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AFRICAN SLAVERY IN COLONIAL VERACRUZ:  
THE FACTORS THAT AIDED ITS  
CREATION AND EXPANSION

A Thesis

by

VERONICA NOHEMI DURAN

Submitted to the Graduate School of the  
University of Texas-Pan American  
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
MASTER OF ARTS

August 2012

Major Subject: History



AFRICAN SLAVERY IN COLONIAL VERACRUZ:  
THE FACTORS THAT AIDED ITS  
CREATION AND EXPANSION

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VERONICA NOHEMI DURAN

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Committee Member

August 2012



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## ABSTRACT

Duran, Veronica Nohemi, African Slavery in Colonial Veracruz: The Factors that Aided its Creation and Expansion. Master of Arts (MA), August, 2012, 100 pp., 158 references, 43 titles.

The focal point of this study is to prove that it was the simultaneous presence of five factors during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries that allowed African enslavement in Veracruz to expand. I built upon previous works and authors to support my claim that it was the decline in native population, economic profits, religious apathy on the subject, social acceptance and government support that pushed for the systems creation and expansion. By discussing each of these factors in a chapter of their own, I concluded that in an almost cause and effect manner these factors are responsible for the expansion African slavery. I was then able to connect these findings to broader terms regarding the situation of their descendants in present situations. My final argument states that in order to fully understand any social dynamic we must have an understanding of the history behind it.





## DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this accomplishment to the three people that have never left my side regardless of the situation. Your support, understanding and motivation inspired me to keep my head high and my goals within sight. To my mother, Silvia Duran, I would like to say that I am thankful for all her support and for all that she has sacrificed. To my sisters, Jessica and Aime, I would like to say that it was my everlasting love for you that inspired me to embark on this journey. I hope that it inspires you to follow your dreams and to listen to your heart.



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In addition I will always be grateful to Dr. Charles Waite for awakening the historian within that fateful day. Your support and fate in this aspiring historian greatly helped to form the scholar I have become. Also a special thanks to Ms. Juanita Garza for always believing in me.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT.....	iii
DEDICATION.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vi
INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER I. THE DEPOPULATION AND ABUSE OF THE NATIVE PEOPLES IN MEXICO BY THE SPANISH COLONISTS: A GATEWAY TO AFRICAN ENSLAVEMENT.....	10
CHAPTER II. CAPITALISM: THE ECONOMIC GAINS FOR THE STATE OF VERACRUZ .....	24
CHAPTER III. RELIGION: CAPITALISM OVER MORALITY.....	40
CHAPTER IV. SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE TOWARD AFRICAN SLAVERY IN VERACRUZ: SLAVES IN A PRECARIOUS SITUATION.....	65
CHAPTER V. GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT: THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND THE SYSTEM OF SLAVERY IN VERACRUZ.....	79
CONCLUSION.....	90
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	94
APPENDIX.....	99
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.....	100



## INTRODUCTION

There is a common saying in Mexico that goes...*trabajar como negro para vivir como blanco*, this means “work like a black to live like a white.”

Racial dynamic interactions in any society are complex and built upon a long history of events that leads to the ideas, beliefs and morals that make up their civilization. Mexico is no exception. Its long history of Spanish dominion has led to the complex racial structure that its citizens now follow. Mexican citizens are reluctant to discuss the issue of race as they fear they might be judged racist. Because of this unwillingness, the subject is extremely difficult to comprehend from the outside.

This saying, although normally not viewed as racist by Mexicans, is very appropriate to describe the way in which many societies viewed the relationships between Africans and European, between natives and colonists and between the enslaved and the enslaver.<sup>1</sup> Although this saying is common in Mexico it does not mean that the general population is truly aware of its origin. Many react with disbelief and suspicion when approached with the possibility of there being African ancestry amongst Mexico’s citizens. Many are ignorant of the fact that Africans were once present in Mexico and reject any possibility of having African blood.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Githiora, Chege. *Afro-Mexicans: Discourse of Race and Identity in the African Diaspora*. (Trenton, African World Press, 2008), 178-179.

<sup>2</sup> Carroll, Patrick James. *Mexicans Society in Transition: The Blacks in Veracruz, 1750-1830*. (Austin, Texas, University of Texas at Austin, 1975), 10-11.



Despite the present idea of “la raza cosmica” in Mexico, it is extremely difficult for an individual to engage in conversation when it comes to race. The term “la raza cosmica” refers to the idea that Mexicans are a people made of up of almost all races which intermixed through colonization and *mestizaje*. This proves that Mexicans as a society put great importance on their origin and their heritage. Yet with all this said many refuse to engage in dialogue when it comes to discussing race and color. While society as a whole agrees that their heritage and race is made up of the intermixing between Aztec and other native groups with Spanish colonists, they refuse to acknowledge that there was a third race at play during this period; the African race.<sup>3</sup> This begs the question, how is that in a country in which people are so proud about their native heritage and blood they are also so unwilling to consider and accept that there could have been a third African race at work during the time of colonization?

As a person born in Mexico and raised in Tamaulipas during the early years of my life, I was exposed to these ideologies. However, not until I was in my twenties did I begin to take the comments and ideas in my surroundings into consideration. I began to wonder about the comments that were so easily thrown around amongst my community. Many of these comments were related to race and economic status. It interested me that people were so willing to make comments about a person’s race, physical appearance or economic situation with such ease and with no real understanding of what their comments meant or where they had originated.

Because of the continuing influx of people from Veracruz migrating into Tamaulipas many of the comments related to Veracruzanos. These people migrated north in search of jobs and business opportunities. Many have become successful business owners and have improved their economic situation. Yet many Tamaulipecos regard them as inferior citizens because they

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<sup>3</sup> Gonzalez Ibarra, Juan de Dios. *La Negritud Tercera Raiz Mexicana*. (Mexico D.F., Universidad Autonoma del Estado de Morelos, Distribuciones Fontamara, Mexico, 2007), 15-16.

are not native to the state. They view them as ignorant, backward simpletons. Their distinctive accent makes them recognizable to others. Their culture is different from that of Tamaulipecos; their cooking, their attire, their demeanor is all very representative of their native state. Also they stand out from native state citizens because of their distinctive pigmentation, facial characteristics and accents. Although much of these Veracruzano features are hard to distinguish due to the mixing of African descendants with European descendants, there are still many of them who possess physical characteristics that can be attributed to African slaves in Mexico.

Because of the relaxation of laws and monitoring of classes that began the eighteenth century many Afromexicans were able to integrate into mainstream society and participate in the mestizaje of the nation.<sup>4</sup> That is not to say that their labels and classifications were vanishing as well. Although they were no longer classified as people of African descent they continued to pass down their physical traits to their descendants. Up to fifty percent of the inhabitants in certain Veracruz cities such as El Coyolillo exhibit some form of African physical characteristic. It is common to see individuals with dark curly short hair, distinctive dark brown-red skin pigmentation or facial characteristics such as a broad nose or large forehead in infinite variations.<sup>5</sup> This statistic indicates that African characteristics are still present in Veracruz amongst its citizens. Although detectable, these characteristics are quickly becoming blurred as the mixing of races continues to accelerate. People may detect these features and unconsciously be repelled by them with no knowledge that their prejudice has been passed down through many generations.

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<sup>4</sup> Del Valle Pavon, Guillermina "Transformaciones de la Poblacion Afromestiza de Orizaba Segun los Padrones de 1777 y 1791." In *Pardos, mulatos y libertos: Sexto encuentro de afromexicanistas* edited by Adriana Naveda Chavez-Hita. (Xalapa, Veracruz, Biblioteca Universidad Veracruzana, 2001), 84-87.

<sup>5</sup> Martinez Moranto, Alfredo. "Dios pinta como quiere. Identidad y cultura en un pueblo afromestizo de Veracruz". In *Presencia Africana en Mexico* coordinated by Luz Maria Martinez Montiel. (Mexico D.F., Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 1995), 534-535.

AfroMexicans have not been generally accepted into the mainstream society for several reasons. First, many Tamaulipecos view them as outsiders who come into their cities to take their jobs and occupy their schools. Also, Tamualipecos do not recognize their culture or their features; they are suspicious of them. Another reason why they have not integrated into mainstream society is their own reluctance to do so. Most Veracruzanos in Tamaulipas build communities amongst themselves. Many come with a set purpose in mind: to find a job, work hard, save money to send back to their families in Veracruz and eventually have enough capital to return home.

The comments and attitudes of the people involved led me to realize that one of the reasons why Veracruzanos were many times isolated or discriminated against was because of their physical characteristics. Their broad noses, singular skin pigmentation and broad forehead varied greatly from that of Tamaulipecos and other surrounding states. This differentiation places them at a disadvantage and many times is cause for the discrimination they suffer.

These realizations then led to the present research. History, as is often the case, held the key to why this group was often separated from other citizens and why many of them wish to attract as little attention to themselves as possible. In this thesis I study the enslavement of Africans in Veracruz during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century. This distinctive physical features that many Veracruzanos share and that the previous abuse and discrimination that this group suffered have left some psychological scars on their descendants of today.

The main focus of my study is the creation and expansion of the enslavement of Africans in colonial Mexico. My argument is that its expansion was due in great part to the presence of five particular factors. I discuss each of these factors in individual chapters.

The first chapter focuses on the decline of the native population following the arrival of the Spaniards. I argue that due to the significant depopulation of the natives due to disease, abuse and war, there was a need for a new labor force suited for the arduous physical labor that colonial expansion demanded. The Spanish colonists found an answer to this labor shortage in the importation of Africans into New Spain.

The second chapter focuses on the economic profits that the enslavement of Africans brought to those involved in the system. The exportation and importation of African slaves was a profitable system for all that were involved. Their capture, sale, transport and their labor all signified a substantial gain. African tribes, Spanish merchants, plantation owners and ultimately the monarchy profited greatly from the labor of the slaves.

The third chapter of my thesis focuses on the position of the Spanish Church regarding African enslavement in Veracruz. The research indicated that although the Spanish Church in New Spain was very involved in the protection of the indigenous people and were responsible in part for the laws that were passed for their protection; this was not the case when it came to Africans slaves. What little concern the Spanish Church showed regarding African slaves pertained not to the morality of the system or the conditions in which the slaves were treated, but rather to the situations to which Spanish colonists were exposed to when they were in proximity to the slaves. The Church's concern was the comfort of Spanish citizens, not the African slaves.

The fourth chapter centers on the way in which society reacted to the system of slavery. Although there may have been some hesitations regarding the morality of slavery, most of these comments and uncertainties were overpowered by the great majority of landed elites who wished to engage in the practice. Those few who openly protested against the enslavement of Africans were quickly silenced and many times isolated as a result of their protests. Many who opposed

the practice were in no position to offer much aid to the slaves and thus their protests were almost useless.

The final chapter in my thesis focuses on the policy of the monarchy and other officials regarding the matter. Many factors, ranging from morality to social conceptions, affected the actions that the monarchy took regarding African enslavement. Local officials were affected mostly by the demand for a new labor force from the elite class after the decline of the native population. Monetary profit also played a role in shifting the mindset of both the monarchy and local officials. They went from regarding slavery with hesitation and caution to fully embracing the system and participating in it greatly.

I argue that the simultaneous presence of these five factors during the 16<sup>th</sup> century aided the creation of large-scale African slavery in New Spain and that it was the presence of these factors which allowed the system to establish itself and grow. This is not to say that had one of these factors been absent from the equation the enslavement of Africans would not have happened in colonial New Spain. My research suggests that if this had been the case, then the system would most likely not have grown to the extent that it did. Almost as if by the principal of cause and effect, these factors supported the system allowing it to exist and expand to the extent that it was able to reach.

I believe that my research builds on that of previous works and that it will be a valuable addition to the field. It focuses on slavery in Veracruz from a different angle than do other authors and thus gives the reader a different approach to the topic. It focuses on slavery in broader terms and argues that it was factors present at the time that allowed for the creation of the enslavement of Africans in Veracruz, this helps the reader understand the way in which the system came to be without being overloaded with statistics and facts about the system.

My work builds on that of authors like Gerald Cardoso. His book *Negro Slavery in the Sugar Plantations of Veracruz and Pernambuco 1550-1680: A Comparative Study* was of great aid in my writing. His style of writing inspired much of my work. In his work he divides the two systems that he is discussing into two sections, African slavery in Veracruz and African slavery in Pernambuco, and focuses on them separately. Although he separates the two systems he focuses on five aspects of slavery and discusses them accordingly for both. His comparative style of writing along with the easy way in which he writes inspired much of my work and helped to structure much of my thesis.

Patrick J. Carroll's book *Blacks in Colonial Veracruz: Race, Ethnicity, and Regional Development* was also of great aid during my research. His regional approach to the topic is a refreshing and full of pertinent information for other scholars. His goal in writing this book was to determine what Africans in Veracruz had in common with other groups and what set them apart from them. He discusses Africans in Veracruz in a variety of situations at different times and what their lives were like. He discusses some of the factors that led to the importation of African slaves and how this changed the regional dynamic of the area. His book focuses on different aspects of slavery and different situations to which the slaves were subjected to, this allows the reader to gain much insight about the ways in which the system worked and into the lives of slaves in different situations. He touches up on areas such as politics, capitalism, social dynamics, economics which help the reader understand the way in which this system affected almost all aspects of social life in Veracruz. He also branched out to topics about rebellion, escape and life after slavery which allowed the reader to have a broader understanding about differing situations regarding slavery.

Herman L. Bennet's book *Africans in Colonial Mexico: Absolutism, Christianity and Afro-Creole Consciousness, 1570-1640* focused on the way in which religion played a role in the formation of an African enslaving society in Mexico, how religion played a role in the experiences that African slaves encountered and in a broader sense on the way that Spanish religious history played a part in the ideas that formed in New Spain. This work helped put the role of religion in perspective and to see how much it affected the lives of slaves in Veracruz. It allowed the reader to see how the religious past of Spain, mainly the Spanish Inquisition, played a role in the development of ideas and sentiments regarding slavery. This author and this book were of great aid in the formation of my third chapter.

Bennet's previous work *Colonial Blackness: A History of Afro-Mexico* was of great aid in understanding the social and racial dynamics that were at play during the colonial era of Mexico. In this book he explains how society reacted to the presence of Africans in the area, how racial differences played a role in society and how Africans in Mexico were able to establish themselves in a society that largely rejected them. Although Bennet's style of writing differs greatly from that of Cardoso and Carroll his works were very helpful in understanding the social and racial situations that Africans encountered upon their arrival to the New World. This helped to put the situation of slaves in perspective and to see the slaves as individuals in a precarious situation rather than statistics.

These authors along with many more who are mentioned and not on my thesis aided me in the writing of this research. Their style of writing and the focus of their work helped me to gain greater understanding of the system of slavery in Veracruz and the many complex situations that the African slaves encountered. They helped broaden my understanding of social, economical and racial dynamics that were at work during this time of great change and turmoil.

