn to the urban areas of the New World.

[28] The *Leyes Nuevas* also prohibited the new allocation of *encomiendas*. Existing ones were to be reduced to an “appropriate” size. The New Laws also (again) declared the Indians to be free vassals of the Crown who, due to their cultural inferiority, still needed protection and thus had a special status. The laws also did away with slavery for good; earlier on a few exceptions had applied.

extremely short-lived (see Pietschmann 1980a:71).[29] Essentially, these laws represented the Spanish attitudes, which were to prevail for the entire colonial era. They viewed Indians as individuals instead of as members of indigenous communities, while at the same time contrasting themselves, the *república de españoles,* with the Indians, the *república de indios* (Feest 2000:90, see also Pieper and Luetjens 1994:575f). These attitudes followed pre-conquest Spanish precedents. "The idea that defeated peoples resided in their own parallel communities was culturally familiar to Spaniards." (Seed 2001:83)

But, as seen with the *encomienda*, the colonial economy also needed a workforce. Another means to exploit the Indians was the so-called *repartimiento.* It was likewise a measure intended to counteract labor shortages. In one of its forms, Indian villages had to perform certain duties, usually labor duties.[30] In this system, a certain quota of workers was assigned to the colonists and also to cities (see Pieper and Luetjens 1994:594). The official end of the *repartimiento* came about in 1632. In addition to the forms already mentioned there was free labor and various forms of debt labor existed.

From the mid-sixteenth century on Indians were resettled in the so-called *pueblos de indios.* In theory, this meant that the Indians were to govern themselves (Hoekstra 1993:81). "Protective segregation and a degree of political autonomy for communities did not mean that the Spanish rulers intended Indian life to carry on unchanged." (Taylor 1979:17) Among other things, this step was supposed to facilitate the collection of tribute, one of the officials' most important duties. These were usually collected by the *caciques,* who thereby retained some of the pre-conquest influence.[31] "The colonial tax system grafted onto native boundaries contributed to the survival of local nobles, granting them entailed estates and other colonial privileges in exchange for their responsibilities as collectors of the royal tribute and organizers of the labor drafts." (Taylor 1979:18) However, this resettlement and the classification to go with it also defined the legal status of an Indian (Hoekstra 1993:231). Robert Jackson has explored this further and discovered that the classification often depended on the situation and the current needs of the Spanish colonizers (Jackson 1999).

Another form of dealing with the indigenous peoples of Latin America was the

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[29] Pietschmann (1980b:71-72) identifies the Crown's efforts starting with the Laws of Burgos as attempts to create homogenous subjects.

[30] In the most common form of the *repartimiento*, upon the granting of a petition, a quota of indigenous workers from the area were assigned to a colonist. The *repartimiento de trabajo* was abolished in 1633. Later on, forms like the trade *repartimiento* developed.

[31] This has been explored for instance by Gibson (1964:149).

mission.[32] The missionaries, also at times serving as a type of substitute civil servant, were to introduce the Indians to Christianity and to the Spanish way of life. The *padres*, who took over duties of Spanish colonial officials regarding the Indians, were supposed to gradually familiarize their disciples with the Spanish society and its rules. "The concept of Indians as, ultimately, full citizens of the Spanish Empire was generally accepted as the basis of missionary work and had been a part of the working philosophy of those Spanish administrators who bothered with political thought." (Spicer 1962:335)[33] Yet many did not bother at all. Thus for a while, the Indians benefited from the protection of the missionaries as well as by being temporarily exempted from the payment of tributes. But it got increasingly hard to protect the Indians and their land. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Crown offered the colonists to acquire legal titles to their land through payments. This method was called *composición de tierras* and it effectively reduced Indian landholdings. Towards the end of the colonial era *haciendas* surrounded many Indian communities. And even without the *encomienda* many Indians found themselves in a state of debt peonage due to small wages.

