

# Cultural Clashes: Colonial and Modern Latin America

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## Post-conquest Latin America

- A. Principal reasons why aboriginal armies were conquered:
  - 1. Modern weapons, horses, and equipment of the Spaniards
  - 2. Superstition about the coming of the white, bearded man (Quetzalcoatl in Mesoamerica)
  - 3. Indecisiveness of the aboriginal leaders (Moctezuma II of Mexico; Atahualpa and Huascar of Peru)
  - 4. Resentment among the lesser tribes and nations who paid tribute to the powerful ones
  - 5. General social decay among the more powerful nations (Mayas, Aztecs, Incans)
  - 6. Decimation of the Amerindians because of European diseases
- B. Why Amerindians became virtual "property" of the European settlers:
  - 1. Application of European laws and institutions (*encomienda*, *repartimiento*, *hacienda*)
  - 2. Perceived European superiority (warrior-priest syndrome; ascribed honor)
  - 3. Aboriginal "inferiority" (Are they really people? Papal Bull of 1537)
- C. A new "race" of people emerges (mestizos):
  - 1. First, the "bastard complex"
  - 2. Then, the "cosmic race" (Vasconcelos)
- D. The established religion reinforces the status quo when:
  - 1. It favors the church's social, political, and economic position
  - 2. Fatalism is a "manageable" lifestyle for the masses

## Spanish domination and its results

- A. Historical antecedents to the Conquest of the New World:
  - 1. The fall of Constantinople, May 29, 1453 (the Turks close both land and sea routes to the Orient)
  - 2. Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile end the almost 800-year rule of the Moors, capturing Granada on January 2, 1492
  - 3. Columbus receives approval of their "Most Catholic Majesties" to explore a new maritime route to the East
  - 4. The Caravel revolutionizes sailing
  - 5. Hispaniola (Haiti and the Dominican Republic) and Cuba are discovered and become the staging grounds for further exploration
  - 6. Cortés is commissioned by the Governor of Cuba to explore Yucatán and environs
  - 7. Cortés conquers Moctezuma II of Tenochtitlán (Mexico City) by:
    - a. Disobeying the governor of Cuba

- b. Yielding to his indomitable spirit of adventure
    - c. Finding the Indian maid, La Malinche
    - d. Possessing a "sixth sense" about human nature, which helps him escape many plots against his life
    - e. Being incredibly intrepid—he arrests Moctezuma II, then defeats and recruits the soldiers who were sent from Cuba to arrest him
  - 8. Spain then spread its empire over Mesoamerica and beyond with the help of Franciscans, Augustinians, Dominicans and, later, Jesuits
- B. Institutions and norms that brought radical change to Latin America
- 1. Documentary legalism (vs. utilitarianism)
  - 2. Aldeas (vs. scattered, temporary quarters)
  - 3. Forced religion (the imposition of Catholicism produced Christo-Paganism)
  - 4. Forced labor (plantations and mines)
  - 5. Political instability and intrigue among the ruling elite
  - 6. Fiscal, political, and social manipulation by the oligarchy
  - 7. Civil Registry, marriage, and the cemeteries (controlled by the Church)
  - 8. Formal education (usually in the hands of the Church)
  - 9. Restricted social mobility (see handout)
- C. Philosophical assumptions that helped forge colonial society
- 1. The Spaniard's "soldier-priest" complex
    - a. Banking is for Jews
    - b. Commerce is for Arabs
    - c. Industry is for Protestants
  - 2. The neo-feudal haciendas (*latifundia*)
  - 3. The fatalistic view of life, encouraged by the Church and civil leaders (rendezvous with destiny; rendezvous with death)
  - 4. The coping styles of a non-pragmatic culture (cf. works of Diaz-Guerrero)
  - 5. Differing world views and value systems (see handout)

### **Independence and uncertainty**

- A. Historical antecedents to Latin American independence:
- 1. Changing mentality and alternative attitudes
    - a. Reasoning, questioning, inquiry are renewed among Europeans during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries (*obedezco pero no cumpro*)
    - b. The Enlightenment brought more critical thinking about contemporary life on earth instead of celestial reward
    - c. Creole (European born on American soil) wit and intelligence are praised in Juan de Cardenas' *Problemas y Secretos Maravillosos de Las Indias*, 1591 (this was at the expense of the *peninsular*, or a transplanted Spaniard from the Iberian Peninsula)
    - d. All things of Mexican origin, for example, were exalted in Bernardo de Balbuena's *La Grandeza Mexicana*, 1604
    - e. Political issues were influenced by Vernei, Rousseau, Diderot, Montesquieu, Paine, Jefferson, et al (republican experiments: USA in 1776; France in 1789)
    - f. Abdication of Charles IV in favor of Napoleon Bonaparte, 1808
    - g. Mercantilism favors Spain in all commercial pursuits
  - 2. Internal influences:
    - a. *Criollos* and *peninsulares* enjoy a semi-feudal landowner's privileges (hacienda system)
    - b. *Criollos* desire a wider participation in local government (Hidalgo of Mexico)
- B. The example of the Mexican War of Independence (1810-1821)
- 1. *Grito de Dolores*, September 16, 1810

