

# Social Climbers: Changing Patterns of Mobility among the Indians of Colonial Peru

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THE CONQUEST of the Indian empires and their absorption into the Spanish colonial regime affected every aspect of the native cultures. When the Spanish incorporated Andean society into their empire, the patterns of social rank and stratification among the Indians were extensively reshuffled. Most analyses of this problem have concentrated upon the replacement of the Inca elite by the Spanish conquerors and the mechanisms governing the absorption of the native population into Spanish society. These analyses define social mobility in terms of the factors which permitted Indians to enter Spanish society or, conversely, prevented them from doing so.

Such a definition of social mobility implicitly assumes agreement by all members of colonial society that joining Spanish society meant gaining social rank and status in addition to power. This assumption can be questioned, for Indian society had its own criteria for assigning rank and status among its members, and despite the physical fact of conquest, these criteria were not immediately superseded by those of Spanish society. Throughout a large part of the colonial period, Indian society remained distinct from that of the Spaniards. An Indian ambitious for greater social position who had adopted the attitudes of Spanish society would evaluate his social rank and the avenues for raising it very differently from another Indian, equally ambitious, whose attitudes conformed to the traditions of Andean society.

For the Indian who adopted the attitudes of Spanish society, social mobility would be defined from the point of view of that society. Spanish laws defined an Indian in quasi-racial terms, as an individual born of Indian parents. People assigned to this category made up a separate estate in colonial Peru, protected and exploited under laws

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and regulations different from those determining the rights and obligations of other groups.<sup>1</sup>

From this perspective, the Indians ranked at the bottom of the social hierarchy in colonial Peru. Except for those Indians to whom Spanish law granted noble rank as descendants of the Indian elite, members of Indian society were burdened with a variety of restrictive regulations and heavy obligations. Legally the Indian was defined as a "miserable," which made him not only a ward of the crown, but also a minor, who could not enter into a binding legal contract without the approval of the Spanish authorities, the *corregidor de indios* or *protector de indios*.<sup>2</sup> Frequently Indians were not admitted to full participation in the sacraments of the Catholic religion, and there were regulations in some cases holding that their testimony in court was worth only a portion of that offered by Spaniards. Economically they bore the major part of the labor load necessary to sustain the Spanish state and society, as well as contributing tribute payments to the crown in recognition of their vassalage.<sup>3</sup> The attitudes of other members of Spanish society toward the Indians reflected their low status as the peasantry of the colonial regime, for they were generally regarded as inferior beings, fit only for the servile tasks of the society.<sup>4</sup>

Despite such disabilities, Indians who entered Spanish society did not always occupy its bottom levels. Of course, those who became peons on haciendas made up the lowest stratum of viceregal society, but many Indians joined the urban population. By 1614 the Indian population of Lima, most of it residing in the native section of El Cercado outside the city walls, numbered 1978 persons, many of whom practiced a trade or were apprenticed to some one who did.<sup>5</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> The laws and regulations governing the Indians in America may be examined in the *Recopilación de leyes de los reynos de las Indias*, Lib. VI. Commentary on Indian legislation can be found in Juan de Solórzano Pereira, *Politica indiana*, Lib. II. Further compilations of laws affecting local areas are also instructive. On Peru, see Lic. Tomás de Ballesteros, *Tomo primero de las ordenanzas del Perú* [1685] (Lima, 1752), Lib. II.

<sup>2</sup> Solórzano, Lib. II, cap. xxviii, núms. 33-34, 42-45.

<sup>3</sup> John H. Rowe, "The Incas Under Spanish Colonial Institutions," *HAHR*, XXXVII (May 1957), 188, 191; Solórzano, Lib. II, caps. v, vi, and xix, núms. 6-10.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Fray Reginaldo de Lizárraga, "Descripción breve de toda la tierra del Perú . . . para el Excmo. Sr. Conde de Lemos y Andrade, presidente del Consejo Real de Indias," *Nueva biblioteca de autores españoles*, XV (Madrid, 1909), 562.

<sup>5</sup> Emilio Harth Terré and Alberto Márquez Abanto, "Las bellas artes en el virreinato del Perú—perspectiva social y económica del artesano virreinal en Lima, siglo XVI," *Revista del Archivo Nacional del Perú*, XXVI, ent. II (July-

salary received by an Indian artisan was essentially the same as that received by a Spaniard of equivalent rank, and the Indians joined together to form their own *cofradías* and later their own guilds.

These individuals remained legally Indian, but the first available records of their attitudes and personal belongings reveal that, by the latter part of the seventeenth century at least, they had taken on many attitudes and practices of Spanish culture. They and their women wore European rather than Indian style clothing. They participated fully in the European money economy, tending to invest their earnings in urban property, stores or houses, which were then rented out for an income, rather than in cultivated land. They spent their money on expensive luxury clothing or jewelry, and even invested in the same prestige items as their Spanish contemporaries. By the eighteenth century, they drank tea from silver and gold-inlaid *matés*, and a number owned Negro slaves.

In sum, their personal appearance and living habits were probably quite similar to those of their Spanish counterparts of equivalent wealth and profession. By the latter part of the colonial period, many of these Indians were more than likely indistinguishable from their Spanish or mestizo associates, for the continued mixture of conqueror and conquered had made skin color and other physical features very uncertain indicators of legal race. Spanish administrators complained that if an Indian cut his hair, spoke Spanish, and donned Spanish clothing, he could not be distinguished as Indian.<sup>6</sup>

A special group in pre-Conquest Indian society were the *kurakas*, or ethnic chieftains, who ranged from the leaders of substantial states down to the heads of small kin-groups. The social roles and status of these chieftains are still imperfectly understood, as is the structure of the Inca elite which controlled the Andean area prior to the arrival of the Spaniards. Recent work is only beginning to dissociate native

December 1962), 395; "Padrón de los indios que se hallaron en la ciudad de los Reyes del Piru . . . año de 1613," Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid, Ms. 3032, microfilm, courtesy of David Noble Cook.