In general, colonial Indian policy was to a large extent motivated through reasons other than mere humanitarian ones, as historian Horst Pietschmann has pointed out (see Pietschmann 1980b:92). Economic and political issues were at the heart of the matter, accounting for its central importance (see Pietschmann 1980b:93). Economic aspects were also the motivation behind many colonial administrators. After all, frequently the offices were sold and thus the officeholder had to think of ways to make his investment pay off. Also, the lower ranking offices examined here did not pay enough for what was considered an adequate lifestyle for a Spaniard and consequently had to be supplemented by other means.[34] Civil servants often found ways to exploit their offices along with their Indian charges. Usually,

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[32] For the colonial mission to the Indians see among others Becker (1983, see also Hausberger 2000).

[33] Bartolomé de las Casas (1474-1566) was a Spanish priest and missionary and also for a time bishop of Chiapas. He repeatedly attempted to better the Indians' condition in the New World.
Incidentally, the discussion of Las Casas and his attempts to improve the situation of the Indians in a good many books takes up more space than the description of the conditions the Indians lived in and how those came about.

[34] These lower ranking offices were also the ones in charge of Indians, like the *corregidor* (see Pietschmann 1980a:131). The *corregidor* had judicial and also certain legislative powers. The *corregimiento* was the principal unit of local administration (see Lang 1975). As Borah points out, no substantial changes came with the Bourbon reforms. Officials and their aides continued to be underpaid (see Borah 1983:149).
Trough the Bourbon reforms (1786), the *corregidor* was replaced by the intendant, possibly to stop the well-known abuses by limiting power. The *corregimientos* were joined and so-called subdelegates created. They were in effect not long enough to make a difference.

that resulted in the exploitation of the Indians (see for instance Stern 1987:34). If need be, laws were disobeyed or bent to achieve that goal. It was these laws and the aforementioned economic aspects, which chiefly linked the worlds of Spanish officials and of Indians. And on occasion, the Indians resisted the ensuing measures, sometimes actively, and sometimes passively. Very often, this resistance took the form of legal suits (Borah 1983:40).[35] Resistance in the form of village uprising increased greatly in Mexico of the later colonial period (Taylor 1993:111).[36] However, once the immediate goal of the uprisings had been achieved or at least promises extracted, the villagers' violence usually stopped (Taylor 1993:115). At other times, aggression simply burned itself out (Taylor 1993:115). Colonial state officials often negotiated to minimize their losses but were also unlikely to punish whole communities (Cockcroft 1990:117). This would have been counterproductive in the pursuit of their very own personal goals. They needed the indigenous labor force. Yet once pacification had been achieved, of course there was a lot less incentive to keep the promises made. Only if the negotiations failed, the officials resorted to brute force. "The Spanish response to community uprisings in central and southern Mexico, a calculated blend of punishment and mercy, generally followed the principle of 'pacification without destroying the Indians'." (Cockcroft 1990:116) And on the whole, "the colonial regime governed the countryside largely by not governing." (Taylor 1979:165) As long as no major disturbances occurred, things were pretty much left alone.

"As population pressure and colonial demands increased, state officials were increasingly perceived as excessive and abusive. Angered by what was seen as growing Indian resistance, some colonial representatives resorted to even more threats and force than normal to conduct their business. The spontaneous nature of the tumults suggests that the Indians were provoked to action rather than having planned their violence." (Stavig 1996:228) Newer historical research emphasizes the aforementioned spontaneity as well as a greater variety of reasons for uprisings, and a greater breadth of responses than has traditionally been assumed. For instance, rebellions often ensued when individuals of power were removed from these positions. Indians also rose up when they considered the tribute and labor demands as too great a strain on them. But responses were multifold. Instead of taking up arms, indigenous communities also resorted to flight or simply refused to obey (see among

[35] Borah furthermore points out that a substantial number of these suits were over land, grazing rights, and labour (see Borah 1983:46-48).

athors Jones 1989). This *tibieza*, or passive resistance, also came in the form of secrecy and cold treatment. And it is specifically the secrecy, which makes it so hard to get to colonial native motives today. An interesting case is one of continued resistance in an Andean town. There, the natives stubbornly refused to pay tribute. "They considered tribute nonpayment a way of defending what they thought to be an immemorial and correct standard of intergroup relations." (Salomon 1987:162) The author, Frank Salomon, concludes that the Indians did not perceive themselves as part of the Spanish community and thus not as subject to the same laws. Historian William B. Taylor concurs in general, stating that "village uprisings expressed a defiant isolationism in reaction to change imposed from outside." (Taylor 1979:153)