They provided tools that helped me understand how the system came to be and how it affected other areas of social-economic life in Veracruz. I hope that my work builds upon their work and that it contributes to the study of African enslavement of in Veracruz and greater Mexico.



## CHAPTER I

### THE DEPOPULATION AND ABUSE OF THE NATIVE PEOPLES IN MEXICO BY THE SPANISH COLONISTS: A GATEWAY TO AFRICAN ENSLAVEMENT

In almost every great kingdom, empire, or country there has existed a group of people at the bottom of the social pyramid to perform the physical labor that is required. More often than not, this group of people was made up of slaves who were forced to work for the kings and emperors. Temples, pyramids, and palaces are not built by kings and nobles; this is where the poor and slaves come into play.

Although slavery had been present in societies for as long as it has existed, slavery had never before existed on the basis of skin color alone as it did in the Americas. The discovery of the New World marked a definite change in the practice of slavery. In past times it had always been based on the result of wars, economic situation, or social status. The colonists considered it acceptable to enslave natives believing they were ignorant and barbaric. They enslaved natives for their own purposes. Yet, they soon discovered that natives were not suited for this lifestyle as their population was quickly declining and those who survived were too depleted from disease and war to comply with their demands. It was because native numbers were so low that they could no longer meet the needs of settlers that Spanish colonists turned to the slave trade as an option and began importing Africans into the state of Veracruz to use them as slaves in their plantations and mills. If native numbers had remained the same or increased

enough to fill the labor force that the Spanish colonists required then they would have likely never turned to African slavery or in the event that they had it would have been in a much smaller scale. The colonists then shifted to the enslavement of Africans as the major source of labor. From the beginning African slaves were introduced to New Spain as beasts of labor. Their work in the colonies would require only physical labor. Many Spaniards argued that because of their considered backwardness and dark skin it was acceptable to enslave them. They relied on this ideology to excuse their behavior and overlook the cruelties to which they subjected the natives and African slaves in order to make a profit for themselves.<sup>1</sup>

The process began with the arrival of the Europeans to the New World; they brought with them their never ending greed for land, resources, and riches. They also brought disease for which the natives had no defenses, mainly bubonic plague, small pox and flu. These three diseases, along with others, caused great epidemics to erupt creating the depopulation of the native peoples.<sup>2</sup>

From the day Hernan Cortez landed in the coasts of Mexico he began the practice of slavery in the new empire by bringing one slave along in his expedition. In a small way this marked the mentality of the new colony on the subject of slavery. The explorers who came with Cortez were not the only ones seeking out new opportunities. Other Spaniards soon began settling and colonizing the new territory. The promise of new opportunities and profits was very enticing to Spaniards who were of limited means and had almost no chance of advancement in a strictly hierarchical homeland. As more of them came they soon realized that they needed to

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<sup>1</sup>Aguirre Beltran, Gonzalo. *La Poblacion Negra De Mexico, 1519-1810: Estudio Etnohistorico*. (Mexico, D.F., Mexico, Ediciones Fuentes Cultural, 1946), 181-182.

<sup>2</sup>Hall, Raymond A. *An Ethnographic Study of Afro-Mexicans in Mexico's Gulf Coast: Fishing, Festivals, and Foodways*. (Lewiston, The Edwin Mellen Press, 2008), 9-10.

build permanent settlements and towns for their own protection and to create a sense of permanence amongst themselves.

A few, like Cortez, were explorers seeking profits from the resources that would be found in the New World. Their eyes were set on the riches that potentially were out to be discovered in New Spain and the territories that they could acquire after the defeat of the natives.<sup>3</sup> Some were individuals who wanted an opportunity to make something of themselves. They knew that their future would be much brighter in New Spain. However, their numbers in the Spanish colony were not enough to suffice the amount of work that was needed. Many colonial Spaniards believed physical labor to be unsuitable for their class. Therefore, they had to find someone whose birth rank was unimportant, who was willing to perform the physical labor that was needed or could be subjected into doing it.

In order to fill the gap that was created by the lack of a working force they began using grants of native labor known as *encomiendas*, using them as a means of labor. In this system natives were expected to pay taxes or tribute to the government, the king and queen in this case. They were also expected to work in the farms and mines owned by the colonists.<sup>4</sup> In an *encomienda* system the *encomendero* was expected to instruct his laborers in religious matters in return for the labor that they performed.

They established their own systems of governance and social organization, largely destroying the fully functional socioeconomic and political system already in existence amongst

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<sup>3</sup>Wagner, Henry R. "Cortez and the Aftermath of Conquest." In *Latin American Civilization: readings and essays* edited by Harold A. Bierck. (Boston, Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1967), 5.

<sup>4</sup>Cardoso, Gerald. *Negro Slavery in the Sugar Plantations of Veracruz and Permanbuco, 1550-1680: A Comparative Study*. (Washington, D.C., University Press of America, 1983), 3.

the natives.<sup>5</sup> The indigenous system included a highly organized religious system. Although they practiced human and animal sacrifice, their system nonetheless was organized and respected.<sup>6</sup>

For the Spanish colonists that settled the area of Veracruz, known as Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz in 1519, it soon became apparent that the area was ill-suited to grow anything other than sugar cane.<sup>7</sup> Between the three major regions of Veracruz, the *Sierra*, the *Altiplano* and the *Llanura* (the mountain range, the high plateau and the plain), there is little variety of crops that can be cultivated in the region. The Sierra is a mountainous area holding the Citlalpetl volcano, the highest point in Mexico. The Altiplano at the center of the state is full of swamps and lakes, while the Llanura is a sandy coastal region with multiple small islands. Add to this its two major climate zones; the Llanura has rainy and humid summers and early autumns while the Sierra boosts moderate temperatures, which cool as the elevation rises. It is a humid region with tendencies to be struck by hurricanes and strong storms.<sup>8</sup> With these regional and climate variations it was extremely difficult to find a crop that could be widely cultivated in large areas. However, colonists soon discovered that these conditions were more than adequate for the growth of cane. Cane fields and plantations soon sprung up in the most favorable areas such as Jalapa and colonists began to cultivate the crop.

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<sup>5</sup>Boehm, Brigitte. *La formacion del estado en el Mexico Prehispanico*. Serie Disertaciones Doctorales, Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropologia Social. (Mexico, SEP cultura, 1984), 9-18.

<sup>6</sup>Castro-Leal, Maria. "Dioses, Ritos y Ceremonias en la Costa del Golfo." *In Dioses y rituales del Mexico Antiguo: Exposicion*. Centro Cultural Vito Alessio Robles, Agosto-Noviembre de 2001. (Monterrey, Grafo Print Editores, 2001), 35-37.

<sup>7</sup>Robelo Arenas Ricardo, cooperating author Marco Aurelio R. Ledezma. *Historia General de La Fortaleza de San Juan de Ulua, Veracruz*. (Registrado por la Secretaria de Educacion Publica bajo el No. 21642), 8-10.

<sup>8</sup>Cruz Garcia, Mauricio, Graciela Herrera Sanchez and Blanca Alicia Vargas Villanueva. *Historia Regional de Veracruz: Perfil Socioeconomico*. (Mexico D.F., Editorial Limusa, 2000), 23.

In an effort to get as much productivity out of every corner of the empire colonists began setting up sugar plantations and using the natives as their main source of labor. Their primary concern was profit, both for themselves and for the empire. Consequently they cared little about who was doing the labor to raise those profits. They saw no problem with conscripting the native population and forcing them to work their fields and mills. However, this proved to be only a temporary solution to their need of a work force since the natives were too fragile, uncooperative or few in numbers to fulfill the demands of the Spaniards. So the abolition of the *encomienda* would serve as a catapult for the use of slaves.

Life in the sugar mills proved to be too demanding for the natives who were not used to spending every waking moment, planting, caring for and harvesting the crops and then turning sugar canes into sugar. They were not accustomed to working under the conditions that the Spanish forced them to such as working fourteen to sixteen hours a day harvesting cane. Many natives died from exhaustion, from accidents due to the hazardous conditions that they were forced to work in and from the abuse that they received from plantation owners. Although there were bondsmen and war captives present in the Aztec Empire and its surrounding tribes the change proved to be too much for those who were free. Their lifestyle before the Spanish was different. Previously, they were not forced to work such long hours or under such demanding circumstances therefore they were not able to adjust to the change easily. Their situation was of such distress that many lost hope and wilted away in sadness.

On top of their stressful work situation the natives also had one other factor working against them with the arrival of the Spanish, the lack of defenses against the diseases that the Spanish brought with them such as small pox, measles and chicken pox. They had never been previously affected by such illnesses therefore their bodies had no way of providing any kind of

defense against them. Many natives succumbed to the illnesses since they were already weakened by the harsh working conditions that they were subjected to at the hands of the Spaniards. Many died from the plagues of 1545 and 1576.<sup>9</sup> It is estimated that in Veracruz close to two million natives perished as a result of these two plagues. Also, in the hot and humid climate of Veracruz the presence of yellow fever was a genuine reality. The threat of a plague outbreak in this region was something that both the natives and the colonists had to live with constantly in what Phillip II called the “*sepultura de vivos*” or grave of the living. Fevers and plague depopulated villages from 20,000 households to fifty households from the time that the Spaniards first arrived to 1580.<sup>10</sup> The arrival of the Spanish marked a significant point in the lives of the native population; it was because of their arrival that their numbers quickly were reduced.

Because the native population dropped so significantly laws and rules began to be established by the monarchy for the protection of the natives. The king and queen, as devoted Catholics, were also concerned with protecting the souls of the natives. They felt they were responsible for the souls of all their subjects, even of those who were considered uncultured and backwards. Therefore they issued laws to prevent bodies and souls of the natives from being lost. The first of these were the New Laws of 1542-1543, which protected the natives from becoming future slaves to plantation owners. These laws specifically dictated that no native could be enslaved from that point on.<sup>11</sup> They were the first of many to come.

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<sup>9</sup>Cardoso, Gerald. *Negro Slavery in the Sugar Plantations of Veracruz and Permanbuco, 1550-1680: A Comparative Study*. (Washington, D.C., University Press of America, 1983), 4.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 4-5.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 5.

There was also a collection of royal decrees that forbade the use of native Indians in occupation that endangered their lives or health. Of course these laws were vague since there was no specification as to what constituted an occupational danger or hazard to the native's wellbeing. Plantation owners and other colonists found loopholes in the decrees and continued to use natives in mills and fields. On November 24, 1601 King Phillip III issued a decree that banned the use of natives in sugar and textile mills after the number of deaths had grown too high to ignore.<sup>12</sup> From that moment on the natives could no longer be used as laborers in the sugar mills of Veracruz.

There came to once again a need for a working-class in Veracruz as the natives quickly proved to be too unwilling or fragile to perform the tasks that were required to produce sugar and their numbers reduced enough. The answer to the demand for a working-class this time was solved by the importation of Africans into Veracruz. They were brought in and sold as slaves who were to be used as field hands and mill operators for the production of sugar. At the beginning only a few slaves were brought to Mexico because the demand for them was low. But as natives began succumbing to disease and laws were passed for their protection, more colonists and merchants began buying more slaves to replace them. It was in this way that Africans began to be captured and transported into Mexico from places such as Guinea, Cape Verde, the Congo, Angola, Sao Tome, and Mozambique with the intention of having them be sold into slavery.<sup>13</sup>

On March 11, 1531 Juan de Armenta and Hernando Paez were given the first license by the crown to bring in slaves under a contract from the king. This allowed the free and constant import of slaves into New Spain. On March 1, 1535, Rodrigo de Albornoz, a royal accountant in

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 5.

<sup>13</sup>Palmer, Colin. *Slaves of a White God: Blacks in Mexico, 1570-1650*. (Cambridge, Harvard University Press. 1976), 21.

New Spain, was licensed to ship in one hundred slaves for use in sugar plantations and other properties.<sup>14</sup> Through the next few decades similar licenses were given out to those favored by the crown.

By the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century, however, a new system was needed. The excessive importation of slaves and the threat of rebellion was more present than ever. It was in this way that the “*asiento*” system came to be. In the *asiento* system, an individual would agree to bring in a set number of slaves in a given period of years and pay the Spanish crown a percentage of the profits. Most of the individuals involved were merchants and investors. Royal officials like viceroys also invested.

Significantly, these laws and agreements did not always work the way they were designed to. Many of the merchants who received these *asientos* sold them to different people who made illegal use of them. Some of the people who obtained these licenses smuggled in more slaves than they were allowed in order to replace the ones that died during the trip. Others made higher profits by selling more slaves than they were allowed or took advantage of the market by selling slaves at an extremely high price. Many slaves were considered “*negros de mala entrada*,” meaning that they were smuggled into the colonies.<sup>15</sup> For example, upon entering the port of Veracruz on July of 1599, four ships were found to be carrying some 186 *piezas de India* or unregistered slaves.<sup>16</sup> This system allowed for many irregularities and the crown’s attempts to stop them were short lived successes or failures from the very beginning. Whether it

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<sup>14</sup>Cardoso, Gerald. *Negro Slavery in the Sugar Plantations of Veracruz and Permanbuco, 1550-1680: A Comparative Study*. (Washington, D.C., University Press of America, 1983), 11.

<sup>15</sup>Marley, David. “*Documento Numero V: Bando sobre negros “de mala entrada” (1692).*” In *Reales asientos y licencias para la intorduccion de esclavos negros a la America Espanola (1676-1789)*. Edicion facsimilar. Coleccion: *documenta novae hispaniae*.” Vol. B-9. Windsor, Rolson-Bain, 1985.

<sup>16</sup> Cardoso, Gerald. *Negro Slavery in the Sugar Plantations of Veracruz and Permanbuco, 1550-1680: A Comparative Study*. (Washington, D.C., University Press of America, 1983), 13.



was by early licenses, by the asiento system or by smuggling, it is estimated that over 200,000 slaves were introduced to Mexico during the slave trade in that country.<sup>17</sup>

With its tropical rain forest covering much of the south, hills and low mountains to the center and north of the state it was difficult for some crops to grow. Sugarcane is able to grow in humid areas which made it an ideal crop for this region.<sup>18</sup> The importation of slaves allowed the sugar plantations of Veracruz to grow and the prosperity of the sugar plantation created a higher demand for slaves. As time went on and the development of sugar plantations became more ingrained in Mexican culture and economy, slaves began to be imported in greater numbers and put to work in the fields. African slaves quickly became the backbone of sugar plantations and sugar mills in Veracruz and the surrounding regions. They were forced to plant, care for and harvest the crops as well as to grind the sugar canes and turn them into sugar, which was in great demand and much sought out as a luxury good. Slave men, women and older children, along with some natives who were still able to work in plantations, were sent out to the fields to care for the crops. Some men stayed behind and worked in the mills, which was consider more dangerous work since it involved machinery.