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, the testaments in the Archivo Nacional del Perú, Lima (hereafter cited as ANP), Sección histórica, Testamentos de indios, legs. I and II; ANP, Sección notarial, the *Registros de escrituras públicas* of Francisco Cayetano de Arredonde (1727-1731), fols. 588, 771v-772; Francisco Huaman Minayulli (1780-1781), fols. 27v-28, 670-672; Conecolorcorvo, "El lazarillo de ciegos caminantes [1777]," *Biblioteca de autores españoles*, CXXII (Madrid, 1959), 378; "Carta del Arzobispo de Lima, D. Pedro Villagómez, sobre la memoria de D. Pedro de Loma y D. Francisco de Ugarte en razón de la reducción de los indios a sus pueblos [1663]," Emilio Lissón Chávez, *La Iglesia de España en el Perú. Colección de documentos*, . . . Sección primera: *Archivo General de Indias*, V (Seville, 1956), 391.

patterns of leadership and command from the overlay of assumptions made by Spanish observers, who imposed upon the Indian ethnic leaders their own concepts of European nobility.<sup>7</sup>

For the purposes of this discussion, however, these problems can be disregarded, for from the perspective of Spanish society, the Indian nobility consisted of descendants from the Inca elite who had been granted the privileges of European nobility by Spanish law or the *kurakas*, whom the Spanish conquerors accepted as rulers of their people. The noble rank of these persons freed them from the disabilities of the Indian commoner and gave them legal access to the highest positions. Many among the Indian colonial nobility enjoyed an economic position far above that of many Spaniards through the wealth and lands that they claimed by virtue of their descent from the pre-Conquest elite. There are even cases of Spaniards willing to exchange their social standing for the possessions of an Indian noble.<sup>8</sup>

Despite such variations of wealth and legal rank, however, an individual who was known to be Indian was generally regarded as socially inferior to his Spanish counterpart. This discrimination increased from the seventeenth century and was applied at all levels. In the eighteenth century Jorge Juan and Antonio de Ulloa complained that the sons of Indian nobles were treated with disdain by Spanish and even mestizo children; and the Spanish-American aristocracy steadfastly refused to admit members of the Indian nobility to certain professions regarded as the perquisites of Spanish descendants.<sup>9</sup> Intermarriage between Indian and Spaniard also declined throughout the colonial period. By the mid-seventeenth century it was held that "few honorable Spaniards marry Indians or Negroes."<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> See John V. Murra, "Social Structural and Economic Themes in Andean Ethnohistory," *Anthropological Quarterly*, XXXIV (April 1961), 47-59; "An Aymara Kingdom in 1567," *Ethnohistory*, XV (Spring 1968), 115-151; "La visita de los Chupacho como fuente etnológica," in *Visita de la provincia de León de Huánuco en 1562* (Huánuco, Perú, 1967), 386-398.

<sup>8</sup> John H. Rowe, "Movimiento nacional Inca del siglo XVIII," *Revista Universitaria del Cuzco*, no. 107, 1954 (Cuzco, 1955), 4-5, 23-24.

<sup>9</sup> Jorge Juan and Antonio de Ulloa, *Noticias secretas de América* (London, 1826), 317; "Real cédula . . . mandando a los virreyes, audiencias, gobernadores, arzobispos y obispos de las Indias cuiden con particular atención de que sean admitidos en las religiones, educados en los colegios, y promovidos según su mérito y capacidad . . . 11 de septiembre de 1766," Melchor de Paz, *Guerra separatista: rebeliones de indios en Sur América. La sublevación de Túpac Amaru* (Lima, 1952), II, 282-288.

<sup>10</sup> Solórzano, Lib. II, cap. xxx, *punto* 21.

Thus the hierarchy that emerged in colonial Peru was not a single one, with all members of Spanish society superimposed over all members of Indian society. Rather, the Indian and Spanish groups formed two parallel hierarchies. The upper ranks of the Indian hierarchy, especially below the level of the Indian nobility, were extremely thin during the early years after the Conquest, but they expanded as time went on. The two hierarchies overlapped, but they did not merge. The Indian hierarchy was substantially below that of the Spaniards, and on all social levels the distinctions between Spaniard and Indian became more rigid as the colonial period advanced. Obviously, a ragged Spanish or mestizo beggar was probably considered by other members of Spanish society to have lower status than a wealthy Indian artisan or noble, no matter what the beggar himself may have felt about his social position. The judgment will be different, however, if we look at two individuals, one known to be an Indian and the other a Spaniard or mestizo, who were identical in economic position, occupation, dress, education, and other characteristics. In such a case we can say that if one was known to be an Indian, he was socially inferior to his Spanish or mestizo counterpart in the eyes of other members of Spanish society.

The social hierarchies just described, however, are not the only standpoint for examining the problem of social mobility among the Indians of colonial Peru. There is a different perspective, related to another definition of what makes a man an Indian—the view of the Indian himself. In other words, we can examine the problem of social stratification and mobility from the perspective of those who participated in Indian society. For an Indian, “being an Indian” meant not just the place in the colonial social hierarchy assigned to him by Spanish laws and regulations. It meant a way of living, a way of looking at the world and defining one’s place in it. Included in this view was a system of social differentiation that only marginally reflected Spanish laws or attitudes.

Undoubtedly the Indian was aware of the subordinate position which he occupied in a society dominated by Spanish laws and regulations. Still, his own system of reference was not determined by the attitudes of Spanish society but by his own. From his point of view, he was not at the bottom of the social hierarchy in the Spanish world; he was outside it altogether. Discussions about the assimilation of the Indians into colonial society occasionally neglect the obvious fact that the Indians had a culture of their own. Despite the tensions and dislocations resulting from the Spanish Conquest and the continuing

effects of new institutions, laws, and demands created by members of Spanish society, the patterns of Indian culture continued to regulate the conduct of most Indians. The Conquest did not replace traditional patterns of assigning social rank and status with Spanish patterns; instead it modified traditional reference points for assigning social position and incorporated new criteria under the impact of Spanish rule.