For Mexico, Taylor emphasizes the spontaneity of armed outbursts and how short-lived they usually were. Also, he concludes that they were nearly all by members of a single community in reaction to outside threats (Taylor 1979:115). In the cases he looked at he found little evidence of planned leadership. Mostly, the uprisings burned themselves out after a few days. Yet he comes to the conclusion that no uniform pattern existed. "There are too many revolts that do not seem to follow on a period of worsening material conditions and too many rural societies living through increasing poverty without showing an increase in social violence to hazard any universal statements about economic deprivation, elite intransigence, and peasant unrest." (Taylor 1979:131) Taylor believes that it was elite willingness to compromise, which avoided some rebellions. However, as the one common factor in most of the uprisings, in spite of regional variation, he identifies the fact that the rebellions often set off by what seemed like minor changes. "Peasant villages were reacting to what they considered an immediate threat to their way of life." (Taylor 1979:142) These were, for instance, rejection of new taxes – instead of taxes as such, land disputes, labor issues, questions of liberty and autonomy, or political reasons.

Scarlett O'Phelan Godoy, examining eighteenth-century Peru, somewhat seconds this with the finding of numerous cases of *mitayos* leaving work before the end of their turn, complaining of bad treatment (O'Phelan Godoy 1985:40).[37] But she also points to other matters. "Fiscal issues constantly lay at the root of colonial social unrest." (O'Phelan Godoy 1985:49) Yet, just like Taylor, she concludes that people did not object to taxes as such but only did rebel under certain circumstances. For instance, the legalization of the *reparto* only

[36] The same is reported for Peru (see Stavig 1996:227).
[37] *Mitayos* were workers of the labour draft system.

caused unrest in areas already affected by *diezmo* and/or *mita* (O'Phelan Godoy 1985:119).[38] The situation was probably often aggravated because the tributes were commonly collected all at the same time. Like other authors, she also mentions rivalries for the post of *cacique* as a possible reason for uprisings and unrest (O'Phelan Godoy 1985:133). Similarly, Susan M. Deeds points out – for the mission societies – that it was often individuals removed from positions of power who initiated rebellions (Deeds 1998:25). Ronald Spores, on the other hand, ascertains that "Indians were far more likely to quarrel among themselves over boundaries, *cacicazgos,* resources, or a subject community's desire to break away from the control of its *cabecera* (head town) than they were to openly or violently resist Spanish domination." (Spores 1998:33)[39] When uprisings against the Spaniards occurred, they were most often motivated by heavy demands for native labor and other abuses - mostly administrative, commercial, and social ones. Yet the success of these uprisings in general can at best be described as mixed. "In the short run, villagers could count many successes – tax payments were reduced or suspended, offensive civil servants were reprimanded or removed, and corrupt labor practices were reformed." (Taylor 1979:169) But there was little general improvement. The lessons learned by the officials were hardly ever applied in other cases – unless there, too, disruptions occurred. As William Taylor ascertains, "Spanish absolutism was less authoritarian and above all, less efficient that is often supposed", because authorities treated isolated problems and did not see one grievance leading to rebellion as a reason to check elsewhere for that problem (Taylor 1979:168). The authorities were primarily concerned with control - and particularly with smooth tax-collection – and not with general improvements for the native population. Resistance did not always take the form of violence. Roland Spores examines a case in which the *cacique* led the entire town into hiding in the mountains (Spores 1998:37). Such cases were less spectacular than rebellions and therefore probably less likely to bring about permanent changes.

Nancy Farriss is one of several more recent authors to emphasize how multifold indigenous responses to Spanish attempts at colonization were. "Simple acceptance and rejection of alien cultural elements are only two among many possible responses, and much more common may be the transformation of old forms into something that never existed in either of the original cultures." (Farriss 1983:2) Farriss also scrutinizes the Bourbon reforms of the late eighteenth century. "Before the introduction of the intendancy system in 1786, each

[38] These were monetary and work tributes.