2. Populist movement (insurgents) triumphs, falters, fails
  3. Social and agrarian reforms: *ejidos* given to the people
  4. Fear of the masses moves the *criollos* to side with the royalists (1811)
  5. First Hidalgo, then Morelos lead the insurgents; both of these clerics are defeated and executed; constitution and congress are destroyed
  6. From 1818, Creoles and Spaniards discuss more seriously the advantages of independence. Scottish freemasons are of great influence. After a decade of fighting, independence becomes the cause of the privileged classes more than that of the insurgents, resulting in an elitist triumph
  7. With the support of the high clergy and the Spanish Creole aristocracy, Agustín de Iturbide is assigned the task of crushing the insurgents under the leadership of Guerrero. Unable to do so, Iturbide makes an alliance with Guerrero (Plan de Iguala, 1821) that establishes three "guarantees": 1) a single religion; 2) union of all social groups in the independence movement; 3) a constitutional monarchy until such time that a European prince could be empowered to rule Mexico
  8. August 24, 1821, the Treaty of Córdoba gives Mexican Spanish Embassy recognition to the Mexican empire; Iturbide triumphs
- C. Confusion, uncertainty, and intrigue, 1821-1854:
1. From independence to mid-century, Mexico endures an empire, five constitutions, two federal and two centralized governments, two foreign wars, and a dictatorship
  2. Spain refuses to recognize Mexican independence; Iturbide is made emperor (abdicates after one year)
  3. The Church seeks ways to restore her colonial privileges; finances the military in various uprisings
  4. The era of Santa Anna: he is in and out of power several times, as conservatives and reformers jockey for power
- D. The Reform:
1. Santa Anna is unable to control uprisings in 1854, 1855
  2. Benito Juárez rises to prominence (Ley Juárez, 1855)
  3. A new constitution of the reformers, 1857
  4. The War of the Reform: conservatives against liberals.
  5. Liberal laws passed, beginning in 1859: nationalization of Church property and the separation of church and State; civil matrimony; civil registry; secularization of cemeteries; suppression of religious festivals; freedom of worship
- E. The Second Empire and the restoration of republicanism:
1. Juárez and the reformers achieve some goals but the country is bankrupt without the support of the conservatives
  2. Juárez decides to suspend the foreign debt; England, Spain, and France protest; they form the Tripartite Agreement of 1861 and decide to intervene in Mexico
  3. Through negotiations, England and Spain withdraw, but France's Napoleon III offers the Austrian Maximilian of Hapsburg the Mexican crown. Maximilian arrives in Mexico on May 28, 1864, accompanied by his wife, the Belgian princess Charlotte Amélie (Carlota)
  4. The American Civil War ends in 1866; Napoleon III withdraws his French army from Mexico; Maximilian is captured and executed by Juárez, 1867
  5. After the death of President Juárez, 1872, Porfirio Díaz rebels against the re-election of President Lerdo and assumes power as head of State
  6. Porfirio Díaz remains in power until the time of the Mexican Social Revolution (1910); he is an ardent follower of Comte's Positivism (Order and Progress)
- F. The Revolution of 1910 and its consequences:

1. A new constitution in 1917 that helps “institutionalize” the revolution and severely limit the activities of the Roman Catholic Church
2. Guerilla leaders Pascual Orozco, Francisco Villa, and Emiliano Zapata become famous during the revolution
3. Finally, after 100 years of independence, the Mexican people take the initiative in government; here are a few significant events and policies:
  - a. The PRI (*Partido Revolucionario Institucional*, 1946)) emerges as the principal power in politics and the economy
  - b. One presidential term of six years
  - c. Expropriation and nationalization of the oil industry (PEMEX)
  - d. Limitation of acreage owned by one person
  - e. Recent increase in power of the *Partido de Acción Nacional* (PAN); Fox is elected on the PAN ticket after 70 years of PRI domination
  - f. Still another party the *Partido de la Revolución Democrática* (PRD) emerged in 1989. Presently, the mayor of Mexico City is of that party, and might be a candidate for president in 2006.