These men did not have an easier task than those working in the fields. Once their jobs there were finished they did other random errands around the house such as cutting wood, and cleaning and caring for the animals. Many slaves tended to fields that were reserved for producing food for the master's family or for the plantation workers. They cared for the horses, worked at bread mills or sold farm products at neighboring markets.<sup>19</sup> Slaves were always kept

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 17.

<sup>18</sup>Carroll, Patrick J. *Blacks in Colonial Veracruz: Race, Ethnicity, and Regional Development*. (Austin, University of Texas Press, 1991),1, 5.

occupied to prevent them from having time to plan rebellions and to keep them as docile as possible. In addition to being forced to work in the fields female slaves were also expected to cook and clean for their masters as well as for their own families, if the case applied. A slave's life was one of many difficulties because they were not only expected to work for their master, but they were expected to care for their families as well.

African slaves were an immense part of Veracruz society and their involvement grew to include every aspect of life. Along with the Europeans and natives they made up a third component to the cultural mesh that was their new reality.<sup>20</sup> First of all, they were the ones which did most of the hard work that brought in Veracruz' capital, they worked in the plantations as well as in small farms and homes and also did manual work such as blacksmithing, shoe making and mining. Slaves in Veracruz, such as in other places of the world, did almost all the work that kept the Spanish businesses standing. The people of Veracruz also used slaves for personal use as house servants, nannies, and nurses. Slaves in these circumstances would be responsible for cleaning the master's house, caring for the master's children, and caring for the elderly members of the family. Some slave owners could also pick out a slave that they liked who served as their personal companion. This slave followed the owner around carrying things for the master, helping him in any way needed or simply serve as company for the owner. Slaves could also be given away as wedding presents to close family members. When a woman was married she might be given a number of slaves as part of her dowry. In some cases parents used a young slave child of about the same age as their own to serve as the child's playmate or personal

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<sup>19</sup>Martinez Moranto, Alfredo. "Dios pinta como quiere. Identidad y cultura en un pueblo afromestizo de Veracruz". In *Presencia Africana en Mexico* coordinated by Luz Maria Martinez Montiel. (Mexico D.F., Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 1995), 526-527.

<sup>20</sup>Juarez Hernandez, Yolanda. "Afromestizos en el Puerto de Veracruz." In *Pardos, mulatos y libertos: Sexto encuentro de afromexicanistas* edited by Adriana Naveda Chavez-Hita. (Xalapa, Veracruz, Biblioteca Universidad Veracruzana, 2001), 208.

slave. Some slaves were also donated to convents and nuns.<sup>21</sup> When a person died their slaves were given to the next male kin as inheritance. This reflects the Spaniard's idea that slaves were objects that could be given away or handed down to others much like a set of spoons would.

They were also responsible for much of what makes up today's Veracruzano culture. Upon their importation to Mexico they brought with them new customs and traditions that can still be traced in today's cuisine, language, and medicine. Just like the natives of Mexico they had their own traditions and customs, Africans had their own, which they brought with them and were mixed into popular culture as mestizaje occurred. Much of today's Veracruz culture comes from what is considered "caribbean culture" and influences music, dancing, popular and religious festivities as well as gastronomy among others.<sup>22</sup>

Much of this African culture is still apparent in today's common Spanish language. The language that everyday people use reflects the importance that Africans played in the early development of Mexico. Words like *fulano*, meaning an individual who one can not or does not wish to be named, *bobo*, which refers to a person who is lacking in reason, and *sambo*, which refers to a person originating from Mozambique all have a one thing in common; that they originate from African languages and that they were meant to classify and denigrate Africans slaves and their descendants.<sup>23</sup> The term *fandango* refers to a gathering of Africans to eat, drink and dance.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Naveda Chavez-Hita, Adriana. "Denominaciones Raciales en Archivos Locales". In *Pardos, mulatos y libertos: Sexto encuentro de afromexicanistas* edited by Adriana Naveda Chavez-Hita. (Xalapa, Veracruz, Biblioteca Universidad Veracruzana, 2001), 199.

<sup>22</sup>Juarez Hernandez, Yolanda. "Afromestizos en el Puerto de Veracruz." In *Pardos, mulatos y libertos: Sexto encuentro de afromexicanistas* edited by Adriana Naveda Chavez-Hita. (Xalapa, Veracruz, Biblioteca Universidad Veracruzana, 2001), 210.

<sup>23</sup>Hernandez Cuevas, Marco Polo. *The Africanization of Mexico From the Sixteenth Century Onward: A Review of the Evidence*. (Lewiston, The Edwin Mellen Press, 2010), 21-22, 12-14, 15-16.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, 41.

Although these words and others have now evolved to mean different terms or be applicable to other groups at the time they were almost solely reserved for Africans and their descendants. It was common for Spaniards to use words like *cambujo*, *chambon*, *maricon*, *macuarro* or *teporocho* to describe African slaves, making light of their alleged lack of reason, ability, and decency. This emphasizes the way in which Africans were thought to be below Spaniards and in many cases beneath the natives as well, making their life in Mexico extremely difficult from the very start.<sup>25</sup>

Food and food preparation was another way in which African slaves were able to express themselves and preserve some of their culture for generations to come. African slaves were prone to use sweets in their food when it was available, those who worked in mills had plenty of easy access to sugar. They also used bananas, rice, and fish in many of their dishes. Many of these dishes were cooked outside by fire or steamed wrapped in a banana leaf.<sup>26</sup> They used food preparation as a means to gather with their families and spend time together. Many African food ingredients were adopted from Spanish cuisine such as palm oils, pork lard, and other fats however they changed the way in which these ingredients were used. Before, Spanish food was often roasted, stewed, smoked, or boiled but now with the use of lards and fats it could now be fried as well. They also incorporated the use of pork from Spanish cuisine. Dishes like fried pork, birria, menudo, enchiladas, tostadas and flautas have some form of African characteristic in them, be it the way in which it is prepared or the ingredients that it contains.<sup>27</sup> *Menudo* is the

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 17-25.

<sup>26</sup>Juarez Hernandez, Yolanda. "Afromestizos en el Puerto de Veracruz." In *Pardos, mulatos y libertos: Sexto encuentro de afromexicanistas* edited by Adriana Naveda Chavez-Hita. (Xalapa, Veracruz, Biblioteca Universidad Veracruzana, 2001), 213.

<sup>27</sup>Hernandez Cuevas, Marco Polo. *The Africanization of Mexico From the Sixteenth Century Onward: A Review of the Evidence*. (Lewiston, The Edwin Mellen Press, 2010), 117-124.

descendant of the Congo's *mondongo*.<sup>28</sup> Menudo or tripe stew is a dish commonly prepared with entrails, although now it is prepared with beef tripe and hoofs only, hominy corn, peppers and garlic. It is served with chopped onions, tomato, dry oregano and a wedge of lime.<sup>29</sup>

Much of the changes in food ingredients and preparations were not only the result of African culture but rather a result of the economic disadvantage that slaves and natives were in. Their limited resources forced them to look for food sources in unconventional places and to be creative when it came to preparing them. Many dishes today are a result of the imagination of Africans and natives in the lower castes, despite their circumstances they were able to fend for themselves and create dishes that are now savored in Mexican cuisine. They were forced to eat animal entrails (tripas), fried pork (carnitas de puerco) and pork rinds (chicharrones) something that their masters would never consider. These were the parts of the animal that the Spanish deemed unusable and threw out yet Africans found a way to use them out of their need to subsist. They would take these animal parts and combine them with other easily accessible ingredients such as tomato, onions, peppers and cilantro to create a meal for themselves. These dishes are still savored today as popular regional party foods.<sup>30</sup>

Although the presence of African slaves in Veracruz was a result of the population decline of the natives in the area there was many differences in their situation. The circumstances for African slaves in Mexico was much different than that of the natives due to a belief that many Spanish shared and which was quickly spread through the region. They believed that African slaves were much more capable of withstanding harsh conditions due to their origins

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<sup>28</sup>Hernandez Cuevas, Marco Polo. *African Mexicas and the Discourse on Modern Nation*. (Lanham University Press of America, 2004), 33.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 47.

<sup>30</sup>Hernandez Cuevas, Marco Polo. *The Africanization of Mexico From the Sixteenth Century Onward: A Review of the Evidence*. (Lewiston, The Edwin Mellen Press, 2010), 114-119.

and the fact that their physic was much greater than that of a Mexican native. They believed that Africans were genetically build to endure heat because they came from a land in which they sun was hotter and far more ruthless. They also believed that since they came from a land in which they were still forced to run after herds in order to hunt that they would be better at working fast and gaining higher productivity.

Regardless of the reasons for it, African slaves in Veracruz were harshly treated by the Spanish colonists, their enslavement was dehumanizing, cruel and ruthless. However, the colonists, monarchy and clergy were many times willing to over look the brutality of the system that they were enforcing as they were persuaded by the profits that they received with the work that the slaves performed.

## CHAPTER II

### CAPITALISM: THE ECONOMIC GAINS FOR THE STATE OF VERACRUZ

Capitalism was a significant factor in the development of slavery in Veracruz. Quite possibly, it was the most important force in its formation. This is not to say that it was the only factor that influenced slavery in Veracruz. There were other factors involved but capitalism, as in other cases, can have an incredible power on how a society operates. Like most other colonies developing in the new world, New Spainards sought to become a cosmopolitan, rich, and successful extension of the mother country. For Veracruz to achieve success, and be a noteworthy participant in the accomplishments of New Spain, the city first had to attain a strong and secure economy of its own.

Veracruz needed to have a strong work force, a profitable crop or resource to export and investors. This all came to Veracruz slowly but surely. The work force came from the natives in the early stages of the province's development. Exportation came from sugar. Slave labor allowed elite investors to have ample time to educate, refine, and amuse themselves with new ideologies and knowledge. The road to an economically sound empire was one "dripping with blood and mud from all its pores, from its toes to its head."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Martinez Montiel, Luz Maria. "Esclavitud y Capitalismo en America." *In Pardos, mulatos y libertos: Sexto encuentro de afromexicanistas* edited by Adriana Naveda Chavez-Hita. (Veracruzana, Xalapa, Biblioteca Universidad Veracruz, 2001), 231.

Capitalism is one of the most powerful forces in society, capable of making people accomplish great tasks in the pursuit of riches. Yet, in the same way it is capable of making people behave in ways that go against mainstream beliefs and ideas. Some of which they would not normally engage in were it not for the promise of higher profits. Capitalism was the driving force behind the changes that the world's economy underwent during this period.

It is important to note that the demand for slaves would have been nullified had it not been for an African continent that was already primed and ready to engage in a large-scale trade of its inhabitants. As African soil was poor and almost infertile combined with its difficult climate, Africa had to rely on a different source of principal production; its inhabitants. By the time that the Americas were discovered, many villages in Africa relied on slave labor to subsist or benefited from the sale of its war captives. The sale of people was not unknown to Africans, many tribes and villages were engaged in slave trade with Arab nations yet this trade dimmed in comparison to the trade that took place upon the arrival of the Europeans. Their use in these Arab nations was not as harsh as in the Americas, in most cases they were viewed as domestic workers or serf, who were adhered to the land. By contrast, when Europeans began to trade with African villagers for their captives they knew well in advance that they would be destined to work as slaves in some colony in the New World. African merchants were aware of the destiny that awaited their captives but continued to supply the cargo in exchange for steel bars, threads and textiles, rum and gin, knives, firearms, glass pieces and dresses. Many times they sold their war captives or traveled further inland to capture and kidnap people from other regions.<sup>2</sup> They benefited greatly from the trade of its people and made sure that they had ample supplies of them available at all times.

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 233-235.



So well did the trade go for African countries that it left them almost depleted of a significant working population. Europeans were looking for young strong captives that would be able to work in the cotton and sugar plantations of the Americas so this is what the African traders would supply them with. They did not realize at the time that they were exporting the most important part of their population, the one that could work, reproduce and defend. This is why when the Europeans ultimately invaded Africa they found a weak and demoralized population that was unable to organize its nation states and thus was only able to put up a feeble resistance against its invaders.

The trade that developed in the New World resembled a triangle of sorts. Merchant ships would begin their journey in the coasts of Africa where they traded manufactured goods and other luxury items for slaves, gold, and ivory. From there, they traveled to the Americas and left their human cargo in the Spanish colonies and on the tobacco and cotton plantations of Georgia and Virginia. From the Americas they took sugar, tobacco, cotton, gold, rum, cacao and other products. Then slave traders and other merchants continued their journey to its ultimate destination in Europe where they disembarked with the American products that generated great gains that translated to technological advances, growth in industry and communications, and finished goods that would then be returned to the Americas and Africa for trade.<sup>3</sup> It is almost impossible to place an exact figure on the number of Africans that were captured and taken into the New World. Estimations range from five to twenty million. The only thing that can be said with certainty is that many suffered and perished while they were interned transported into the Americas in what was a worldwide stroke towards capitalism.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 235.

<sup>4</sup>Carroll, Patrick James. *Mexicans Society in Transition: The Blacks in Veracruz, 1750-1830*. (Austin, Texas, University of Texas at Austin, 1975), 150-151.

So much was the success of sugar in Veracruz that even the viceroy himself became involved. In the 1530s Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza purchased the first African slaves to be introduced to the Orizaba valley, they were to work in the construction of his sugar mill.<sup>5</sup> In 1542 Don Antonio de Mendoza acquired some land in the Valle de Ostotipac, the area extending from Orizaba to Aculzingo. On this land he established a sugar plantation and the small village of *El Ingenio* (the mill). In the next three years the village had grown enough to have its own church and priest. In 1550 the village of *El Ingenio* attracted the attention of the Spanish Crown, which encouraged the Viceroy to grant land to those who were interested in cultivating sugar cane. Four more mills were established in the area; Francisco Martinez owned one in Gueguetlan, Maria Cataro owned one in Chietla, the Convent of Los Angeles owned one in Matlala and Dona Mecora de Aberraza and her son Juan de Vivero y Velasco owned the larger mill in Orizaba-Tequila.<sup>6</sup> Mendoza's sugar mill was in business until 1716 when it was destroyed by a fire. By this time as a result of this and the other mills in the area sugar was already established as the principal trading product in Orizaba during the seventeenth century.<sup>7</sup>

By the end of the sixteenth century there were eight mills of varying sizes in the Jalapa area and thirty-three in the Cordoba area. The small mills were called *trapiches*, which relied mainly on animals for power. Juan Dias Matamoros, for example, powered his mill with the use of one horse. Smaller mills, which were powered by hand, called *trapichillos a mano*, were

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<sup>5</sup>Del Valle Pavon, Guillermina "Transformaciones de la Poblacion Afromestiza de Orizaba Segun los Padrones de 1777 y 1791." In *Pardos, mulatos y libertos: Sexto encuentro de afromexicanistas* edited by Adriana Naveda Chavez-Hita. (Xalapa, Veracruz, Biblioteca Universidad Veracruzana, 2001), 80.