Indian community dealt directly with the provincial administration.“ (Farriss 1983:12) This way, local Indian leaders were left largely alone. That is, as long as they managed “to deliver the goods and services the Spanish demanded and to keep order within their communities under the more or less watchful eye of the parish priest.“ (Farriss 1983:13) This often amounted to a de facto autonomy of Indian communities. To a large extent, one “could say in general that the Indians and vecinos inhabited separate social worlds.“ (Farriss 1983:19)

Yet these worlds were not unconnected. As seen, the Spaniards’ arrival and attempts at Hispanicization were not at all without impact. Robert Wasserstrom points specifically at civil servants in that respect. “Unlike religious corporations, provincial governors set out to organize a network of commercial enterprises based not on direct ownership of land but on the extensive exploitation of native labor.“ (Wasserstrom 1983:96) And these officials often pursued their own enrichment single-mindedly. So single-mindedly in fact, that even the Spanish *vecinos* protested because they felt unfairly treated in the face of so many monopolies (see Wasserstrom 1983:98). William L. Sherman takes his criticism of the officials involved a step further. “C*orregidores* and *alcaldes mayores*, often lacking any respectable preparation for such positions, physically mistreated the natives and cheated them as well.“ (Sherman 1983:180) He considers the ones coming after the Bourbon reforms to have been just as greedy as their predecessors. John H. Coatsworth seconds this opinion: “In Peru, nearly all of the village uprisings of the 1760s and 1770s were provoked by the predatory behavior of *corregidores*, who collected the tribute, enforced new crown monopolies, and imposed the *repartimiento de mercancías.*“ (Coatsworth 1988:49) Yet he agrees with other historians that there is no such thing as an overall Spanish American pattern to be found. “Protests against new taxes, or abuses by tax collectors, were important in nearly half of the Mexican village uprisings, but other provocations played a more significant role than in Peru.“ (Coatsworth 1988:49)

Steve J. Stern analyses the officials’ behavior further. “Eager to make a small fortune during his term of several years, a newly arriving *corregidor* often cultivated working relationships with regional elites whose interest, in administration, commerce, manufacturing, mining, and agriculture.” (Stern 1982:93) He supplies the example of Don Juan Manuel de Anaya, a *corregidor* in colonial Peru. Anaya was a career bureaucrat and had considerable means before he even took the post of *corregidor* in 1578. He saw this position as a means to

[39] This is conformed by the cases cited by Borah (1983:68-73 and 129-136).

quickly increase his wealth, by commandeering labor, seizing money and goods, controlling and expanding trade circuits, and by backing ambitious commercial ventures (Stern 1982:97). "The *corregidor* passed out free or cheap labor to his friends, and demanded that expert native weavers supply him valuable luxury textiles at substandard prices." (Stern 1982:97) He also forced the local Indians to sell valuable alpacas to his friends, again at substandard prices. These were then resold at high-price markets elsewhere, enriching Anaya and his partners. Anaya crated a scandal by using the local *repartimiento'*s money for one of his business enterprises, without consulting the priests first. So Anaya bought much "needed" ornaments cheaply in Lima and then resold them at hugely inflated prices (Stern 1982:97). Apparently, Anaya frequently used the *cajas de comunidad,* community monies, for money or capital. He also violated legal ordinances through his entire behavior. "Anaya left behind a trail of notoriety and complicated litigation typical of authorities whose greed overreached their effective power, but his actions belonged to the mainstream of the colonials' prerogatives and abuses." (Stern 1982:97) For instance, the abuse of the *cajas de comunidad* was a quite ordinary issue. And the aforementioned abuses worked even better and were harder to detect if the *corregidor* worked together with the local elites. Another such example is introduced by Robert Patch, who describes the case of a Yucatecan governor, who controlled much of the local trade and production.[40] Another governor changed the weights and increased the sheer quantities of goods contracted (see Patch 1993:88). However, the officials had to be careful not to cross too many lines. Stern tells of one case in Huamanga/Peru, where one magistrate angered too many nobles and ended up being charged with treason. He was beheaded and his severed head on a stake was displayed as a reminder and a warning to others (Patch 1993:88).

