

Structuring the Colonies

General Questions

- How does colonial life work?
- Who is in charge – the Crown or the settlers?
- Who works in the colonies? What kind of work? Who benefits?
- Why are some areas centres and others peripheries? How does this change over time?
- Differences/ similarities between Spanish and Portuguese patterns?

Seminar Questions

- How did Spain and Portugal structure their overseas empires? Describe the different administrative and judicial structures.
- What role did the Catholic church play in sustaining (or challenging) colonial authority?
- Explain the centrality of labour, and disputes over labour, to the colonial enterprise.

Government in Spanish America

República de Indios

República de Españoles (Spaniards, *criollos*, African slaves and *castas*)

Indigenous Government

- Indigenous units and authority figures
 - Oversaw local community, collected tribute, organised labour drafts
 - Based on pre-Columbian models (*repartimiento*; *mita*)
- Indigenous elites recognised as most viable for administering Indian towns
 - Enjoyed privileges, exemptions from labour and tribute
 - High ranking members of the native nobility retained their titles, much of their land, and authority/status symbols
- Indigenous social structure left (relatively) in place
 - ‘*caciques*’ (*kurakas* in the Andean region) became intermediaries between Spaniards and Indian commoners
- Indigenous elites proved vital to indigenous stability and survival, especially in 16th/17th centuries

Look at the two petitions from caciques (Indian bosses). What do they tell us about the role of caciques and the nature of Spanish government?

Most Powerful Lord ... In your Royal Name the Indians were ordered to be gathered into towns so that they could be taught the elements of the faith and to become experienced in civil life. And so we gathered in and populated the town of Pintag at your command; and at the same time our ancestors were assured by your royal certificate that the lands we had near Pintag would remain ours ... However, little by little, day after day, many Spaniards have been encroaching on these lands ... They have created so many farms and ranches that they now surround the whole town.

Don Francisco Anaguampla and the lords of Pintag, Ecuador, 1580

‘the natives of the said city are diminishing ... of the thirty thousand men that there were when we gave dominion to your majesty, at present there are no more than about six or seven thousand men ...’; ‘three hundred workmen regularly, which is a great hardship because they spend their lives in the said services and are very badly treated by the Spaniards.’ They also ask ‘that the Spaniards and city council let us freely sell the things we grow and raise, because they order and compel us to give them for less than what others sell them for ...’.

Xochimilco petition, Mexico, 1563

Indigenous cultures, religions, and languages survived, and so too did ‘micropatriotism’ - ‘a highly localized or micropatriotic identity’ (Restall and Lane)

Indigenous communities and individuals incorporated Christian religious figures and imagery into their own religious landscapes, adapting their meaning to create ‘syncretic’ religions



Spanish Legislation and Legal Debate about the Legitimacy of Conquest

'... I who am the voice of Christ crying in the wilderness of this island ... it behoves you to listen ... this is going to be the strangest voice that you have ever heard, the harshest and hardest ... This voice says that you are in mortal sin, that you live and die in it, for the cruelty and tyranny you use in dealing with these innocent people. Tell me, by what right or justice do you keep these Indians in such a cruel and horrible servitude? On what authority have you waged a detestable war against these people, who dwelt quietly and peacefully on their own land? For with the excessive work you demand of them they fall ill and die ... what do you care that they should be instructed in religion? ... Are these not men? Have they not rational souls? Are you not bound to love them as you love yourselves?'

Antonio de Montesinos, 1511

'Cannibal Law'	1503
Laws of Burgos	1512
'The Requirement'	1513
'New Laws'	1542
Valladolid Debates	1550-1551



Essay Questions

- "Spain protected Indians so as better to exploit them." Discuss.
- How successful were the inhabitants of Spanish America (Indian, African and/or Creole) in manipulating the Spanish legal system for their own benefit?
- How did Spain and Portugal maintain control of their colonial possessions and what differences/similarities emerge between the two?
- "Creole societies in colonial Spanish America were virtually independent from Spain." Discuss.
- How and why did Portuguese patterns of colonisation differ from those of the Spanish?
- "The sugar mill shaped colonial Brazil." Discuss with reference to society, politics, and economics.