<sup>6</sup>Cardoso, Gerald. *Negro Slavery in the Sugar Plantations of Veracruz and Permanbuco, 1550-1680: A Comparative Study*. (Washington, D.C., University Press of America, 1983), 24.

<sup>7</sup>Del Valle Pavon, Guillermina "Transformaciones de la Poblacion Afromestiza de Orizaba Segun los Padrones de 1777 y 1791." In *Pardos, mulatos y libertos: Sexto encuentro de afromexicanistas* edited by Adriana Naveda Chavez-Hita. (Xalapa, Veracruz, Biblioteca Universidad Veracruzana, 2001), 80.

common in and around Cordova in the early seventeenth century.<sup>8</sup> The larger mills were called *ingenios*. The main difference between *trapiches* and *ingenios* is that *ingenios* “used a hydraulic wheel usually fed by aqueduct to power the presses.” The *casa de ingenio* or mill house usually stored the wheel and mill with two or three presses. Other equipment included in these mills was a boiler house, furnaces, a purging house, *asoleaderos* or deck houses and syrup tanks.

The largest *ingenios* at the beginning of the seventeenth century were located in Orizaba-Tequila and Santisima Trinidad. The mill in Santisima Trinidad was big enough to house seven boilers in its boiler house. It was valued at 700,000 pesos and brought in a net income of 40,000 gold pesos per year.<sup>9</sup> Other *ingenios* in the area such as El Ingenio de la Limpia Concepcion de Nuestra Senora, San Sebastian Maxtlatlan, Nuestra Senora de los Remedios, Nuestra Senora Del Socorro and the trapiche San Jose Zoncuantla also brought in significant profits. The *ingenios* San Miguel Almolonga and Nuestra Senora de la Concepcion were established by the Actopan River. This last one was established in the 1590s and by 1620 it accounted for at least 20 African slave workers.<sup>10</sup>

However, capitalism did not develop overnight in the New World; Veracruz was no exception to this rule. During the 16<sup>th</sup> century after the Spanish conquest Veracruz’ economy functioned on the principal of a tributary system, in which ‘producers turned surpluses over to hereditary elites as tribute, taxes or rent for land usage. In return elites promised to protect

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<sup>8</sup>Cardoso, Gerald. *Negro Slavery in the Sugar Plantations of Veracruz and Permanbuco, 1550-1680: A Comparative Study*. (Washington, D.C., University Press of America, 1983), 24-25.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 25.

<sup>10</sup> Martinez Moranto, Alfredo. “Dios pinta como quiere. Identidad y cultura en un pueblo afroestizo de Veracruz”. In *Presencia Africana en Mexico* coordinated by Luz Maria Martinez Montiel. (Mexico D.F., Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 1995), 527.

producers from others elites.’<sup>11</sup> In the latter part of the century through the 1630s a new system replaced the tributary system. This new system was mercantilism and it functioned on the principal of restricted trade. Trade-based profit replaced tribute as the principal incentive for surplus production.<sup>12</sup> The idea for this new system was essentially the same as the tribute system but on a much larger scale. Colonists were invested in making high profits that in turn would be of profit to the monarchy.

From 1630 a new system came into existence. This new system was capitalism. This meant ‘forces of the free marketplace subordinated the role of the states in deriving economies’. Market, production, labor, and capital conditions sought equilibrium in an atmosphere ruled not by governments but by unrestrained competition for profit.<sup>13</sup> In this system people were able to engage in free enterprise regardless of their status or bloodline. All they required was drive, ingenuity and good sense. No one was denied the opportunity to make investments and seek out profits.

The use of African slaves in the plantations of Veracruz equated to a highly profitable situation for the individual owners and farmers, for its cities and for the state itself, and for other countries. Its economy relied heavily of the exportation of sugar to Spain. Not having to pay for the labor that the slaves performed allowed them to profit more rapidly from the production of sugar. African slaves grew to represent the highest advantage and investment in the state of Veracruz. Without their labor the state would not have had the economic success that it did.

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<sup>11</sup> Carroll, Patrick J. *Blacks in Colonial Veracruz: Race, Ethnicity, and Regional Development*. (Austin, University of Texas Press, 1991), 40, 41-42.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 40, 43-46.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 41, 46-52.

Many people were at first hesitant to incorporate the use of slaves in their sugar plantations and mills for religious and moral issues. They were uncertain about adopting such a system in their state, although it was already in use in other places and was highly profitable. Sugar was the luxury of the time and was in great demand not only from the mother country Spain but from countries all over the world. By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century sugar had grown to become the most important source of wealth in the province of Veracruz.<sup>14</sup> People everywhere needed sugar to make bread, sweeten their teas and to make all sorts of foods. Veracruz being one of the major growers and exporters of the crop was eager to meet the demands of its consumers; those who were hesitant to engage in the system of slavery were almost always quickly persuaded by the capital that the system brought in to all levels of the trade.

At the same time farmers and plantation owners wanted to make higher profits for themselves. In order to do this they would have to cut down their production cost as much as possible so that their profits would be higher. Slaves provided the means for doing that. They were relatively affordable to purchase, and it cost almost nothing to feed and clothe them as they were given the most inexpensive and basic of needs. They performed labor without receiving any form of pay and were given simple homes to live in or were housed in the master's home. Slowly they began to be more open to the possibility of using African slaves in their plantations and mill on a larger scale than how they had been doing up to this point. They began to consider the profits that this would bring and they soon began to not only consider it but to implement the use of slaves as their main labor force. The slave-owners put their hesitations aside in pursuit of a higher revenue.

Once the attitudes towards slavery began to shift, the dehumanization of the slaves expanded and widened as well. Spanish society began to see them no longer as human being but

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 14.

as property. Their trade and sales were documented alongside horses and other animals. This allowed the slave traders to rationalize their own hesitations and appease their guilt. They were thought of as property and thus their trade transactions were documented as such. In many cases an arriving slave would be examined by a physician who would confirm that the slave was in good health and could perform the work that was required of him or her.<sup>15</sup> Their sales would be documented by a notary and a document would be drawn specifying the details of the trade. This document would include information about the slave such as origin, company or individual from which the slave was being purchased, to who it was sold to, classification of the slave, physical description of the slave, the price for which he or she was sold and any other pertinent information about them such as previous incidents of theft, escape attempt or general behavior, special skills and family history when available.<sup>16</sup> The inclusion of a slave's information on a contract was done so to protect both the buyer and the seller. With the information known in writing and included in the contract, there was no way that either party could go back on the contract if they were not satisfied with the end result.<sup>17</sup>

In some cases plantation owners and other buyers who could not make the trip to buy a slave themselves would authorize others to make the purchase for them. This was the case for

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<sup>15</sup>Aguirre Beltran, Gonzalo. *La Poblacion Negra De Mexico, 1519-1810: Estudio Etnohistorico*. (Mexico, D.F., Mexico, Ediciones Fuentes Cultural, 1946), 95.

<sup>16</sup>Naveda Chavez-Hita, Adriana. "Denominaciones Raciales en Archivos Locales". In *Pardos, mulatos y libertos: Sexto encuentro de afromexicanistas* edited by Adriana Naveda Chavez-Hita. (Xalapa, Veracruz, Biblioteca Universidad Veracruzana, 2001), 195-199.

<sup>17</sup>Gonzalez Ibarra, Juan de Dios. *La Negritud Tercera Raiz Mexicana*. (Mexico D.F., Universidad Autonoma del Estado de Morelos, Distribuciones Fontamara, Mexico, 2007), 47.

Don Diego de Leon who was authorize by Don Roque de Hiera y Receno to make the trip to Veracruz in hopes of buying a Negro slave by the name of Joseph.<sup>18</sup>

There were several reasons why many plantation owners began to change the way in which they saw slaves, one of them being the assumed genetic advantage that Africans were said to possess to perform harsh and arduous physical tasks.<sup>19</sup> It was believed by many that Africans were genetically and physically adapted to endure harsh environmental conditions due to their dark pigmentation and arduous physical labor due to their broader backs and higher stature. If a slave was physically able to perform more work then that meant a higher profit for the owner. Although the price of slaves varied depending on many factors and increased as more slaves were being introduced, many were still willing to purchase slaves due to their relative inexpensiveness. In 1550 a Negro slave would be sold for an average of 200 pesos, however this price quickly more than doubled within the next decade selling for as much as 500 pesos.<sup>20</sup> A significant number of slaves died during the plague of 1576-77, which served to increase the demand for African slaves to take their place in the fields and mills and in any other employment they might have held. At this time that the demand for slaves was at its peak and most plantation owners and investors guarded their slaves as their most valuable asset. Despite the Spanish Crowns' attempts to manage the situation, the demand for slaves led to some corruption and irregularity with their trade. In 1556 the Crown declared 120 pesos the highest permitted price for a slave. In 1561 they increased this to 140.

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<sup>18</sup> Carroll, Patrick J. *Archivo Municipal de Cordova y Archivo Notarial de Cordova Mexico Seleccion de Documentos Sobre Esclavos y Padrones*. (University of Texas at Austin, Bentsen Latin American Collection Microforms, Reel 1).

<sup>19</sup> Carroll, Patrick J. *Blacks in Colonial Veracruz: Race, Ethnicity, and Regional Development*. (Austin, University of Texas Press, 1991), 63.

<sup>20</sup> Cardoso, Gerald. *Negro Slavery in the Sugar Plantations of Veracruz and Permanbuco, 1550-1680: A Comparative Study*. (Washington, D.C., University Press of America, 1983), 29.

However, the demand was so high that it left ample space for many slaves to be sold illegally and at extremely high prices. But citizens of Veracruz were willing to pay it since their return profit would be much higher.<sup>21</sup> There were several factors that affected the price of a slave such as age, sex, origin, skills, physical condition and health. Young men in good health usually sold for the most money. However, a woman under certain situations might also be sold for a significant amount such as if she was sold with her husband or if she had any children with her. This was an advantage for the buyer since he was not only purchasing the female slave but also any children she came with or would bear in the future. In 1619 a thirty-year old woman and her four month old son sold for 475 pesos when in 1653 an eighteen year old boy sold for 415. By 1744, the price for a young girl of 10 or 12 years of age had dropped to 200 pesos.<sup>22</sup> This shows the variation in prices due to age, number of slaves and time of sale.

The origin of a slave also had a significant impact on the price that he or she was sold for as it was believed by many that slaves from a certain area possessed qualities such as capability or docility. For example, slaves from Cape Verde Islands were preferred over others and were sold for higher prices during the 1560s for their strength and physical condition. Slaves from areas such as Guinea, Berbesies (now Gambia Valley), Mandingas (Gambia Valley) and other areas in the northwest regions of Africa were thought to be good-natured, hard-working and trustworthy. They were imported from these places in great quantities and their price was based on these qualities.<sup>23</sup> Slaves from Angola were supposed to be “humble and docile.” On the other hand, Gelofes or Wolofs were considered to be rebellious as a result of their exposure to

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 29.

<sup>22</sup>Martinez Moranto, Alfredo. “Dios pinta como quiere. Identidad y cultura en un pueblo afroestizo de Veracruz”. In *Presencia Africana en Mexico* coordinated by Luz Maria Martinez Montiel. (Mexico D.F., Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 1995), 528.

<sup>23</sup> Palmer, Colin. *Slaves of a White God: Blacks in Mexico, 1570-1650*. (Cambridge, Harvard University Press. 1976), 21.



Islam. The demand for them was low and their importation to New Spain was limited.<sup>24</sup> This was the trend for much of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century until the Spanish crown began establishing *asientos* and trying to oversee their implementation more closely.<sup>25</sup>

As noted, colonial Veracruz was heavily depended on the labor of African slaves to sustain the complex economy that was growing as a result of the high demand of sugar. The production of sugar was no easy task, from the planting of the sugar cane to the gathering of the crops to the milling of the sugar cane into sugar, it all required some degree of “technology, management and labor.”<sup>26</sup> Many would have thought that Africans, who were considered savages and ignorant, would be incapable of performing such a task.

However, in Veracruz the slaves were able to produce the cane and process it into sugar using the complicated equipment and procedure of the mills. African slaves took over tasks that were considered too harsh for the natives and were giving duties such as “handling the boilers and presses and other activities in the refining process.”<sup>27</sup> There was a certain level of cooperation needed to successfully manage a mill and meet production quotas, it would be expected that this cooperation would come from the expectation of incentives such as higher pay or better working conditions. However, in the case of slaves no such incentives could be expected.<sup>28</sup> This slaves’ cooperation was achieved by “a combination of positive and negatives

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<sup>24</sup>Cardoso, Gerald. *Negro Slavery in the Sugar Plantations of Veracruz and Permanbuco, 1550-1680: A Comparative Study*. (Washington, D.C., University Press of America, 1983), 30.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 29-30.

<sup>26</sup>Carroll, Patrick J. *Blacks in Colonial Veracruz: Race, Ethnicity, and Regional Development*. (Austin, University of Texas Press, 1991), 61.

<sup>27</sup>Cardoso, Gerald. *Negro Slavery in the Sugar Plantations of Veracruz and Permanbuco, 1550-1680: A Comparative Study*. (Washington, D.C., University Press of America, 1983), 27.

<sup>28</sup>Carroll, Patrick J. *Blacks in Colonial Veracruz: Race, Ethnicity, and Regional Development*. (Austin, University of Texas Press, 1991), 61-62

incentives, close managerial supervision, standardization of labor tasks, and a certain degree of socioeconomic cooptation.”<sup>29</sup> This cooperation of course was of benefit to the plantation owners and investors who depended on sugar to increase their fortunes. As was previously stated the demand for sugar remained high and plantation owners sought to meet the demands of their customers as quickly as possible.

This cooperation shows the importance that African labor played in almost every step of cane and sugar production, they were involved from the moment that the cane was planted to the moment that the cane was processed in the mill. The establishment of mills or ingenios in Veracruz meant a significant growth in capital for the state but also a need for labor force and an influx in African slave population.

After the use of natives in the mills of Veracruz was prohibited on November 24, 1601 by King Phillip III, African slaves were used to perform the tasks that natives could no longer legally perform. At first many plantation owners were hesitant to let go of the use of natives as they were a source of affordable labor and were easy to manipulate and exploit. However, their hesitations were soon vanquished by the realization that the use of African slaves was an even more profitable one than that of the use of natives.<sup>30</sup>

African slaves signified higher profits for plantation owners as they were inexpensive to sustain and received no wages for their labor. Most slaves worked long hours performing harsh physical labor and received little to no pay for their effort. Their peak season was from September to February, although sometimes it extended up to May. At this time some mills would be in operation twenty-four hours a day every day, which meant even more work for the

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 62.