Friedrich Katz points out that Indian resistance to these and other abuses may have been weakened by mortality. It also seems to have been a question of whom to blame for wrongdoings and misery. "Most rebellions were directed at local officials, and the Indians mostly remained firmly convinced that the crown, if it only knew, would redress their wrongs." (Katz 1988:79) And in a way, this was not all that far off the truth since at least in theory and with some mostly unheeded laws the Crown did attempt to protect the Indians, probably for multiple, not entirely selfless reasons. For instance, it was against the law for the officials to pursue commerce – something hardly heeded. "The *corregidores,* though

[40] The individual in question controlled 57 % of textiles, 6.5 % of threat, 80.5 % of wax (see Patch 1993:83).

forbidden to engage in commercial activities, were the promoters and main agents of economic distribution among Indians." (Gibson 1987:395) As seen, they abused their offices and positions of power to enrich themselves. Sometimes the law was broken clandestinely, at other times quite openly, sometimes alone, and at other times with private partners. Indians were thus compelled to buy to exorbitant prices, and sometimes even goods of little or no use to them.

Rarely did complaints reach the right places or were they taken seriously enough. In 1543, an *encomendero* complained to the viceroy of New Spain that the governor and nobles of his town levy too much tribute and force the peasants to cultivate extra land. In response, the viceroy commissions an Indian as judge to investigate the matter and to send the ones he finds guilty of misconduct to come before the viceroy himself (Borah 1983:72). Yet often it was probably a common occurrence for the Indians to stand up for their rights themselves in court, just like they did when rebelling against abuses. Actually, "much of the energy that the colonials expended to drive the natives to comply with the hated labor drafts involved drawn-out legal battles." (Stern 1982:117) The fact that Indians took some of their issues to court at all also testifies to their basic acceptance of the colonial system as such. "The colonial bureaucracy was impressively large for its day and peasants generally acknowledged its legitimacy by flooding the high courts with petitions and complaints, protesting abuse of power rather than questioning the legitimacy of colonial sovereignty." (Taylor 1979:165) Therefore, while Indians might bitterly oppose the local officials, the Crown's representatives, they did accept it as a legal sovereign (Taylor 1979:170). And if only this remote institution knew about their trouble and the abuses committed against them it would surely do something about it. The evidence for this trust can be found in the flood to the courts.

But the knowledge of how to make use of the courts had to be acquired first. In the 1580s, officials had to acknowledge that the efforts to introduce the Indians to the Spanish legal procedures had failed. "The Indians still lacked access to relatively simple, inexpensive, quick, and effective legal remedies." (Borah 1983:79) Consequently, the General Indian Court was established and special Indian agents "of the half-real" created. In Peru, networks of judges were established specifically to deal with native cases. They were free or available for a minimal charge. Yet even this legal system created and supposed to aid the Indians was abused by Spanish officials. For instance, Indians were told that wills had to be made before

the officials, who after the death of the person in question still proceeded to ignore the will and to enrich themselves with the inheritance (Borah 1983:86-87). Often, the ensuing court orders were defied for a very long time. But Indians were spared costs arising through having to contract the services of interpreters, solicitors, etc. The system's costs were covered by tax money. A half-real per tributary of the annual community contribution was appropriated to cover the costs of the legal system (see Borah 1983:104).

In general, one can say that a "moderate amount of extortion does not seem to have brought the Indians to complaint; but when the fleecing reached proportions they deemed intolerable, they would protest either to the viceroy or the audiencia." (Borah 1983:150) So they essentially displayed a similar behavior as in the rebellions and uprisings but instead of resorting to violence or flight took their grievances to court. Woodrow Borah has examined such cases brought to the General Indian Court by Indians. Most of them were fairly ordinary ones, complaining of abuses, of being forced to pay too much tribute, etc.[41] These cases were investigated in a variety of ways, and sometimes the officials accused were ordered to return the money they had unjustly extracted from the Indians and were admonished to do their duty properly.