Analysis of these changes is complicated by our incomplete understanding of Indian social structure prior to the Spanish Conquest. The social organization of Andean society was complex and undoubtedly not the same throughout the area. There is a temptation to regard the extensive Inca territories at the Conquest as culturally uniform, a temptation made more attractive by the fact that most of our information regarding Indian society describes social and cultural patterns as practiced, understood, or imposed by the Incas. Yet they had held sway over most of their empire for less than a century before the Spaniards replaced them as overlords.<sup>11</sup> While the Incas undoubtedly shared many more cultural attitudes with the groups they conquered than did the Spaniards, it is highly unlikely that all of the local groups under Inca rule had identical social organizations, or that in less than a century the Incas succeeded in making all of the peoples of their empire conform to their own patterns of rank and status.<sup>12</sup>

Despite these differences, however, it is possible to describe a basic pattern for the Peruvian highlands in which the major criterion for the assignment of social status was birth. Spanish society in the sixteenth century also placed much emphasis upon birth in assigning social rank. The system through which the basic resources of the society were distributed was not the same in Andean society as in that of the Europeans, however, and the Indians did not define kinship, wealth, or prestige in the same terms as did their conquerors. The terminology used to describe the social structure of western European societies, therefore, provides little insight into the patterns of internal differentiation that prevailed in Indian society.

Among the most familiar systems of social differentiation in Euro-

<sup>11</sup> John H. Rowe, "Absolute Chronology in the Andean Area," *American Antiquity*, X (1944-1945), 265-284.

<sup>12</sup> For examples of the variety of local conditions in the Inca empire at the time of the Spanish conquest, see the *Visita hecha a la provincia de Chucuito por Garcí Diez de San Miguel en el año 1567* (Lima, 1964); *Visita a la provincia de León de Huánuco en 1562* (Huánuco, 1967); Marcos Jiménez de la Espada (ed.), *Relaciones geográficas de Indias* (4 vols., Madrid, 1881-1897).

pean culture were castes, feudal estates, corporations or corporate groups, and, since the nineteenth century, social classes. Feudal estates, castes, and classes are all generally described as hierarchically arranged groups set apart from other groups in the society. The privileges and duties of estates and castes and their rank in the larger society were defined and supported by specific legal or religious rules. However, membership in one or another class conveyed no special civil or political rights. Classes were more exclusively economic groups, and while—like other forms of social organization—the system of classes tended to function so as to ensure that each individual maintained the social position into which he was born, the criterion for this position was not exclusively birth, but the economic position which was closely tied to birth. For this reason, the boundaries of the class system might be more or less fluid, depending upon the new opportunities that emerged for obtaining wealth and the degree to which the political system insured that these new opportunities were restricted to certain groups.<sup>13</sup>

Provincial Indian society under the Incas consisted of peoples who did not trace their descent from Inca ancestors. These people may be divided into two hierarchically arranged groups differentiated by legal or religious rules or by their access to the goods of the society and their role in it. First, there is a clear distinction between the ethnic chieftain, the *kuraka*, and the Indian commoners. Second, there is a sharp difference between the members of Indian society who participated in kin-groups, whether commoners or elite, and the *yanakuna*, or specialized retainer group, whose members were divorced from the kin-group of their birth and attached to the household of a *kuraka*. Among a substantial number of peoples, these distinctions existed prior to their incorporation into the Inca empire, although the boundaries between the three groups were not always as clear and sharp as the Incas later sought to make them.<sup>14</sup> The *kurakas* and the *yanakuna* were set apart from the rest of Indian society by their function in that society, to a degree by their access to its wealth, and also by distinct sets of rules and regulations govern-

<sup>13</sup> On social organization in Spain and Spanish America during the colonial period, see L. N. McAlister, "Social Structure and Social Change in New Spain," *HAHR*, XLIII (August 1962), 349-370. On social class and its differences from other forms of social differentiation in European society, see T. B. Bottomore, *Classes in Modern Society* (New York, 1968), 9-33.

<sup>14</sup> John V. Murra, "New Data on Retainer and Servile Populations in Twantinsuyu," *Actas y memorias del XXXVI Congreso Internacional de Americanistas* (Seville, 1966), II, 35-45; Murra, "Social Structural and Economic Themes," 52-53.

ing their conduct. The Spanish conquerors immediately saw in these two groups the Indian equivalent of the European nobility and the slaves, although recent investigation has made it clear that while these groups may have had functional counterparts in European society, they were actually quite different.<sup>15</sup>

The kurakas and the yanakuna, however, made up an extremely small proportion of Indian society. Among most members of Indian society—those who were neither kurakas nor yanakuna—there were no hierarchical groupings to which we might assign the terms estate, caste, or class without seriously distorting understanding. Rather, an individual's place in his society was defined by his position in the web of kinship relations that reached from his immediate family unit to the larger lineage group and, further, to all who regarded themselves as the descendants of a mythical ancestor-deity. The size of this larger group varied from region to region. An example is Huarochirí, an area that encompassed the three river valley systems of the Rímac, Lurín, and Mala on the western slopes of the central Andes. All people here defined themselves as the sons of Pariacaca, the local ancestor-deity. A component group within the region regarded itself as descended from one of the seven mythical children of Pariacaca, and the ayllu, the extended kin-groups that survived into the colonial period, described themselves as "we who are like a single son."<sup>16</sup> A Spaniard familiar with Indian society pointed out that the structure of the ayllu was not entirely unlike that of lineages in Spain and described it as "a group of people of the same origin, as we might say 'Mendozas' or 'Toledos.'"<sup>17</sup> In the Andes,

<sup>15</sup> See, for example, Murra, "New Data on Retainer and Servile Populations"; Murra, "Social Structural and Economic Themes," 49-54; Murra, "La visita de los Chupachu como fuente etnológica," 387-398.