<sup>30</sup>Cardoso, Gerald. *Negro Slavery in the Sugar Plantations of Veracruz and Permanbuco, 1550-1680: A Comparative Study*. (Washington, D.C., University Press of America, 1983), 27.

slaves. Most males worked harvesting the cane and operating the mills. Women and the older children, ranging from age eight to fourteen, worked in the fields performing some of the lighter tasks such as weeding and watering. Women were also expected to perform domestic tasks such as cooking, baking and cleaning for herself, her family and on occasion for the other workers as well.

Most slaves began their work day before daybreak and were given a light meal at midday. Most plantation owners fed their slaves well; there was enough food for the slaves although it was not always of the best quality, taste, or variety. Most gave their slaves a weekly ration of *almud* or maize, which the slaves would consume in the form of tortillas. At times they would also be supplied with rations of salt, bread, molasses, beef and beans, and on occasion the men would be given tobacco. Extra food was given as incentives for slaves that possessed any unique skills, anyone who impressed or pleased the plantation owner, or to those who were thought to otherwise deserve it. Providing food for the slaves was little trouble for the plantation owner when compared to the cost of paying natives or others to perform the same work. All an owner had to invest in slaves was the purchase price, enough food as was needed for the slaves and some simple clothing so keep them dressed. This, of course, was of benefit to the owners who were able to rake in as much profit from their slaves while investing as little as possible in them.<sup>31</sup>

With slaves doing the bulk of the work and receiving no pay for their work and their relatively affordable keep there was more capital available for plantation owners to expand or invest in other areas. From a capitalistic standpoint it made more sense for them to use African slaves in their plantation than to use native workers. Because of the capitalistic advantages that

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 27-28.

African slavery signified investors and plantation owners were more willing to engage in the system causing it to expand along the way.

One way in which the amount of revenue that was being brought into Veracruz can be judged was by the amount of *diezmos*, contributions made to the church during the half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. In 1602 there was 100,000 pesos worth of *diezmos*. By 1607 there was 150,000 worth. It remained this high for 17 years. From 1624-1640 it was well over the 200,000 pesos. In 1654 it rose to 277,000 pesos.<sup>32</sup> Based on these sums we can judge the amount of revenue that was being brought into Veracruz. If these amounts are representative of one tenth of the overall amount of capital that was in place each year in the state we can easily see that there was a constant increase from the year 1602 to the year 1654.

The increase in profit meant not only increased revenue for the plantation and mill owners, but also money available for expansion and investment. As slaves were being used in mills and fields more and more, less was spent on wages and salaries since only the foreman and a few employees were actually paid. This meant that there would be a higher profit left for the owner. This in turn meant that the owner would have more money to expand his production and possibly increase his land in order to be able to plant more cane. Many owners began to consider investing in other areas of economy. They also partnered up with others who did not have the necessary capital to make their businesses a reality.

This meant more capital available for the state and within the state. Now there was more money available for public works and city improvements. The exportation of sugar was in no doubt the driving force by which the state lived. By the early 19<sup>th</sup> century Veracruz was

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<sup>32</sup>Carroll, Patrick J. *Blacks in Colonial Veracruz: Race, Ethnicity, and Regional Development*. (Austin, University of Texas Press, 1991), 46-47.

exporting well over a million pesos worth of sugar from its port to other parts of the world.<sup>33</sup>

The flow of revenue also caused an increase in population as many saw great opportunities in the growing state. In Jalapa alone there was a very significant increase in population, between the years 1791 to 1830; the population rose from 4,824 to 10,628.<sup>34</sup> This gives us an idea of the type of population changes that the state was undergoing and the effect that it was having. By having more people in the area the state was forced to keep up to the rapid changing needs of the growing population. Since most of the people moving into the state were families who were looking to invest or take some part in the growing economy, we can assume that they already possessed some amount of capital and were looking to increase it. This meant that most of the families coming into Veracruz were more than likely middle or high class and were educated. Their arrival meant that the state's society structure would soon change and adjust to the needs of those who had the most money. As a result of this change the state soon began to refine itself and become more cosmopolitan.

Plantation owners and investors now had money on hand to devote to other areas besides public works such as steel work, mining and businesses. This in turn caused business growth and cities and the state to expand. Before this time the expansion of cities and towns had been slow due to the lack of a labor force to provide food for citizens. Since African slaves were now present this allowed for cities and towns to be expanded. Some of the major cities in the Spanish colonies were able to exist and expand due in large part to the high African slave concentration in the area. The colonists in these cities needed African slaves in the area to grow their food source and the resources that they were exporting to Spain. This is also a factor that pushed the

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 165.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 170.

Spanish monarchy to choose capital interests over their moral hesitations as they wished to colonize their new territories and export as much resources out of them as possible.<sup>35</sup> Once African slaves were present in the area this was a much more viewable reality for the Spanish monarchy.

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<sup>35</sup>Mellafe, Rolando. *Negro Slavery in Latin America*. Translated by J.W.S. Judge. (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1975), 88.

## CHAPTER III

### RELIGION: CAPITALISM OVER MORALITY

Religion is one of the major factors that help to forge the identity of any peoples. Faith gives countries definition and citizens purpose. Religion gives people a sense of belonging and reason; people need to have some idea or belief as to where they stand in the world. People have always needed to believe in something greater than themselves, something that gives them a sense of security and acceptance. They need to feel that there is some sense of structure and organization in their life. The themes of creation and destiny appear to be present in almost every culture's belief system. They have always looked for a way to find answer to their questions about destiny, morality, and origin.

In the case of the Spanish this belief came in the form of Catholicism. Spain had a long and firm history of being a highly religious country. To Spain, religion was the way of life.

Ferdinand and Isabella felt it was their personal and divine duty to lead the country to their spiritual salvation through the ways of the Catholic Church. As leaders of their people they had to set an example for their citizens on the righteous way of living and the practices that they should follow in regards to religion. The king and queen and many of the rulers who followed them lived their life with the utmost prudence and strove to be as devout as they could, they tried to follow the word of God in everything that they did. They were also held to different, stricter, standards than their subjects as their actions were under continuous scrutiny from almost every direction. They were being monitored by outside forces and kingdoms that would surely attack

at the first sight of weakness, they were watched by the rest of its court for any sign of error, by the church and their priests to ensure that they were being just and wholesome and by their citizens who looked to them for guidance and leadership.

Since the Spanish kingdom, their king and queen and the church were all devout Catholics it is no surprise that most of the Spanish subjects were Catholic believers as well. They followed the Catholic practices, believed in the Holy Trinity and prayed to the Catholic saints. Most Spanish citizens were happy to follow the examples of their king and queen who led their lives in a highly religious fashion. Like them they strove to achieve religious understanding, to lead their lives on earth as purely as possible by staying away from evil and temptation and above all to attain salvation for their souls in the afterlife. They followed the practices that the church dictated and participated in religious events. They led their everyday life in the way that the church deemed appropriate and abstained from participating in actions or thoughts that were impure or improper.

However, for those who did not follow Catholic doctrine life was not that simple. Jews, Christians, and Muslims began to feel the rejection of Catholics in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. At first they found comfort and support within their groups, relying on one another to prosper and coexist, but as rejection grew so too did conflict between the groups. Jews and Muslims were rejected in Spain to the point that they were forced to discard their religious ideologies or face persecution during the Spanish Inquisition. They were discriminated against, persecuted, ostracized, rejected by mainstream Catholic society and many were hunted down for failure to denounce their faith.<sup>1</sup>

With all of this pressure to be faithful, citizens might question the beliefs that they were being presented, at great peril. It would be prudent to think that at least a few of those who

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<sup>1</sup>Kamen, Henry. *The Spanish Inquisition: A Historical Revision*. (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1997), 8-12.



practiced the Catholic religion did so more out of social pressure than out of fidelity or devotion for the church or belief in the doctrine.

Spanish colonists shared this devotion for Catholicism. As colonists settled in New Spain they brought along with them the desire to keep their religious ideologies and convert others to it as well, sometimes through the use of force.

The fifteenth century represented a time of great change and victory for the Spanish. Their religious exhilaration was a result of their victory over the Moors. This victory, as most tend to do, left the Spanish with a sense of empowerment and superiority over others. They were united as a nation and felt that it was divine duty to continue to convert other souls into Catholicism.<sup>2</sup>

This sense of superiority was apparent in the colonists as they entered these new lands. They didn't see a society able to exist without their interference. Rather they saw new souls to convert and riches to be collected. Many returning soldiers of war were slow to relinquish this state of mind and sought the colonies as a source of "additional opportunities to conquer more infidels for Christ and their homeland and to turn a personal profit as well."<sup>3</sup> Before the arrival of the Europeans there already existed a form of trade between natives in Veracruz based on the exchange of ceramics for other needed goods. Yet, to the Spanish the natives only represented a new population that could be used as labor, converted into their religion, and oppressed by their society.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Carroll, Patrick J. *Blacks in Colonial Veracruz: Race, Ethnicity, and Regional Development*. (Austin, University of Texas Press, 1991), 6.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 6.

<sup>4</sup>Blazquez Dominguez, Carmen. *Breve Historia De Veracruz*. Coordinated by Alicia Hernandez Chavez and adjunct coordinator Manuel Mino Grijalva. Fideicomiso Historia de las Americas: Serie Breves Historias de los Estados de la Republica Mexicana. (Mexico, D.F., El Colegio de Mexico, 2000), 27.

The explorers and colonists coming into Veracruz and other areas of New Spain were not content with being mere observers of the culture and society that was already present in the area. They were intent on altering it completely to resemble their own. They saw the natives in the area as inferior and backwards, incapable of possessing any real knowledge. They were extremely ethnocentric as a result of their war victories and religious domination, which led them to behave in a racist manner against the natives. They truly were trying to make this new colony into a “New Spain.”<sup>5</sup>

However for all that, the colonists met with significant resistance from the natives. The natives of New Spain already had a cultural and religious system in play at the time of the Spanish arrival, and were not willing to let the newcomers dictate their way of life. Not only was there cultural opposition to a change in the natives religious beliefs but there were also many physical barriers that prevented the spread of Catholicism into further areas of Mexico such as Veracruz. Although Veracruz had ample coastline, travel was often times difficult and slow. This was one barrier that the Spanish could not overcome by the simple use of force. Because of this natives in the more remote areas were able to keep their way of life for the most part and ultimately surrendered their way of life to other factors like disease, poverty or conflict rather than Spanish influences.<sup>6</sup>

It is because of this that it is no real surprise that amongst the first structures erected in New Spain were missions intended to convert the natives. As more colonists began to venture into the new lands and the social and structural dynamics of Veracruz began to change, the Spanish crown sought to include in the new order a higher presence of the Catholic church for

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<sup>5</sup>Carroll, Patrick J. *Blacks in Colonial Veracruz: Race, Ethnicity, and Regional Development*. (Austin, University of Texas Press, 1991), 6.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 6-7.

the conversion of the natives. In the same year that La Villa Rica de la Veracruz was founded, the Spanish explorers began construction of the first church in the steps of what used to be Quizhuiztlan. In 1523 or 1524 the Church when it was relocated to the city of Antigua. Another church was erected in Zempoala by Cortez after he demolished the natives' ceremonial structures and idols. This church was dedicated to the Virgin Mary. Here he arranged for mass and the baptismal of eight Toltec virgins, giving birth to the evangelization of the natives of Veracruz.<sup>7</sup>

In 1524 priests began to arrive which allowed for greater change in the social and governmental structures of Veracruz. Although cities and provinces continued to be under jurisdiction of the Viceroy and supervised by their mayors and council members, monasteries also played an important part in their social structure. Xalapa, Zempoala and other coastal cities were now under the religious guidance of the Tlaxcala monastery. In 1526 that jurisdiction had extended to the north and central regions of Veracruz. In 1535 the Oaxaca monastery claimed to be the religious center of southern Mexico.<sup>8</sup>

Amongst the duties of the monasteries was the construction of Spanish churches and places of worship. As early as 1531 monasteries were being built. In 1535 the Atztlan temple was constructed. In 1548 they built the San Francisco Church. These two edifices allowed the religious leaders greater access to parts of Veracruz that they had not been able to reach because of physical barriers, distance or inconvenience. In the years of 1560 and 1561 they built a church in Coatepec and in 1571 they build a finer one in Antigua.<sup>9</sup> In 1540, they built an

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<sup>7</sup>Blazquez Dominguez, Carmen. *Breve Historia De Veracruz*. Coordinated by Alicia Hernandez Chavez and adjunct coordinator Manuel Mino Grijalva. Fideicomiso Historia de las Americas: Serie Breves Historias de los Estados de la Republica Mexicana. (Mexico, D.F., El Colegio de Mexico, 2000), 56.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 56.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 56.

additional monastery in Panuco. In 1541 the first eight Jesuits landed in the coasts of Veracruz. They served in the regions of Antigua and Tuxcla.<sup>10</sup>

Churches served many purposes. Churches helped to congregate the natives into larger groups. Also, they served as intermediates in land disputes. And perhaps one of their most important contributions was the hospitals they built. These buildings were not only a place in which the natives could receive help and medication, it was also a place in which they could gather information and meet with others. Amongst the hospitals built at the time are the Concepcion Inmaculada in Xalapa, (which cared for Spaniards and natives), the Nuestra Senora de Belen hospital in Perote, the Nuestra Senora de el Puerto de Veracruz, (which admitted African), and the San Martin hospital in San Juan de Ulua.<sup>11</sup> The most devout owners would sometimes provide a separate church in which their slaves and native workers could worship or they would allow them time during the week so that they could do so in the same church as the hacendado.

This idea of having churches in which to worship was also present on a smaller scale in the plantations of Veracruz, many of which had a church for use of the owners and those living in their plantation. The plantation of Santisima Trinidad had, amongst its eleven *caballerias* of cane fields, its refinery buildings and two story plantation home, a chapel for the use of the family.<sup>12</sup>

Although churches and missions were quickly constructed in Veracruz there was no real strong effort to convert the slaves present in the area into Catholicism. This was rare considering

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 57.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 57.

<sup>12</sup>Cardoso, Gerald. *Negro Slavery in the Sugar Plantations of Veracruz and Permanbuco, 1550-1680: A Comparative Study*. (Washington, D.C., University Press of America, 1983), 42.

the level of importance religion played in Spain and the great effort that was placed on converting the natives of Mexico. The slaves' religious instructions depended greatly on their masters. Unlike natives who were aggressively targeted for conversion through the use of persuasion and force, there was no such rush to convert the slave population in later years.

Members of the Catholic Church were not oblivious to the lack of attention to the souls of the slaves in New Spain. As early as 1572 members of the church condemned the fact that more was not being done to convert the slaves. They worried that it was the slaves who were in the most need of religious instruction and who were most greatly ignored. Troubled by the situation, the Archbishop of Lima wrote to the Council of the Indies and expressed his concern. His solution was to have the slaves baptized before they left the Portuguese factories in Africa. The Spanish Crown, also concerned, continued to ask slave owners to provide churches and priests for their slaves so that their souls could be guided to the right religion.