One of the most interesting cases sketched by Borah is actually one in which the Indians took the matter in their own hands – though neither by instigating an uprising nor by going to court. Some Indians in Cuzco killed a particularly abusive tax collector, who had previously beaten and jailed the *cacique*. But before resorting to this drastic and probably desperate measure, they had attempted to ask a local priest for help. Unfortunately, he himself had been afraid of this *cobrador*, this tax collector. However, after the killing this priest proceeded to testify in favor of the Indians and no action was taken against them. "By going beyond the bounds that governed colonial relations, the tax collector had lost legitimate authority; hence, neither the Indians nor the Europeans viewed the killing as a challenge to or protest against colonial authority as a system." (Stavig 1996:228) Like the tax collector, most officials had to negotiate a fine line between coercion and persuasion, had to figure out how much abuse and exploitation the Indians were disposed to accept. Should they overdo it in their personal quest for wealth, the outcome could be potentially disastrous. The ones who came to be sued were thus the ones who got off lightly in comparison to the fate of the

[41] However, one case is mentioned where an official had beaten an Indian to death, and, while he was severely reprimanded, he walked away with a fine only.

cobrador.

As Borah has found out through his analysis, "complaints against Spanish provincial governors, their subordinates, and other Spanish officials … constituted an appreciable proportion of the total business that came before the General Indian Court." (Borah 1983:148-49) This is not at all surprising after the glimpses of the attitudes and behavior displayed by colonial officials with regard to the Indian populace, which have been briefly examined in the examples above.

As seen, it was in the officials' own interest to keep the Indians alive and able to work. Therefore, the number of responses available to them was rather restricted. While the Indians were clearly not in a position of power, they were not doomed to accept any treatment, either.

Quite obviously, during the whole of the colonial period, many indigenous identity traits and traditions were retained. That is not to say that all kept their pre-contact identities. On the contrary, identities changed and even so-called *ladino* Indians, Spanish speaking and acculturated Indians, came into being as also becomes apparent through colonial censuses. In the newer sociological literature on globalization this can be interpreted as hybridization or cultural mélange (Nederveen Pieterse 1994:161-184).

While much remains in the dark about the relationship between the Spanish colonial official and the Indians of the New World, what can be said is that the officials were not entirely successful in their role as experts bringing the Spanish system to the New World. Horst Pietschmann concludes that the efforts helped to integrate the Indians culturally, socially, economically, and with regards to religion – but that they at the same time stood in the way of complete adaptation (Pietschmann 1980b:137). As seen in connection with the tribute collection, the old system was much too convenient and worked too well to be sacrificed by the officials. So the Indians could afford to keep a number of older structures. Rik Hoekstra confirms this by pointing out that "although the Spaniards did of course impose their rule, initially they did not try to introduce profound changes into the existing society." (Hoekstra 1993:49) Parts of the pre-colonial system suited them just fine.

The Indians insisted on being selective in their acceptance of proceedings, knowledge

and other, more practical introductions. For instance, they seem to eagerly have embraced the potter's wheel, oxen and plow yet resisted other introductions (see Taylor 1979:22-23, see also Patch 1993:27). They also to a large extent embraced or rather, instrumentalized the Spanish legal system to settle both their grievances with Spaniards and internal affairs (see Lockhardt 1968:237, see also Borah 1983). They insisted on that local knowledge, which seemed most valuable to them but the motives for their decisions and behavior are hard to get at because indigenous sources are lacking.[42] And since the Spanish officials often misunderstood the Indians and the latter did generally not deem it necessary to explain themselves to them, the Spanish sources are of little help in that respect. Explications may have been lost through a variety of filters, mostly through the officials themselves or their higher-ups. Also, officials found multiple ways to limit the interactions and dealings with the indigenous peoples by hiring other Indians to perform certain tasks in their stead. The latter Indians had often held similar posts pre-conquest and the Spaniards made use of these older systems present in the "high-cultures" like the Maya, Aztecs/Mexica, and Inca – with the blessing of the officials in charge.