<sup>16</sup> *Dioses y hombres de Huarochirí, narración quechua recogida por Francisco de Ávila (1598?)* (Lima, 1966), 65; also 73, 137, 139. These tales which a zealous priest collected in order to combat native religious practices are a major source of information on Huarochirí province prior to the Spanish conquest. Obviously, since mythology and folklore are not historical documents, their statements cannot be taken as fact. Nonetheless, folklore tends to reflect something of the social organization, as well as other basic, largely unquestioned assumptions of the society from which it emerges. Thus, though these tales are imaginative creations, their cultural context reflects the social patterns of the pre-Conquest society. Such sources must, of course, be used with a great deal of care, but when so used, they can throw much light on problems not dealt with in more conventional source materials. On the use of tales and mythology, see Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition* (London, 1961); for a superb example of social reconstruction based upon this kind of source, see Moses I. Finley, *The World of Odysseus* (London, 1956).

<sup>17</sup> Francisco de Ávila, "Relación de idolatrías," in "Carta del Arzobispo de



however, these kin ties, whether real or fictive, extended throughout the entire society, binding together all its members.

An individual claimed his position in society and his share of its goods by virtue of his place in this web of kin relations. The kin group held primary access to land, irrigation rights, and the other resources of the society, distributing these among its members.<sup>18</sup> The kin group was the basis of exchange and the source of labor. An elaborate set of rights and responsibilities insured the individual access to land, goods produced in distant areas by his kin, and the aid of others to help him plant, harvest, construct houses, and perform the other necessary labors of daily existence. The ideal of Andean society was one of self-sufficiency, and insofar as possible, production and exchange were organized through kin ties. This form of organizing economic activity is very different from the market-oriented system of the European world. Similarly the social groups whose position in the society was defined by their access to its goods and resources bear only slight resemblance to the major divisions of European society, whether estates, castes, classes, or functional corporations.

Indian society was not homogeneous; there were great differences of wealth and position. The kin groups were ranked within the larger society on a recognized scale of prestige that determined the order of participation in activities such as land distribution or work parties, and ceremonial functions such as cleaning the irrigation ditches or joining in dances or worship.<sup>19</sup> This scale of prestige was closely related to the amount of society's resources enjoyed by the various ayllus. Thus an ayllu of high prestige held extensive lands and herds, while one of lower rank held less. This scale was also related to the relative age of the kin-group within the larger unit. In central Peru prestige was directly related to age, as the myths of Huarochirí point out in speaking of the ayllu Checa, noting that

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Los Reyes Don Bartolomé Lobo Guerrero a S.M. sobre el estado de la diócesis, 20 de abril de 1611," *La iglesia de España en el Perú*, IV (Seville, 1946), 630. The same document is also included in *Dioses y hombres*, 255-259.

<sup>18</sup> The discussion of kin ties as a determinant of social position and access to goods and resources mainly centers on the ayllu, which is generally defined as an extended kin-group. On the ayllu, see John H. Rowe, "Inca Culture at the time of the Spanish Conquest," *Handbook of South American Indians* (7 vols., Washington, D.C., 1946), II, 253-256; Paul Kirchoff, "The Social and Political Organization of the Andean Peoples," *Handbook of South American Indians*, V, 293-296; Murra, "Social Structural and Economic Themes," 55-57. Also see *Dioses y hombres*, 39-43.

<sup>19</sup> *Dioses y hombres*, 113, 141.

the Checa were regarded as the youngest offspring of the deity of the province, "and for that reason they were given [by the deity] next to no land and very little clothing."<sup>20</sup> Nor were the kin groups internally homogeneous; their members might range from the wealthy man who was able to provide gifts and food for many people down to the poor man, or "potato eater," who dressed in ragged clothing, sat on the outer fringes of the circle of drinkers at celebrations, and was frequently ignored in the distribution of food and drink.<sup>21</sup>

Since access to goods and to the aid of others was determined by kin ties, the person with an abundance of kin had a greater number of hands available for help in the labor of amassing goods and thus greater opportunities for wealth and power. In fact, wealth in this context might be defined as effective kin ties or the ability to mobilize the assistance of one's kin. The close relationship between effective kin ties and wealth is recognized in language; the Inca word "*wakcha*," meaning "poor," is also translated in sixteenth-century dictionaries as "orphan."<sup>22</sup>

The allocation of wealth, power, and prestige through kin ties suggests that social mobility was limited, since it would be regarded as degrading for a member of a wealthy family to enter into a kinship relation with a person of lower status. In fact, the myths emphasize how exclusive were the upper ranks of Indian society. In one myth the marriage of a poor man to the daughter of a wealthy and powerful individual, a union achieved with supernatural aid, aroused strong protests from the poor man's new in-laws. And the discovery by a female *wak'a*, or deity, that the unknown father of her child was a "potato eater"—also a *wak'a*, for such distinctions existed even among deities—was enough to cause her suicide.<sup>23</sup>

Prior to the Inca conquest, it was possible for a kin-group of low status to gain additional wealth by conquering new lands, which in turn would raise its rank to a position commensurate with its new wealth and power.<sup>24</sup> The Incas, however, prohibited such actions within the territories they conquered, making themselves the arbiter of disputes over land. Since the capture of new lands was an im-

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 181.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 35, 46-49, 149.

<sup>22</sup> "*Guaccha*: pobre varón o muger, huérfano," in Fray Domingo de Santo Tomás, *Lexicón, o vocabulario de la lengua general del Perú* (Lima, 1951); "*huacchayani*: yr empobrecido o faltarle los parientes," in Diego González Holguín, *Vocabulario de la lengua general de todo el Perú llamada lengua quichua o del Inca* (Lima, 1952).

<sup>23</sup> *Dioses y hombres*, 25, 35-43.