Many slaves were said to be converted into Catholicism but few were actually baptized or had any serious religious teaching.<sup>13</sup> Yet, records show that little was done to follow the request of the Crown, slave owners in Mexico had little to no concern with the religious well being of their slaves. Surely, there must have been exceptions to this but as records show the vast majority of slaves in Veracruz received no religious guidance and little was done to convert them into the Catholic faith.<sup>14</sup>

Since slaves rarely received any formal religious instruction they were sometimes able to continue practicing their own religion to some extent. The level of freedom to express their religion varied depending on the amount of liberty and autonomy that each plantation owner

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 45.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 45-46.

allowed their slaves. I estimate that a good portion of them were still able to practice their religion to some degree. The slaves many times practiced with small cults with those who shared their beliefs.

Their rituals were often times judged as backward, depraved, and brutish. From the moment that Europeans first had contact with African rituals and religious ideologies they classified them as ignorant. Missionaries who were exposed to West African religious practices even went a step further and deemed them evil and thus unlawful. Manuel Alvares, a Jesuit of the seventeenth century, declared the religious practices of the Cacheu region on Africa to be the immoral and the work of the devil.<sup>15</sup>

This sentiment was common in Veracruz and other areas of Mexico where Spanish colonists saw any African religious activity as immoral, ignorant and as a potential threat. Many colonists, though intrigued by the unknown African religious practices, kept a close eye on African slaves who continued to practice their religion. Since the threat of rebellion or escape was always present, Spanish colonists were cautious of any activity that the slaves were involved in, never allowing them too much freedom.

One aspect of African religion that is worthy of mention is the use of chocolate for various purposes. Chocolate was used in potions and remedies both for benign and wicked purposes. There are many instances in which it is denounced as a method for poisoning others. In 1678 an African woman by the name of Juana was accused of witchcraft. It was argued that she had poured the powder made from the hair of an African woman and animal nails into a

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<sup>15</sup>Bristol, Joan Cameron. *Christian, Blasphemers, and Witches: Afro-Mexican Ritual Practices in the Seventeenth Century*. (Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 2007), 32-35.

chocolate mixture that was to go to her owner. This would cause her owner to choke, giving her an opportunity to steal his belongings.<sup>16</sup>

There is a strong association between African women, mestizo women, and chocolate. The use of chocolate seems to be intertwined with sexuality, poisoning, witchcraft and women. There are many alleged uses of chocolate by African women. Many Europeans believed it to be an aphrodisiac. This is reflected in many aspects of history and helped to amplify the stereotypes against African women that were in place at the time regarding their magical gifts and their physical attributes.<sup>17</sup>

Animism, fetishism and witchcraft were also often a key component of these African religions. Practitioners of the groups often resorted to exorcisms, amulets and talismans as a solution to problems or illnesses.

They were used for curing illnesses, bringing good luck or better treatment by their masters and on occasion as a love potion. One way in which a woman was sure to win over the affection of a man was for him to ingest some chocolate mixed with a small amount of her menstrual blood. This was said to make him fall in love with her. There were practices that served different purposes such as eating a crow's heart, which was said to have the power to appease sexual desires. This was of great aid in a time in which sexual promiscuity was highly frowned upon by Catholic colonists. In 1621, Damiana Lopez kept such an item in hopes that it would keep her husband, Francisco Partida, from wandering off with other women. The finger of a dead person was also a highly sought out item, especially if the person had been killed or murdered. It was said that using the dead person's finger to stir any potion would greatly

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<sup>16</sup>Velazquez Gutierrez, Maria Eliza. "Orgullo Y Despejo." *Iconografia de Las Mujeres de Origen Africano en los Cuadros de Castas del Mexico Virreinal.* In *Pardos, mulatos y libertos: Sexto encuentro de Afromexicanistas* edited by Adriana Naveda Chavez-Hita (Xalapa, Veracruz, Biblioteca Universidad Veracruzana, 2001), 33-36.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 34-35.

increase its success. Also in 1621, a slave of Dona Leonor Calderon, Isabel, was thought to own such an item from the hand of a person who had been hanged.<sup>18</sup>

There were many people who sought out the knowledge of African slaves regarding potions and spells. With the use of amulets, chants, animal parts, various flowers, roots and herbs, body parts and fluids; slaves were able to provide people with potions and spells believed to answer the needs of those who sought them out.<sup>19</sup>

Because of the similarities that existed between the religions of the slaves and living conditions and those of the natives, the slaves found some support from the natives. Many Indians also worshiped in the same manner with the use of talismans, amulets and practiced exorcisms. Some ties developed between the two groups.<sup>20</sup> In native culture, the religious leader or shaman was a person of great authority and respect. This person oversaw family events such as births, marriages, deaths and passage from childhood to puberty. Yet his most important function was to treat illnesses with the magical powers that were attributed to him or her. This leader was said to have power to understand and control the natural forces of the land. He held no real power in government but was a venerated status in the community.<sup>21</sup> Evidence suggests that there was a high level of ceremonial artifacts in existence long before the arrival of the

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<sup>18</sup>Cardoso, Gerald. *Negro Slavery in the Sugar Plantations of Veracruz and Permanbuco, 1550-1680: A Comparative Study*. (Washington, D.C., University Press of America, 1983), 45.

<sup>19</sup>Bristol, Joan and Matthew Restall. "Potions and Perils: Love-Magic in Seventeenth-Century Afro-Mexico and Afro-Yucatan." In *Black Mexico: Race and Society from Colonial to Modern times* edited by Ben Vinson III and Matthew Restall. (Albuquerque, University of New Mexico, 2009), 162, 155-179.

<sup>20</sup>Cardoso, Gerald. *Negro Slavery in the Sugar Plantations of Veracruz and Permanbuco, 1550-1680: A Comparative Study*. (Washington, D.C., University Press of America, 1983), 45.

<sup>21</sup>Blazquez Dominguez, Carmen. *Breve Historia De Veracruz*. Coordinated by Alicia Hernandez Chavez and adjunct coordinator Manuel Mino Grijalva. Fideicomiso Historia de las Americas: Serie Breves Historias de los Estados de la Republica Mexicana. (Mexico, D.F., El Colegio de Mexico, 2000), 26-27.



Spanish in Veracruz which supports the claim that religion was of great importance to the natives and why they were slow to embrace the religion that the Spanish wanted to convert them into.<sup>22</sup>

Perhaps the greatest reason why there was never a strong move to convert the slaves was the fear of rebellion or advancement. The few slaves that did receive any form of religious instruction were highly supervised and monitored. Those slaves who were interested in practicing the religion of their masters sought to form their own *cofradías* (brotherhoods), which by their nature attracted the attention of their masters as a possible threat. Slaves were not permitted to worship in groups without the presence of a “*persona grave*,” or person of importance who would supervise the gathering and assure that it was indeed meant for the purpose of religious worship and not a cover up for any plot.

Because of their status and race, slaves and mulattoes were not allowed into the priesthood. They were considered beneath other classes. Although the Spanish Crown asked the colonists on repeated occasions to care for the religious well being of the slaves in Mexico it continued to issue decrees in which the ordination of negroes or mulattoes was not permitted. As late as the eighteenth century, the Order of St. Augustine in Mexico continued to reject Negroes and mulattoes. They were considered “individuals generally scorned by society, unworthy of occupying public office, and of being charged with the guidance of souls.”<sup>23</sup>

The Spanish church had a very peculiar opinion of slaves from the time that they were first introduced to the Spanish-American trade and culture. The church did not wish to cause conflict between masters and their slaves. Their concern with the issue of slavery was not to determine the morality of it, but rather the effects that its perceived immorality could have on

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 27.

<sup>23</sup> Cardoso, Gerald. *Negro Slavery in the Sugar Plantations of Veracruz and Permanbuco, 1550-1680: A Comparative Study*. (Washington, D.C., University Press of America, 1983), 46.

Spain. According to Frank Tannenbaum, the Spanish Church gave slaves a “moral personality.” This meant that although slaves were not considered full people, they did have some characteristics of decency and ethics which the church was interested in protecting, not for the well being of slaves but rather for the protection of Spain’s reputation. Some church officials were willing to intervene in master-slaves relationships to try to make things easier for the slaves; these events were not many though.<sup>24</sup>

Most church officials gave slaves the status of “persons,” even before the introduction of slaves into trade in the Atlantic Islands, Europe and the Indies. Their explanation for this idea was that they

“...the Church also identified Africans as the *extra ecclesiam* (an ecclesiastical term applicable to all persons who did not profess Christianity) and thus gave them rights that competed with their slave status. In constituting the *extra ecclesiam*, the Church relied on the rediscovered teachings of the ancients, the Bible, the natural laws, customary law, commentaries, canon-law precedents, theological treaties, and papal bulls. Collectively these texts and institutional practices outlined the obligations and the rights of non-Christians both within and beyond an imagined Europe. Such rights and accompanying obligations prevailed until the individual *extra ecclesiam* embraced the Christian faith. If enslaved Africans elected to become Christians, the Church amended these rights and obligations. In its encounter with Africans the Church focused less on amelioration than on regulation of slaves. According to crown and clergy, Christian slaves had to conform to Christian orthodoxy.”<sup>25</sup>

What this meant was that the Spanish Church regarded slaves as “persons” or “*extra ecclesiam*” who even in their status of non-Christians still had rights and obligations. A “person” was someone who had not yet discovered Christianity but who had the possibility to do so and who once they had done so would be granted the rights that other Christians enjoyed. However, these laws were altered when it came to an African slave. Their rights were changed

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<sup>24</sup>Bennet, Herman L. *Africans in Colonial Mexico: Absolutism, Christianity and Afro-Creole Consciousness, 1570-1640*. (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2003), 35.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 35.

to accommodate their slave status and their obligations were made so that it would not interfere with their already established obligations. As was mentioned, the Church was more concerned with the control and regulation of slave population than with the improvement of their conditions or lives.

The Spanish church in New Spain had little to no direct contact with the slaves. They placed their focus on the conversion of natives cared more for native spiritual wellbeing and salvation than for that of the Africans living. The church seemed to be unconcerned with the way in which the slaves were treated.

In 1601, a slave boy was said to have been tied up between two poles and beaten brutally by his master for no apparent reason. After enduring a savage beating the boy was dragged naked through town and taken to “hear mass in that condition without having respect for the church nor the divine acts that were being celebrated, so that it there was a great muttering from the natives as well as the Spaniards.”<sup>26</sup> In 1611, a slave girl was forced to dress in a coarse cloth sack by her owner so that she looked unsightly and out of place. The owner placed an iron ring around her neck and yanked the slave girl all the way to church. Although there was no official complain to the church or to the slave owner, there was much muttering and criticism of the slave owner amongst the community.<sup>27</sup>

This is not to say that all slaves were treated in the same manner but it does give some insight to the concerns of Spaniards regarding their treatment. In both of these occasions the church and its followers seemed more concerned with protecting its image and sanctity rather than with the protection of the slaves wellbeing and safety. Despite the fact that these were two

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<sup>26</sup> Cardoso, Gerald. *Negro Slavery in the Sugar Plantations of Veracruz and Permanbuco, 1550-1680: A Comparative Study*. (Washington, D.C., University Press of America, 1983), 31-32.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 32.

separate occasions a decade apart the results for both were the same, apathy and indifference from the church clergy and from practitioners. In the case of the young boy, his nakedness was cause for great upheaval amongst the natives and the Spaniards, yet no one thought to mention or speak out against the cruelty to which the boy was being subjected or to question the morality of the owner for treating him in such a way. The only criticism against this man was that he had polluted the purity of the church by bringing the nude boy into the church. In the case of the slave girl there was the same response. It was mentioned by the locals that the owner's behavior towards the slave girl was cruel and severe but there was no real action taken to prevent any further abuse done to her. They described her appearance as that of a "lunatic" which reflects that she was unsightly. This speaks of what was really important to the people and the church, her appearance, which was what they were being forced to look at. It was not that they thought she was being harshly punished, it was the fact that they were being forced to look at her in such conditions. In this case it was noted that there were other allegations against the woman who owned her and other slaves, yet there was little done to punish her or prevent her from continuing such behavior.

Slaves were many times also branded in the way that cattle were to ensure that if any slave tried to escape, or was stolen or lost, he or she would be returned to its rightful owner. For example in Tuxtla some slaves were branded with the initials of their owner, the Marquez. They were also listed in registries or "*Caja de Negros*" and plantation records as property next to equipment and animals.<sup>28</sup> They were forced to work long hours in dangerous environments where they could suffer any number of injuries or accidents, under extreme conditions that made the work that much harder, with little to no food or rest, given very little to wear. They were thought of as property to be abused to its limits in search of a profit. Many were crippled or

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 31.

maimed as a result of their harsh working conditions or their abuse. Some were also subjected to the jails that their masters built and ruled over. A slave owner could at many times accuse, judge and punish for crimes ranging from talking back to rebellion. In the same manner, the punishment for such crimes could range from isolation, beating, castration or even death. There were no real guidelines for what an owner could or could not do to their slaves. A slave was also watched constantly for any signs of rebellion or plans to escape. He had no privacy or control over his life and every aspect of his day was controlled and scrutinized.<sup>29</sup>

Slaves could be accused of any number of crimes that were in reality a result of their harsh and severe conditions. As humans they could not help but to react to certain actions that were being done against them but in doing so they could be accused of talking back, fighting a person of authority or even conspiring to form a rebellion. For example a slave could be accused of crimes against the Spanish church if he refused to pray, or cursed the church, or its beliefs or saints or rejected Catholicism as the true religion. It did not matter under what conditions such words or actions were done, the punishment for such blasphemy was always insensitive and spiteful. For example, in 1600, Victorilla, a slave woman was accused of blasphemy after she denied “God and all the saints and the Virgin Mary” in response to an atrocious whipping. In another incident Juan Villarden, a slave of Don Gaspar Osorio, was also accused for blasphemy when he denied the “heavens, God and his saints” after he was whipped and then struck with a dagger.<sup>30</sup>

This again shows the primary concerns of the Spanish Church with regards to the African slaves. They were unsympathetic to the abuse and violence that was being done to the slaves and were more concerned with the crimes against Catholicism. In both of these cases the crime was

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 31-33.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 32.

blasphemy, which was only committed after being subjected to violence and abuse at the hands of their masters. This again shows that the church was more concerned with the protection of its honor, status and image rather than with the truthfulness of the accusations or the way in which the punishments were executed.