These officials frequently had a lot of freedom, at least as long as they performed their key functions fairly well, like the collection of tribute. And if there were not too many complaints about them, individual officials could in many respects do as they pleased. Usually only if problems mounted were v*isitaciones* held, were other administrators sent to check on their colleagues, in a way not unlike a modern-day evaluation mission. But since this generally happened only after troubles had already occurred, it was often too late to get immediate reactions. In addition, even complaints and reports on officials abusing their rank took a lot of time, due to the underdeveloped infrastructure and the long distances involved.

It was unlikely for the officials, even the higher-ups, to search for the mistake amongst themselves. That is not to say that gross abuse was left unpunished when discovered. But it was deemed unlikely – if not impossible – that the Indians could know something, could possibly contribute something to the Spanish way of life. "For Spaniards, Indians of whatever class were people with a lower, never higher, status." (Patch 1993:24) Their input, in legal cases as in general, was not taken seriously and thus often probably left out in the reports. So this knowledge, which could have greatly facilitated matters for the officials by making them

[42] For instance, Lockhardt has concluded about the notarial and trial records that they tell very little about ordinary procedures (see Lockhardt 1968:221).

understand the problems they faced, usually did not make the transition to information, did not get to the key figures who could have used it. If it was reported at all, it probably was not passed on high enough or not processed by the intended recipients. Therefore, the lower ranks of officials received mostly standardized instructions, completely leaving aside regional variants and needs.

One well-documented exception is the viceroy Toledo of Peru. To set up the *mita* and other systems, "Toledo spent five years (1570-1575) traveling throughout the Andean highlands on an audacious *visita,* or tour of inspection, designed to implement an effective, direct reorganization once and for all." (Stern 1982:76) He thus specifically attempted to collect and use first-hand knowledge. And since tribute was traditionally paid in labor therefore the system was left that way. But even though – or maybe because - Toledo tackled his assigned task somewhat more systematically than others, he was still motivated by the same things as most of his colleagues. Extraction of wealth was of prime importance to him as well. "The irony of Toledo's extractive regime was that it imposed terrible burdens which ultimately menaced local economies and life rhythms, but did not immediately eliminate the natives' subsistence capacity or economic independence." (Stern 1982:92) In that respect, as well as in others, hispanicization had failed.

Globalizing or better, Hispanicizing the indigenous system was far from being an easy task for the officials anyway. For instance, according to the Aztec tradition, all tributes were in kind and when the Spaniards insisted on conversion into money the system fell apart (Hoekstra 1993:66). So the authorities decided to compromise and the Indians were told only to supply goods originating in their own *pueblo;* however, a common tribute item had been mantles, made of cotton imported from other areas, and the Indians took the new rule as an excuse not to pay with mantles anymore. Thus there were far more problems encountered than could have been anticipated in Spain. Things might have worked better had the civil servants taken the Indians and their customs more seriously and had inquired more into the nature of the old system, like Toledo had done. A horizontal exchange between the officials of a particular Indian group also might have helped. But there was no functioning network between individual officials, partly due to the difficulties with communication. However, as Jochen Meissner has shown for the *cabildo* of Mexico City, it was possible to set up functioning networks – when the officials' private business interests were concerned (see

Meissner 1993). “In a society where access to influence constituted the lifeline of wealth and enterprise, high lords and petty tyrants alike spun complicated webs of kinship and placement which enhanced their political reach and stature. In the countryside, *corregidores* and other Spanish lords were not too proud to become godparents of Indian children. Local colonials even married the daughters of *kurakas,* who had their own reasons for such alliances.” (Stern 1982:101) If needed to further their own interests, the officials were perfectly capable of not only establishing functioning networks among themselves, but also to interface with the local Indian population. After all, they were serious about their personal projects, about money acquisition. And “in the final analysis“, as Steve Stern has correctly determined, “the energy and wealth devoted to solidifying or extending points of loyalty and cooperation in various elite networks could make the difference between success and failure.“ (Stern 1982:101) And a few *corregidores* actually did manage to get rich in a short time (Gudmundson 1996:159).