<sup>24</sup> See, for example, *ibid.*, 77, 81.

portant means for kin groups low in prestige and rank to improve their position, the Incas' prohibition of warfare within their domains probably also meant the elimination of earlier channels of social mobility within Indian society. But either individuals or groups might obtain new resources through the generosity of the state in return for special services such as those rendered by the Indians of the province of Huarochirí, who helped to suppress rebellion within the Incas' realms.<sup>25</sup>

In the case of at least one group in Indian society, the kurakas, the Incas may have sought to intensify the distinctions of rank and status. The position of kuraka may not have become hereditary in all areas prior to their incorporation into the Inca empire, although in many regions the position appears to have been passed down along kinship lines, at least at the upper levels.<sup>26</sup> The Incas reinforced the social position of the kuraka, while reducing his political autonomy. Although he was supervised by an Inca governor, his special rank and status within the empire were emphasized. The Incas set him apart from the rest of the community by restricting to him certain perquisites of wealth and position—luxury goods such as *qompi* cloth, feathers, gold and silver articles, special stores of prestige foodstuffs, and the services of retainers.<sup>27</sup>

The Spanish Conquest introduced new methods of obtaining wealth and power that substantially altered the internal structure of Indian society. The period of the Conquest itself offered such opportunities through alliance with the Spaniards, and many who allied themselves early with the conquerors used that connection to improve their social position. Ethnic leaders appropriated a higher rank for themselves than they had held prior to the Conquest or gained additional wealth by claiming title to community lands. Others who had held no positions of leadership prior to the Spanish Conquest rose to become part of the Indian elite.

In the settled colony the social and economic system of the con-

<sup>25</sup> See *ibid.*, 131-135.

<sup>26</sup> Murra, "Social Structural and Economic Themes," 50; "Descripción y relación de la ciudad de La Paz [1586]," Marcos Jiménez de la Espada (ed.), *Relaciones geográficas de Indias* (Madrid, 1885), II, 72; Waldemar Espinosa Soriano, "La Guaranga y la reducción de Huancayo," *Revista del Museo Nacional*, XXXII (Lima, 1963), 15-16; María Rostworoski de Diez Canseco, *Curacas y sucesiones: costa norte* (Lima, 1961).

<sup>27</sup> Rowe, "Inca Culture at the Time of the Spanish Conquest," 261; Murra, "Social Structural and Economic Themes," 51-52; Murra, "New Data on Retainer and Servile Populations," 40-41; Sally Falk Moore, *Power and Property in Inca Peru* (New York, 1958), 55, 63; *Dioses y hombres*, 41-43.

querors, together with the reorganization of the Indian community imposed by Spanish law, produced a new set of factors which could be utilized by members of Indian society to gain for themselves a greater proportion of the available goods and resources. The levies imposed by the Spaniards upon the Indians did not weigh equally upon all; some were given an advantage which could be translated into wealth and position. Furthermore, the Spaniards set up new positions of power in the Indian community which the ambitious individual could use to amass more goods than he could have obtained through traditional means. These opportunities permitted some to acquire both wealth and power, and, through the judicious use of these, the prestige commensurate with higher rank. In other words, they introduced new avenues of social mobility.

The establishment of religious and civil government in the Indian communities modeled upon that of Spain and backed by the authority of the Spaniards offered further opportunities to those who sought to increase their power and possessions. In the civil sphere the Spanish authorities established the *cabildo*, and in the religious sphere they recreated the hierarchy of lay assistants to the priest that existed in Spain. The pagan religious officials were to be replaced entirely by representatives of Catholicism, just as the Christian religion was to displace the worship of native deities. The *kurakas* of the larger social units were assimilated into the Spanish administrative system, but their authority was limited by Spanish laws and shared by other Indian officials. The *kuraka* retained his traditional role as leader and spokesman of his people, but the duties and powers of the central figure in the Indian *cabildo*, the *alcalde*, overlapped those of the *kuraka* in some areas and replaced them in others.

The *alcalde* supervised the distribution of village lands and the conduct of the villagers together with the *kuraka*, whose function this had been prior to the Spanish Conquest. All judicial authority over the Indians passed from the *kuraka* to the *alcalde*, and the *alcalde* became the representative of the village in court cases and in village dealings with the provincial authorities, particularly the *corregidor de indios*. The *alcalde*, together with the *kuraka*, was responsible for the collection of tribute and in general executed the orders of the *corregidor*.<sup>28</sup>

The other Indian officials in the *cabildo* functioned largely as the administrative assistants of the *alcalde*. The laws provided for one

<sup>28</sup> The laws regulating the duties and conduct of the *alcalde* are contained in Ballesteros, *Tomo primero de los ordenanzas*, Lib. II, tit. ii, ords. i-xxxvi.

to two regidores to aid the alcalde in his administrative duties, and an alguacil mayor, who was the village policeman. These officials, together with the alcalde, were elected yearly by the outgoing cabildo, whose members could not succeed themselves. The only permanent member of the cabildo was the escribano, or notary. There were also a number of officials appointed by the incoming cabildo, but these positions brought little power.<sup>29</sup> For the purposes of this discussion, the significant positions are primarily those of the alcaldes and the regidores.

In 1575 Viceroy Francisco de Toledo ordered that there be a cabildo established in the capital town of every repartimiento, the old encomiendas converted into administrative divisions within the Indian provinces.<sup>30</sup> In 1618 Philip III modified this decree, specifying that every Indian village should have an alcalde chosen from its own population, and in villages of eighty houses or more two alcaldes and two regidores.<sup>31</sup> In cases brought before the royal audiencia by the Indians, even small villages were usually represented by an alcalde, suggesting that many villages did conform to the rule established in 1618. Of course the most powerful posts—and, judging from tribute records, often the only positions whose occupants were relieved from tribute and labor obligations—were those in the capital village of the repartimiento.<sup>32</sup>

Indian religious officialdom was not given final form until the early years of the seventeenth century. In the years after the Conquest, priests gathered around them large numbers of Indian assistants charged with the care of the church and the enforcement of religious regulations and priestly dictates. In the sixteenth century one corregidor, upon assuming his position, complained that the priests of his area had appointed sixty-three alguaciles to aid them.<sup>33</sup> By the early seventeenth century, however, the number of these Indian assistants to the priest was strictly limited. In each village

<sup>29</sup> Ballesteros, *Tomo primero de las ordenanzas*, Lib. II, tít. i, ords. i, ii, iv, xiii; tít. ii, ords. xxix, xxxix; tít. iii, ords. ii, iii. See also the *Recopilación*, Lib. VI, tít. iii, leyes xv, xvi, xvii.