Anyone would have thought that after the victory over the Moors and other non-believers the Spanish monarchy and church would have been more concerned with the conversion of souls into Catholicism, but this was not the case in New Spain and many other Spanish colonies. Following in Pope Innocent IV's ideology the Spanish monarchy and church treated all non-believers in the same way. Non-believers, in Spain's Catholic views, included "Saracens, a widely used term for infidels or those who willfully rejected the Christian faith, and pagans, individuals who existed in ignorance of the Christian faith."<sup>31</sup> They both fell under the category of *extra ecclesium* and as such were held to the same laws and treatment. Individuals who fell under these category in Spain were at first tolerated and ignored for the most part. But as the Reconquest began to gain strength in the thirteenth century Jews and Moslems living in the Iberian Peninsula were ordered to follow Christian legal laws and social traditions. Their religious and social freedoms were slowly being taken away and they began to be forced into Catholic doctrine and Iberian society. The goal in Spain was to convert as many non-believers into Catholic faith and save their souls.

This mentality was in place in Spain for many years and would seem to have been transferred into New Spain along with the colonist.<sup>32</sup> In Spain's mentality there were two flocks for which the pope was responsible since all people were from Christ. One of these groups was

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<sup>31</sup>Bennet, Herman L. *Africans in Colonial Mexico: Absolutism, Christianity and Afro-Creole Consciousness, 1570-1640*. (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2003), 37.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*, 37.

made up of Christians and the other was formed by everyone else.<sup>33</sup> However, despite their desire to convert souls, neither the Spanish monarchy nor church seems at all too concerned with slave conversion or salvation.

Although the main attention of the church was not focused on the conversion of the slaves, their documents and registries do allow great insight into the lives of slaves. The church kept close record of slave births, baptisms, marriages and deaths. They also were in great part responsible for the record keeping regarding slave classifications, their occupation, residency and ties to other in the community.<sup>34</sup>

The church showed some level of concern when it came to recording slave marriages. Whether the marriage was between two slaves, a slave and a free native or, in rare case, between an African and a Spaniard or criollo, the church felt the need to document the union in their documents mainly for verification and record keeping purposes. Slaves were questioned intensely and officials took actions to verify that they were indeed able to marry someone freely and did not have any other previous engagement with someone either in the Americas or in Africa. This was one of the few issues in which there was little distinction between slaves and free natives or Spaniards. They were all treated with the same level of suspicion and mistrust. It was of utmost importance that the sanctity of a religious sacrament such as marriage be available to all and at the same time protected by the church.

When two slaves chose to get married they would have to request a marriage license from the church. In order to receive one they would have to provide proof that they were both single and able to marry. To do so many slaves would present witnesses of their marriage eligibility to

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 36.

<sup>34</sup>Naveda Chavez-Hita, Adriana. "Denominaciones Raciales en Archivos Locales". In *Pardos, mulatos y libertos: Sexto encuentro de afromexicanistas* edited by Adriana Naveda Chavez-Hita. (Xalapa, Veracruz, Biblioteca Universidad Veracruzana, 2001), 196.

the church clergy. These witnesses would provide testimony that they had known the individuals in question for a number of years and that in the years of knowing this person they had never been married, had been but were now widowed or divorced, and that they had never made any reference to having been married. It was also important to verify that the couple wishing to marry were not related by blood; the church had to prevent any sin from resulting as a result of this union. The person asked to appear on the behalf of the two individuals would also testify that to the best of their knowledge the two were not kin or connected in a spiritual form such as baptism or confirmation. Whoever was elected to appear on the couple's behalf was carefully selected and it was normally considered a great honor to be asked to provide such a service. The person chosen to appear could also be of any status as long as he could attest to the couple's eligibility to unite.<sup>35</sup>

It is worthy of mention that any slave wishing to marry did not have to acquire permission from his master to do so. In accordance with the Catholic Church's Fourth Lateran Council decisions in 1215 which the Council of Trent had supported and reinforced in 1545-1563, any slave wishing to marry could do so without the permission of their master. It was enough for the church that they provide verbal consent and provided witnesses to their freedom to engage into marital union. The church's position on this was clear: anyone regardless of their status and legality had the right to enter into a religious sacrament such as marriage as long as they provided the necessary requirements to do so. In the case of the slaves this meant that masters could not overrule this decision.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>Bennet, Herman L. *Africans in Colonial Mexico: Absolutism, Christianity and Afro-Creole Consciousness, 1570-1640*. (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2003), 79-80.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*, 80.



The church also recorded marriages and slave unions to keep a record of the slaves and their classifications. They did this to prevent people from lying about their ancestry. In some cases when a slave was unable to account for his classification the clergy would appoint one to him based on minor research and his appearance. As Africans began to intermarry and procreate with other groups their classification became more complex. There were many ways in which a slave could be classified such as geography, (based on the place in which a slave originated from), color, (the way in which a slave looked) and written records of the slave's lineage. As the mixing of groups continued the classifications continued to change making it even more difficult to provide an accurate classification. Priests did the best they could to provide an accurate classification of the slaves they came in contact with but there was ample room for error.<sup>37</sup>

Any slave who wanted to marry was required to identify themselves according to class and caste. They would have to provide information as to their origin, master and birth, caste and status. The church official would take note of the place from which the slave originated and would inquire to whom the slave belonged for record keeping purposes and to decide to whom any children resulting from the union would belong to in the case of a dispute. In the case of slaves any children who were born to the couple would belong to the father, or rather to his owner, in accordance to Christian doctrine.<sup>38</sup> This was the way in which things were suppose to work, in reality it was not uncommon for masters to fight over who would get ownership of the slave's offspring. Any person appearing on the couple's behalf would also be asked to identify themselves, their origin, their cast and status. The church had no intention to use this

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<sup>37</sup>Naveda Chavez-Hita, Adriana. "Denominaciones Raciales en Archivos Locales". In *Pardos, mulatos y libertos: Sexto encuentro de afromexicanistas* edited by Adriana Naveda Chavez-Hita. (Xalapa, Veracruz, Biblioteca Universidad Veracruzana, 2001), 199-203.

<sup>38</sup>Bennet, Herman L. *Africans in Colonial Mexico: Absolutism, Christianity and Afro-Creole Consciousness, 1570-1640*. (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2003), 81.

information against the slaves; it was merely a way in which to keep a document slaves they came in contact with.<sup>39</sup>

However, marriage was of no assurance or protection to the slaves. Spanish colonists made almost no effort to encourage slave marriages despite the fact that this unions could potentially result in an increase of slaves in labor with the children born to such partnerships. It can be argued that their Protestant American counterparts made a significant effort to encourage slave unions. In America a slave had no right to marry as they were not considered full persons. Yet American owners would encourage slaves to form partnerships and have a form of family lifestyle. Spanish colonists seemed more concerned with the prevention and suppression of slave groups that could ultimately launch a rebellion.<sup>40</sup>

It was only natural that slaves would be inclined to form some sort of family structure even in the harsh conditions in which they were forced to live. The lack of security, privacy and social life were no impediment for a slave to want to have a mate and children. This is why many slaves in Veracruz chose to take a partner from within their own plantation or the surrounding area.

Few slaves were actually married by a priest. And yet even those who were married and suppose to be protected by divine law had no security that their union would be respected by society. Even though the church made some effort to support marriage and family life within the slave community, these efforts were overridden by the profits that a slave sale could mean for their owners. Slave husbands, wives and parents lived with the constant threat of being separated from their loved ones at any time. Although there were laws in place that discouraged

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<sup>39</sup>Ibid., 79-81.

<sup>40</sup>Cardoso, Gerald. *Negro Slavery in the Sugar Plantations of Veracruz and Permanbuco, 1550-1680: A Comparative Study*. (Washington, D.C., University Press of America, 1983), 43-44.

the separation of families, there was little that the church could do to prevent the division of unions and families. Husbands were sold away from their wives, wives were separated from their husbands under the bill of sale right and children not much older than ten were sold away from their parents. To their masters it was of more importance to make a profit out of their sale than to promote a family structure.<sup>41</sup>

However, it is important to note that the Church and the monarchy were so indifferent to this issue because much of society was afraid that any socialization between slaves would result in stronger ties between them. They felt that if slaves had something or someone to protect and fight for; then they might rebel. This is why they strove to prevent any slaves from engaging in group activities. If the church was at all interested in the slaves' family life it was out of protection for their image to their own society and the outside world rather than for genuine concern for the wellbeing of the slave.

Because of this, some slaves were wary of forming such ties with other slaves and of eventually forming a family over which they would have little control. The threat of being separated from anyone with whom they have formed a sentimental, spiritual or blood tie was sometimes too real for a slave to risk. They knew that separation was something that could happen at any time and without warning and that there was nothing that they could do to prevent it.

Only a handful of slaves ever had the courage to speak out against the torment that would result from being separated from their families. It was the Holy Office of the Inquisition, a branch of the Spanish church, which was in charge of hearing such complaints. One such slave brave enough to raise a grievance to this Holy Office after being separated from his wife in 1618 was Juan Matso. His wife had been sold to someone in Mexico City, which caused great distress

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid., 43-44.

to Juan, who was living in Veracruz. He was not allowed by his master to visit her nor was she allowed to visit him. His request was simple: he wanted the Holy Office to demand that his wife's owner sell her to someone in Veracruz where she would be closer to him and thus they would be able to visit from time to time. Although the Holy Office did receive his petition the records do not indicate their decision on the case.<sup>42</sup>

This case demonstrates how slaves were willing to enter into marriages and common-law unions, despite the risks. Yet, these marriages were seldom protected by either the state or the church which allowed many of them to be broken by separation. When a slave chose to fight against the separation of his spouse or family, though few did, they were many times ignored or rejected and ran the risk of provoking the anger of his master and those around him who thought that they had no right to demand anything from their owners, government or the church. These cases were more than likely considered unimportant and were thus discarded. The church did not place high priority on the matters that dealt with slaves.

The Spanish monarchy did make some small attempt to safeguard the souls and spirits of the slaves, yet their efforts were often short-lived and ignored by plantation owners who were the ones in direct contact with the slaves. For example the Spanish crown ordered that every slave have access to a church within the plantation so that they could pray in the mornings, hear mass on Sundays and receive any other religious sacraments on holidays. It was expected by the Crown that the owner of the plantation would provide a place in which the slave could pray and ensure that there was some religious leader to guide them. Yet in more cases than not these churches did not exist.

If a slave owner was found guilty of breaking this law then he would be fined thirty pesos for every time that he was caught. It was also decreed that within six months of their purchase,

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 44.

slave owners were to teach them about the Catholic religion and its sacraments. Once this was done then they were to be baptized. If an owner failed to do this then he was fined a sum equal to one fourth the slave's purchase value on the first offense, one half of the value on the second offense and the full value of the slave on the third.<sup>43</sup> However, these laws were largely ignored; the educational and spiritual needs of the slaves continued to be neglected.

One issue which the monarchy and the Spanish church seemed to be somewhat concerned with was the fact that a large number of slaves were being killed at the hands of their masters. This worried them not because souls under their care were being lost due to the slaves' unbaptized or confessed state at the time of their death. A slave who died without being introduced into Christianity was still considered a pagan and therefore unable to gain access to the spiritual kingdom. If they died after being introduced to Christianity and rejected it then they too were unable to obtain entrance to the spiritual kingdom. As a result of this in the latter part of the sixteenth century the Spanish king issued several ordinances aimed at preventing any further deaths or permanent injuries toward the slaves by their masters. Any person accused and found guilty of causing such injury to their slaves would be forced to give up their slave to the king and also to pay twenty pesos to the person who had denounced him as reward for doing so.<sup>44</sup> As with many other ordinances and decrees these too were largely ignored and the slaves continued to suffer at the whims of their masters, unprotected by either the monarchy or the church.

As was stated, Spain had a long history of being a devout Catholic country and placing the highest importance on religion in almost every aspect of their lives. This did not seem to translate in the same way in the Americas. In Spain the word of the Church was highly sought

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<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 33.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 33-34.

after and respected by all. The Pope had much power over the actions that the king and his monarchy took, and they sought his guidance and counsel.

However, once in the colonies this mentality seemed to wither somehow. This is not to say that they were no longer as devoted as they had been in Spain, but rather that there were other forces influencing the actions as well as religion. Their desire to convert others, even after their victory over the Moors, was not as present in the America as it should have been, perhaps blurred by the distance between themselves and the mother country and by the dreams of riches that lay ahead of them. Most Spaniards remained Catholics, their beliefs did not change nor did their ideologies and they continue to practice the customs that the Catholic holidays required yet it was not with the same devotion as they had done so in Spain. They placed the required importance on Catholic practices such as baptisms, marriages, last rites and burials.<sup>45</sup> They tried to enforce these practices on the slaves only half-heartedly since they knew that they would be responsible for all the costs that they implied.

As new generations were born away from the mother country the devotion and loyalty continued to diminish as a result of changing times and distance. They still remained loyal to the Spanish crown and what it stood for and to the Spanish church, religion and beliefs but their devotion had changed somehow. They now not only thought about doing as the monarchy and church dictated but also about what was best for themselves, their families and their pockets. Many Spaniards and their descendants were swayed by the distance that existed between themselves and their official. They felt that it was more important to do what was convenient and advantageous for them rather than obey laws created an ocean away from them. This mentality did not appear from one day to the next but developed over time, yet it spread quickly

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<sup>45</sup>Barret, Ward. "Slavery and the Mexican Sugar Hacienda." In *The African in Latin America*, edited by Ann M Pescatello. (New York, Alfred A. Knoff, 1975), 75-76.

and deeply into the minds of the colonists who sought their own profits over those of the crown or the beliefs of the church.

Few church officials or priest spoke out against the immorality of slavery. Although the church never truly declared its position with regards to slavery, it never spoke out against it either. It did not embrace it nor deem it unjust. When the Spanish church acknowledged the presence of slaves or dealt with their issues it was always itself and the monarchy that they were protecting, not the slave's wellbeing. The main preoccupation for the Spanish church was to protect its image and that of the monarchy by seeming a just people to the mother country and others. Most church officials chose to ignore the presence of African slaves for the most part.

## CHAPTER IV

### SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE TOWARD AFRICAN SLAVERY IN VERACRUZ: SLAVES IN A PRECARIOUS SITUATION

In New Spain it took some level of effort from society to accept the new regulations by which slavery was now implemented. People of almost every social class were aware that slavery was based on an entirely different belief system than before when slavery was based on economic status and that as a result of this new belief system great changes would occur.

Slavery in the Americas was present almost from the discovery of the New World. Some explorers brought their slaves along with them on their expeditions. As a result of the death of tens of millions of natives in New Spain the colonists found themselves in need of a new, stronger workforce to build the cities and the colony that they and the monarchy envisioned. There were many forces pushing for high revenues from New Spain. Colonists knew that the monarchy was expecting a new source of revenue from them and that it was expected that they provide goods, services and riches to their king and queen in repayment for the expenses that their expedition to the New World had caused. This, of course, came second to their greed and desire for wealth. There was little doubt in their minds that people would have to be sacrificed for the advancement of their new colony; they knew that the labor of a lower class would have to be used in order to obtain the most out of their new terrain.