Steve Stern also states that “it was precisely because Indians did not succumb easily to coercive pressure, and even escaped beyond certain limits, that colonials come to rely also on a second adaptation: the use of voluntary agreements, contracts, and early forms of wage labor to secure native services.“ (Stern 1982:156) After all, the officials needed them to co-operate since they could not rule by coercion alone. More likely, they did rely on force only when quelling uprisings and may even have preferred appeasement to force.

Charles Gibson comes to a similar conclusion on the double function of some Spanish introductions and the power structures involved. “Tribute became one of the principal devices of control exercised by *encomenderos* over Indians, and their tribute collectors, themselves commonly Indians, were among the most feared of the encomenderos’ agents.“ (Gibson 1987:379) Tribute and labor, two elements central to the duties of many colonial officials, were ways to enrich the administrators and also mechanisms of control and to propagate the Spanish way of life. According to Gibson, in this the *corregidores* were often worse than *encomenderos* (Gibson 1987:381). Yet this control could have been exercised more effectively had the officials managed to integrate and transmit local knowledge.

For a long time Indians were considered to be a more or less uniform group, childlike savages, instead of different peoples with different ways of life, traditions, customs. And a lot of the officials probably cared less about their duties than about their personal enrichment. Most tried to avoid staying in their assigned area and instead opted to live in one of the

metrópolis of the New World. So their work was usually left to some Indian hirelings, who carried out the tasks and reported to their master. These Indians naturally mostly kept doing what they or their ancestors had been doing pre-conquest.

Therefore, it becomes quite plain that Spanish civil servants lacked a number of qualifications and even virtues to be development experts in the current sense of the word. For instance, they were not required to learn indigenous languages, like many of the missionaries sent to Indian communities. While they were supposed to propagate the Spanish system and way of life in the New World and especially when it came to the Indians, they were not given the training this task would have required. For instance, instructions for *alcaldes mayores* evolved during the 16th century and included many clauses emphasize good behavior. They were to collect only tribute and no other contributions, should see to it that Indians were not forced to sell below proper prices, were not supposed to accept gifts or to engage in trade, to keep livestock, or to have *estancias* or land (see Borah 1983:149-50).

Also, and especially since the sale of offices was not uncommon, too little effort was put into selecting individuals qualified and disposed to perform the duties in question.[43] For many officials, the job they took was supposed to be a temporary one, a step on their way to riches. They intended to make a fortune in the New World, to then return to Spain. They were not professional enough, in the current sense of the word. This becomes apparent in use of the pre-Spanish systems to collect tribute, and by the hiring of Indians helpers so that the officials themselves could spend their time in the bigger cities. While they were present, in the sense of being in the New World, the officials were also absent, because they did not stay in their sphere of duty. They probably lacked all but the most basic understanding of that sphere – or maybe chose to use what knowledge they had for their private business enterprises instead of for their assigned duties.

It was hard to check on the lower ranks of administrators effectively, due to the communicational problems already mentioned. This also aggravated the flow of information. Not only was it very slow, but there were very many filters enroute because of the chain of command imposed. Knowledge was lost along the way because it was deemed unnecessary, not taken seriously, or simply not understood. And there was no network of officials

[43] On the sale of offices, see for instance Pietschmann (1980a: part I).

dedicated to the exchange of knowledge and information – at least not when it came to performing the tasks of their offices.

Therefore, one could say that it was matters, which are still crucial for experts today, which kept Spanish colonial officials from being true development experts. It was the transfer of data, the command structures, professionalization, networks, and knowledge filters, which made it hard for them to effectively perform their tasks. For instance, the lessons learned in one uprising were hardly ever applied to other cases because of the lack of data transfer. And while the officials often were very professional when it came to benefit their own enrichment, they hardly ever displayed the same level of professionalization when it came to the duties of their office. The rigidity of the command structure and the long distances involved were hampering their performance even more. All of this was aggravated by the generally poor selection and training of the officials, as well as by their absence from their spheres of duty and by their private agendas. Some of them pursued the latter with too much success to call them inept, to come back to the introductory question. So Spanish civil servants were supposed to be experts but fell short of meeting that goal, partly because they were individuals out for personal profit, partly because of the problems inherent in the New World situation.

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