<sup>30</sup> "Ordenanzas . . . para los Indios de la provincia de Charcas . . .," in Roberto Levillier (ed.), *Ordenanzas de Don Francisco de Toledo, virrey del Perú (1569-1581)* (Madrid, 1929), ord. I, 305-306.

<sup>31</sup> *Recopilación*, Lib. II, tít. iii, ley xv.

<sup>32</sup> See, for instance, the representations of the alcaldes in ANP, Sección histórica, Derecho Indígena, cuad. 353 [1773-1775]. For examples of exemptions provided for in tribute records, see ANP, Sección histórica, Derecho indígena, cuad. 189; Biblioteca Nacional del Perú, Sección de Manuscritos, Ms. C-1909.

<sup>33</sup> "Carta a S.M. del Lic. Castro, Los Reyes, 12 de enero de 1566," Roberto Levillier (ed.), *Gobernantes del Perú* (Madrid, 1921), III, 137.

of one hundred or more Indian parishioners, there was to be one sacristan in charge of caring for the church, two or three cantores to lead the choir and the responses, and a fiscal or alguacil to supervise attendance at Mass.<sup>34</sup> In addition each administrative division was to be provided with a school. This regulation was later extended by the Church until each parish was required to maintain a school staffed by an Indian schoolmaster who spoke and read Spanish.<sup>35</sup> It is clear that rural schools did exist in many areas, although it is not possible to judge their quality or the consistency with which they were maintained. Tribute records stipulated the exemption of specific individuals from personal service because of their position as schoolmasters, and inspections of village parishes by officials sent out from the archbishopric of Lima report the presence of schools in many parishes and prescribe fines for priests in whose parishes schools were not functioning.<sup>36</sup>

Participation in this new power group offered several rewards to the Indian who chose to ally himself with the provincial representatives of Spanish authority—the priest and the corregidor de indios. A real but minor advantage was the compensation offered. Only the Indian schoolmaster actually received a salary, but in return for their services the others obtained exemptions from the mita or from both the labor draft and tribute payments.<sup>37</sup> Far more important than the legal reward, however, was the power which derived from the position of these officials as representatives of Spanish authority. Individuals who joined this group wielded power over their fellows by virtue of the force represented by the Spanish state, a source of authority completely outside the traditional sanctions and customs that regulated power in Indian society. As long as the Spanish officials did not force their Indian representatives to observe the sanctions of Indian society, those representatives could ignore or flout

<sup>34</sup> *Recopilación*, Lib. VI, tít. iii, leyes vi, vii.

<sup>35</sup> Ballesteros, *Tomo primero de las ordenanzas*, Lib. II, tít. vii, ord. iii. The earliest known cédula which ordered schools for each village with a resident priest is dated 1685: "Real cédula que se enseñe a los indios la lengua española y se pongan escuelas, Madrid, 7 de julio de 1685," Richard Konetzke, *Colección de documentos para la historia de la formación social de Hispanoamérica, 1493-1810* (3 vols., Madrid, 1953-1962), II, 766-767. However, the inspectors of the Archbishopric of Lima required the village priests to maintain schools in their doctrinas as early as the mid-seventeenth century. See the "Visita de Chaella, 1642," Archivo Arzobispal de Lima, Visitas de Huarochirí, leg. I.

<sup>36</sup> See "Visita de Chaella, 1642," and "Visita de San Pedro de Casta, 1721," Archivo Arzobispal de Lima, Visitas de Huarochirí, leg. I.

<sup>37</sup> Ballesteros, *Tomo primero de las ordenanzas*, Lib. II, tít. ii, ord. xxxi; tít. vii, ord. iii; *Recopilación*, Lib. VI, tít. v, ley xx; tít. iii, leyes vi, vii.

traditional sanctions with impunity. Furthermore, since those sanctions also regulated access to wealth, the Indians who enjoyed a source of power outside the traditional structure of Indian society could use it to obtain a greater share of their own society's resources.

There is clear evidence, indeed, that the Indian officials did use their power to amass wealth for themselves in defiance of the rights and responsibilities by which wealth and power were customarily allocated in Indian society. In 1565 the lawyers of the audiencia of Quito complained that the Indian cantores and musicians in many villages were attempting "to shake off their obedience to their leaders."<sup>38</sup> Early in the seventeenth century Huaman Poma de Ayala accused the Indian religious and civil officials of robbing the Indians, sending them to the high punas or the lowlands for llamas, maize, and potatoes, or requisitioning cloth for them. He also asserted that they took the young girls of the village—those who had not already been claimed by the priest—and made them their concubines.<sup>39</sup>

Within the structure of Indian society these activities were not mere random criminal acts. Traditionally the right to extra labor services and goods, particularly cloth, as well as the possession of more than one woman, were privileges limited to those of high status. Under the Incas, they were reserved in most cases for the elite and were distributed according to status.<sup>40</sup> When Huaman Poma de Ayala accused the Indian officials of robbery, he was really saying that they were using the threat of force derived from their alliance with the conquerors to usurp for themselves goods appropriate to a status and rank far above their legitimate position in traditional Indian society. When he wailed that the world had been turned upside down,<sup>41</sup> his complaint was a literal description of what he saw happening to the social hierarchy. New ways to acquire power and wealth were indeed undermining the traditional system of rank and status determined by birth.

Yet the goods obtained by the members of the new power group by virtue of their association with the Spanish authorities did not in themselves bring the prestige and rank that accompanied wealth in

<sup>38</sup> "Cédula real por la que se ordene a las autoridades de Quito prohíban el abuso de los que por ociosidad se dedican a la música, setiembre 3 de 1565," *Colección de reales cédulas dirigidas a la Real Audiencia de Quito* (Quito, 1935), I, 130.

<sup>39</sup> Huaman Poma de Ayala, *Nueva corónica y buen gobierno* (Paris, 1936), 574-575, 587, 662-663, 797-798.

<sup>40</sup> See note 17 above.

<sup>41</sup> See, for example, Huaman Poma, *Nueva corónica*, 604, 762.

traditional Indian society, for such wealth had been obtained in defiance of that society's patterns. Doubtless some were unconcerned by their position as usurpers of power and wealth that did not belong to them according to Indian traditions. Others, however, seem to have sought to legitimize their new positions. In addition to their roles as representatives of Spanish authority, they were active participants in and leaders of the native religious cults, maintained despite the active persecution of Spanish authorities. In 1611 a priest investigating the persistence of native religion reported that the priests of the ceremonies were frequently Indians "who know how to read and write, and have been raised among Spaniards and priests; and others are cantores of the churches and maestros de capilla. . . ." <sup>42</sup> A century later, the alcalde of an Indian village confessed to serving as a priest of the native religious observances. He also implicated the fiscal of the church, legally entrusted with policing the parish against religious lapses. In a neighboring village, the feast of the local pagan deity was led by the fiscal, the sacristan, and the cantor of the church. <sup>43</sup>

At the beginning of the seventeenth century the Spaniards discovered the dual roles played by the Indian village officials and fought the practice without success. They found it hard to understand this behavior, for an Indian official discovered in such activities not only lost his privileged position and source of power, but was frequently penalized heavily and even exiled from his village. <sup>44</sup> Yet the role of priest of the *wak'as* was one carrying prestige and power in traditional Indian society, and access to it was usually determined by birth. <sup>45</sup> If we assume that the members of the Indian power group were in fact seeking higher rank and status within their own society by utilizing the power available through alliance with the Spanish officials, their participation in the native religious ceremonies be-

<sup>42</sup> Francisco de Ávila, "Relación de idolatrías," 631.

<sup>43</sup> "Causa criminal de hechisero de oficio seguido contra Don Francisco Julcarilpo y su cuñada Doña Francisca de Oría . . . 1730," in "Documentos sobre idolatrías y hechiserías de la provincia de Huarochirí (Peru) 1641-1730," typescript copies from the Archivo Arzobispal de Lima, *Visitas de idolatría, Huarochirí*, in the Department of Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley, 176-177.

<sup>44</sup> See the sentences given Indians convicted of idolatry in the "Causa criminal contra Juan de Rojas, su mujer y otros indios de Carampoma, por idólatras, impíos, y hechiseros, de la provincia de Huarochirí [1723]," in "Documentos sobre idolatrías," 97-164. See also Nancy Caldwell Gilmer, "Huarochirí in the seventeenth century: the persistence of native religion in colonial Peru" (M.A. thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1952), 117-123.

<sup>45</sup> *Dioses y hombres*, 103.



comes perfectly comprehensible. By taking part in activities that were the mark of higher status within Indian society, they might gain the recognition and prestige commensurate with their effective wealth and power. In this way they would climb to a higher rung on the social ladder of ranked statuses within native society.

As a result of the new avenues to power and wealth opened by the economic system and by the legal regulations of the dominant Spanish group, the hierarchy of status and prestige within Indian society seems to have been reordered during the latter part of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. But the social hierarchy was not overturned; there was a high degree of continuity between the old elite and the new. Many of the kurakas maintained or even increased the power, wealth, and prestige which they had enjoyed prior to the Spanish Conquest. Furthermore, they had a unique opportunity to influence the choice of the new elite, for long-standing traditions of deference to the kuraka did not end with the Spanish conquest, and he also maintained close contacts with the local Spanish authorities. Thus while the kuraka himself was prohibited by Spanish law from taking part in Indian village government, his influence remained strong, and members of his family often joined the village officialdom.<sup>46</sup> Huaman Poma cites one village in which the kuraka established his brother as mayordomo of the church. In another village the alcalde was "son and grandson of principales," and his son in turn became cantor of the church.<sup>47</sup>

In addition to those who had traditionally held positions of high status in Indian society, however, the new Indian elite was also composed of persons who would have occupied a much lower rank in pre-Conquest society, as well as members of entirely new privileged groups defined by their exemption from the levies imposed by the Spanish authorities. An individual who did not have to serve a turn of the mita or pay tribute levies was in a position to gain more by offering his goods and labor on the Spanish market than the Indian who had to fulfill such obligations, and this advantage could be in-

<sup>46</sup> Governor Castro recommended that the Indian alcaldes be chosen from among the "indios principales." Francisco de Toledo, who modified this practice by stipulating that one of the two alcaldes must be a commoner, did not bar the Indian nobility from participation in village government. "Preveniciones hechas por el Lic. Castro para el buen gobierno del reino del Perú . . . Los Reyes, 1565," in Levillier, *Gobernantes*, III, 117-118; Ballesteros, *Tomo primero de las ordenanzas*, Lib. II, tít. i, ord. vii. The kuraka himself was enjoined from participating in or attempting to influence the elected Indian officials. Ballesteros, *Tomo primero de las ordenanzas*, Lib. II, tít. i, órds. v. vi.

<sup>47</sup> Huaman Poma, *Nueva corónica*, 872-873, 1120.

creased by allying with the Spanish provincial authorities. Some individuals were exempt from levies on the basis of their part-Spanish parentage. The mestizo was freed of both labor levies and tribute payments, and while many of these individuals became part of Spanish society, others remained in the Indian communities.<sup>48</sup> By the eighteenth century at least, the racial classifications were divided still further, and a legal status assigned the mixture of Indian and mestizo—the cholo. He was freed of the mita draft, although liable for tribute.<sup>49</sup>

The law also granted special status to persons who practiced a trade. The Toledan ordinances provided exemptions from mita services for a blacksmith, shoemaker, tailor, and dyer in each Indian parish, and the decree of Charles II, incorporated in the *Recopilación*, freed all Indian artisans from labor levies.<sup>50</sup> Throughout the seventeenth century these provisions were enforced to some degree when the individual practiced his trade full-time, although most such craftsmen found better opportunities in the Spanish urban centers and migrated there. Nonetheless, individuals who practiced a trade without such legal exemptions, even if part-time and supplementary to their primary farming activities, enjoyed a potential source of additional income through their participation in the Spanish market system. Finally, the forastero, or migrant to the community from elsewhere, was exempted from labor services and granted reduced tribute payments.<sup>51</sup> Such exemptions may well have stimulated migration despite the loss of land that accompanied emigration. How-

<sup>48</sup> Solórzano, *Lib. II, cap. xxx, núm. 28*. For examples of mestizos living in the Indian villages, see the visitas of the repartimientos of Huarochiri and Chaclla in the mid-eighteenth century in the ANP, Sección histórica, Derecho indígena, cuads. 284 [1751] and 286 [1752] *passim*.

<sup>49</sup> Antonio Porlier, "Instrucción de capítulos que han de observar los jueces revisitadores . . ." in "Libro de cédulas, autos acordados, y otros instrumentos pertenecientes a los indios, año de 1760," Yale University Library, Lib. III, fol. 93, microfilm in the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, in "Documents relating to Peru," reel 2.

<sup>50</sup> The Toledan ordinance is included in the census of the repartimiento of Chaclla in the ANP, Sección histórica, Derecho Indígena, cuad. 189 [1705] fol. 27v; the later ordinance is contained in the *Recopilación*, Lib. VI, tit. v, ley xx [1618].

<sup>51</sup> José Matraya y Ricci, *El moralista filalético americano* (Lima, 1819), I, no. 550; "Instrucción que los corregidores, y comisionados nombrados por la visita general de tribunales de justicia, y real hacienda de estos reynos, deben observar provisionalmente para la formación de nuevos padrones de tributarios . . ." included in the *Instrucción de visitas o matrículas formada por el Señor Don Jorge Escobedo y Alarcón . . .* (Lima, 1784), Museo Mitre, Buenos Aires, Papeles diversos, Lima, 1768-1784, doc. 1, cap. xxix.

ever, they were not usually sufficient to permit the outsider to achieve wealth and power within his adopted community unless he also had other advantages.

When Spanish laws exempted some individuals from the levies imposed upon the rest of Indian society, these laws were not in themselves sufficient to raise these people to a higher status in that society. But they do seem to have made it relatively easier for an ambitious individual who enjoyed such an exemption to join the new Indian power group. The proportion of these individuals among the new Indian elite is much greater than their proportion in the Indian population as a whole. Mestizos or cholos frequently appear among those holding civil or religious positions in the Indian villages, as do individuals who practiced a trade.<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, members of these same groups, particularly Indian artisans, appear with relative frequency among the priests of the native religion during the seventeenth century.<sup>53</sup> It appears, then, that the economic and administrative structure introduced by the Spaniards offered the Indians opportunities to obtain wealth and power outside traditional kin ties. These new opportunities, by introducing alternative means to rank and position, stimulated some realignment of the social hierarchy in the sixteenth and early seventeenth century.

These new avenues of social mobility did not remain open throughout the colonial period. From the latter part of the seventeenth century they began to be constricted, and this constriction increased throughout the remainder of the colonial period. The viceregal economy entered into a protracted decline at some time in the seventeenth century.<sup>54</sup> As the stagnation of the economy increased, the Spanish population laid increasing demands upon an Indian population whose resources, in both land and labor, were declining, and the Indian power group proved unable to maintain itself. The privileged members of Indian society—both the kurakas and the members of the new power group that had emerged under colonial rule—found themselves pinched between the demands of their masters and the inability of the Indian community to meet those demands. Their positions, once means of obtaining wealth and power, were gradually converted into

<sup>52</sup> See, for example, Sebastián Franco de Melo, "Diario histórico del levantamiento de la provincia de Huarochirí, y su pacificación . . . Pachachaca, 20 de octubre de 1761," Museo Mitre, Buenos Aires, Mss. collection, Arm. B, Caja 19, Pieza 1, ord. 4, fol. 18.

<sup>53</sup> See the "Causa criminal contra Juan de Rojas," 113-117, 143-144.

<sup>54</sup> Karen Spalding, "The Failure of Exploitation: Economic Depression in Eighteenth-Century Peru," unpublished manuscript presented to the Committee on Latin American Studies, Harvard University, May 15, 1967.

devices through which the Spanish authorities absorbed the wealth of the more privileged members of the Indian community. Under these pressures, many of the wealthier members of the Indian community emigrated to the urban areas, and those who were left did their best to avoid serving as village officials. The avenues of social mobility opened in the early part of the colonial period were thus closed, and as pressures upon Indian resources continued to grow, distinctions of status and position within the rural Indian communities were steadily reduced.<sup>55</sup>

This summary of the impact of colonial rule upon one aspect of Indian society is clearly incomplete and tentative. Further study is needed in order to clarify the response of Indian society to the pressures of colonial rule. One major part of that study consists of archival research. Reports on local areas, land disputes, and similar documents from the years immediately following the Spanish Conquest frequently contain much information on the actual function of native institutions and relationships presented in other sources only as vague, generalized abstractions.

Still, these materials fail to answer many questions about the nature of Indian society, and in order to evaluate the fragments of native culture patterns that emerge from the colonial records, comparison with the changing patterns of other societies under colonial rule can be an extremely useful technique. Inside the Spanish empire, we can compare the native societies of New Spain with those of Peru, but the Indian cultures of both areas have changed substantially in the course of the past four centuries, and the pre-Conquest period is accessible only through written sources and archaeological evidence. We can also turn to areas where the colonial regimes were established more recently. Africa includes societies that, like those of New Spain and Peru, were complex social units organized into relatively large states. Recent investigators there have been able to question individuals who still remembered the patterns of life prior to European occupation. Familiarity with the process of culture change in this and similar areas can often suggest profitable lines of questioning and investigation to be applied to the Andean materials. Perhaps more important, they can provide valuable alternatives to interpretations based upon the assumptions and practices of European society.

<sup>55</sup> Karen Spalding, "Indian Rural Society in Colonial Peru: the Example of Huarochiri" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1967), 133-134, 166-173, 202-208.