Citizens and society as a whole varied in opinion when it came to the issue of enslavement. Some questioned their rights to enslave first the natives and then the Africans based solely on their skin color and place of origin. Others embraced the changes in the system fully, arguing that it was a necessity and, with time, that it was a necessary luxury. It was in part the shifting of social opinion on the issue and its internal dynamics that helped perpetuate African enslavement.

This chapter argues that society in Veracruz was almost entirely unconcerned with the fate or protection of slaves and accepted the system due in large part to the benefits and high revenue. Many of those who initially had doubts or hesitations about the system were quickly won over by the profits that the use of a strong labor force brought for them. Those who continued to voice their hesitations were soon silenced by those who supported the system. Most doubters, however, chose not to make their concerns known to others at the risk of becoming outcasts. It was this response to African enslavement that guided the way in which the system grew and altered itself to fit the needs of those who benefited most from it.

Social receptivity to African slaves differed greatly when in comparison to that of natives. It did not matter that many like Alonso de Montufar argued that there was no significant difference between the two groups when it came to religious acceptance or fidelity. Society's elite had already deemed Africans inferior than not only Spaniards but also to the Indians. This left African slaves in a very dangerous state in which they had no rights or protections and which the dominant group had already labeled as inferior and attributed to them such negative qualities such as drunkenness, laziness, deceitfulness, sexually immorality, superstition, ignorance, cruelty and rebelliousness and disobedience. For these reasons the Spanish social elites believed that Africans were destined to serve as slaves and were in need of constant supervision by white

society.<sup>1</sup> One other explanation for the difference in the treatment of African slaves and natives was the position of the church on the status of the natives. Pope Alexander VI declared that the natives in the Americas were not beasts but people, something that did not happen with the Africans being brought into Mexico who were classified as animals.<sup>2</sup> This difference in the way that the Catholic Church classified natives and African slaves allowed Spanish colonists to ease their conscience on the issue. If the slaves were considered animals then they were not committing a sin by enslaving them and forcing them to work in their sugar plantations and mills. This allowed individual and social opinion on the morality of slavery to begin to change in favor of the system.

Spanish colonists justified the enslavement of Africans with a variety of explanations, ranging from logical to convenient. They sought to minimize their hesitations regarding the mass enslavement of Africans by creating excuses for themselves that would diminish their guilt. Some argued that because of their physical nature Africans were far more able to perform the work that the Indians had been unable or unwilling to. It was thought that one African was able to do the work of four natives. It was later even speculated that an African's physical force could surpass that of even a Spaniard, all in a quest to appease their conscious and rationalize their decisions.<sup>3</sup> Their argument was that Africans were accustomed to working hard and enduring longer and harder work hours than their native counterparts. They claimed that because of their broader backs and stronger torso they were able to lift heavier burdens and work harder,

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<sup>1</sup>Vinson III, Ben. "La Historia del Estudio de los Negros en Mexico." In *Afromexico: El Pulso de la Poblacion Negra en Mexico: Una Historia Recordada, Olvidada y Vuelta a Recordar* edited by Ben Vinson III and Bobby Vaughn. (Mexico D.F., Centro de Investigacion y Docencia Economicas, Fondo de Cultura Economica, Mexico, 2004), 27-28.

<sup>2</sup>Gonzalez Ibarra, Juan de Dios. *La Negritud Tercera Raiz Mexicana*. (Mexico D.F., Universidad Autonoma del Estado de Morelos, Distribuciones Fontamara, Mexico, 2007), 22.

<sup>3</sup>Aguirre Beltran, Gonzalo. *La Poblacion Negra De Mexico, 1519-1810: Estudio Etnohistorico*. (Mexico, D.F., Mexico, Ediciones Fuentes Cultural, 1946), 181-182.

unlike the natives who many times had significantly narrower torsos and shorter and weaker arms. They were also expected to be able to withstand hotter temperatures. Spanish colonists argued that temperatures in Africa were similar, if not harsher, than in Veracruz and thus the slaves would have no trouble assimilating to the climate in their new location.<sup>4</sup>

African slaves were provided most of the labor that was required to keep capitalism in the area growing and stable. This was especially true in the sugar mill which continued to appear in the area. In 1534 the first sugar mill was established in New Spain by Hernan Cortez. As many as forty mills were constructed after this. Some of these mills were established in Veracruz like the Santisima Trinidad owned by Francois Chevalier, the largest mill in Jalapa. In Cordoba alone there were thirty-three small mills producing sugar. This shows that importance of sugar in Veracruz.<sup>5</sup> African slaves employed in sugar mills had a variety of occupations such as operating the boilers and presses and other tasks in the refining process.<sup>6</sup> Since natives could no longer be employed in the refining process of sugar most of the burden fell to the slaves who now had to work in almost all the stages of the sugar production.

Another explanation that the Spanish colonists used to excuse their engagement in slavery was the economic gains that it signified. The economy and system of trade in Spain underwent many changes in a relative short time and those changes affected Veracruz. They were anxious to participate in and profit from all the benefits that being in a new territory meant. While they may have had some moral uncertainties about enslaving another human being. These hesitations were dismissed by many because slavery meant great revenue for them. They were

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<sup>4</sup>Carroll, Patrick J. *Blacks in Colonial Veracruz: Race, Ethnicity, and Regional Development*. (Austin, University of Texas Press, 1991), 21.

<sup>5</sup>Cardoso, Gerald. *Negro Slavery in the Sugar Plantations of Veracruz and Permanbuco, 1550-1680: A Comparative Study*. (Washington, D.C., University Press of America, 1983), 24-25, 24.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 27.

also at some level preoccupied with the advancement of Spain and New Spain and wanted to contribute to its growth. This is why they were also willing to overlook certain nervousness that slavery could have brought. To them Africans were a commodity that meant high benefits for business owners and their families. They soon began to see it not so much as commodity but as a necessity.

With slaves doing the bulk of the work that was needed to produce sugar and other materials, colonists and their families now had more time for leisure activities. As the slaves worked in the fields and the mills of Veracruz, the colonists were left with time to read and educate themselves. Men participated in group gatherings and meetings in which they discussed business, commerce and trade. Women engaged in the activities normally expected of them such as cooking, mending and sewing now read, painted and sketched. They also gathered in groups to talk about the latest events. These gatherings of men and women, in their respective and separate groups, allowed for a growth of ideas to arise in the middle and higher classes. This exchange of ideas and thought gradually made Veracruz a more cosmopolitan area.

The dynamic between the groups varied as each case was different and the relationships between individuals were not all the same. There was not only the issue of race at play between these three groups (Spaniards, natives and Africans) but also issues such as class, social, cultural and political situations. The issue of race itself was not determined solely on skin color or physical characteristics. It was influenced by other factors and biases. All of this was at work when it came to positioning the status of Africans within Spanish colonial society.<sup>7</sup> Many times their status could be maneuvered so that it suited the needs of the dominant group.

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<sup>7</sup>Carroll, Patrick James. *Mexicans Society in Transition: The Blacks in Veracruz, 1750-1830*. (Austin, Texas, University of Texas at Austin, 1975), 48-50.

In rare instances, slaves served other purposes such as witnesses in court matters. This was the case for Dona Magdalena Lucrecia de los Reyes, who presented her slave in court to testify in her favor regarding a legal matter. She was accusing Pedro del Castillo, a lawyer, of borrowing 80 pesos and failing to pay back. Her slave testified that Dona Magdalena had on several occasions sent her to ask for the money back, but that Pedro refused to pay.<sup>8</sup>

Although many times slaves were not permitted to formally marry they were encouraged to form partnerships bound together by simple traditions, customs or supervised by slave owners. This was done to provide a supply of new slaves. This gave slaves a sense of family structure and dependency. Yet those few slaves who were allowed to marry formally through the Catholic Church knew that this was a powerful tool in their favor. They chose their partners and witness carefully since they knew that much depended on the choice that they made. Picking a spouse who was free meant that any children born to that union would have a better quality of life than those born to slave unions.<sup>9</sup> Many male slaves took native wives because they knew that native communities followed matrilineal customs. They knew that by taking natives wives the children born of these unions would be considered to belong to the wife's family and thus would not be considered slaves.<sup>10</sup>

Because farms and large plantations were often the main source of labor in some areas it was not uncommon for there to be high a population of natives in the areas surrounding them. Large plantations and ingenios were often the starting point of town and cities so natives were

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<sup>8</sup>Camba Ludlow, Ursula. *Imaginarios Ambiguos, Realidades Contradictorias: Conductas y Representaciones De Los Negros Y Mulatos Novohispanos Siglo XVI Y XVII*. (Mexico, Colegio de Mexico, 2008), 85-87.

<sup>9</sup>Bennett, Herman L. *Colonial Blackness: A History of Afro-Mexico*. (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2009), 87.

<sup>10</sup>Carroll, Pat. "Black Aliens and Black Natives in New Spain's Indigenous Communities." In *Black Mexico: Race and Society From Colonial to Modern Times* edited by Ben Vinson III and Matthew Restall. (Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 2009), 73-74.

attracted to them since it meant labor, security and commodities. Many slaves would be in constant contact with the natives and developed relationships with many of them. They saw each other as neighbors and in some cases as co-workers.<sup>11</sup>

Many Africans, both free and enslaved, sought to become part of native villages as they found comfort within them. Free blacks and slaves were accepted into native villages as long as they were there to work and contribute to the survival of the community.<sup>12</sup> Natives were not in the same position as the slaves because they had the freedom to make more choices for themselves. However they felt empathy towards the slaves and because of this the slaves sought out their aid and acceptance.<sup>13</sup>

From the first stages of the slaves voyage to the Americas, traders knew that reproduction of the slaves meant a significant advantage for both themselves. Therefore it was almost always required by ship merchants and traders that one third of the slaves aboard a ship be females. Traders knew that there were bound to lose a few slaves along the trip and that buyers would be looking for ways in which to regain their investment. This is why they ensured that there were a good number of female slaves in the ship. The female slaves would be mated with male slaves in order to replace those slaves that died along the journey. This was a practice that was enforced not only in the ships and docks, but also in plantations and farms everywhere in the Americas. They treated their slaves much as they would animals, mating them for

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<sup>11</sup>Carroll, Patrick James. *Mexicans Society in Transition: The Blacks in Veracruz, 1750-1830*. (Austin, Texas, University of Texas at Austin, 1975), 85-89.

<sup>12</sup>Fisher, Andrew B. "Negotiating Two Worlds: The Free-Blacks Experience in Guerrero's Tierra Caliente." In *Black Mexico: Race and Society from Colonial to Modern Times* edited by Ben Vinson III and Matthew Restall. (Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 2009), 57-58.

<sup>13</sup>Carroll, Pat. "Black Aliens and Black Natives in New Spain's Indigenous Communities." In *Black Mexico: Race and Society From Colonial to Modern Times* edited by Ben Vinson III and Matthew Restall. (Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 2009), 73.

practical reasons rather than allowing them to form unions based on affection, morality or humanity.<sup>14</sup>

Slavery in Veracruz was almost universally accepted or at the least tolerated. Those who were involved in the slave trade gained the greatest profits as they had a more direct interaction in the system. However, they were not the only ones to benefit from slavery. Others not directly linked to the system also saw the benefits that it represented. Higher revenues meant more money was available in the area for investment in other businesses. Many began to see it not as so much as a necessary evil but as a necessary good that made their lives much easier, wealthier and convenient. Their guilt for forcing others to perform work without pay began to diminish as their profits grew and their lives became easier. They were no longer as hesitant to engage in the system once they knew the great benefits that they could reap from it. Their interest in African slaves was based on economic factors. They had no intentions of integrating them in their social class or making them more a part of their lives than was absolutely need.<sup>15</sup>

People's opinion of slavery varied depending on factors such as education, economic status, class level, business situation, religion and family structure. Those who were of high or middle class were most likely to support slavery as they were the ones who received the highest profits from it. Natives and the lower classes were less supportive of the system. Their opinions had less effect on the development of slavery as they were less influential than their richer counterparts. They were considered inferior because of their origin and socio-economic positions.

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<sup>14</sup>Cardoso, Gerald. *Negro Slavery in the Sugar Plantations of Veracruz and Permanbuco, 1550-1680: A Comparative Study*. (Washington, D.C., University Press of America, 1983), 26.

<sup>15</sup>Carroll, Patrick J. *Blacks in Colonial Veracruz: Race, Ethnicity, and Regional Development*. (Austin, University of Texas Press, 1991), 84.

People in the higher classes had the money and the position to make the most decisions when it came to slavery in Veracruz. They had their investments and lifestyles to protect therefore their decisions were not generally based on the well being of slaves but their own. Religion also played an important part in how people felt about slavery. Those who were more religiously devout were of course the ones to have the most hesitations about the enslavement of Africans. But if they were of the higher classes those hesitations were soon forgotten in exchange for the profits that they received as slave owners. If they were of the lower classes then their hesitations were of little importance since they had no real voice in government.

Education and family structure also played a part in their view of slavery. Those who were educated and came from a good family were likely to know that slavery was morally wrong, yet they also knew that its benefits were immense and too good to pass up. They knew that slavery was a good business and that much revenue would come from it. Therefore they were willing to overlook the knowledge that slavery was wrong, also in exchange for higher revenues.

The treatment of slaves in Veracruz varied from plantation to plantation depending on its size and the number of slaves that were kept by the owner. Some slaves that were kept in smaller farms or in smaller numbers might have been treated better as their interactions with their masters were more intimate and constant. Slaves in smaller farms were more likely to develop some sort of personal connection with their masters and more likely to feel appreciative of them. Their masters might have been nicer to them and thought of them as servants rather than property. However, this situation in which fewer slaves were kept in smaller farms may have also proven to work against slaves as well. Fewer slaves also meant that there was more attention placed on the slave's work and attitude. If there were only a few slaves then the owner



would have more opportunities to watch the slaves for signs of rebellion or reluctance to work. In a bigger plantation there might be a slave who would work out in the fields, one to clean the house and one to do other errands and housework that might arise. In a small farm one or two slaves may have been responsible for everything.

Being in a bigger plantation, however, did not necessarily mean that life was easier for slaves. A bigger plantation had many disadvantages for the slaves. Slaves did not share any sort of relationship with their masters. More slaves meant that resources had to be shared with more people: clothes, food and housing may have been of inferior quality as a result of this. The care and guidance was often left to overseers who would be in charge of making sure that slaves performed their duties quickly and accurately.<sup>16</sup> In bigger plantations there was a greater threat of rebellion for which the owners were always alert. Slaves were not often allowed to gather in groups or participate in group gatherings such as large dinners or family gatherings since this allowed them privacy and time to plan for rebellion. Larger plantations also allowed for greater abuse to the slaves. Since they did not have any form of affection toward their slaves they were less likely to hesitate to whip or punish their slaves when a slave was thought to deserve it. It was not uncommon for rebellious slaves to be punished violently in front of other slaves as a form of warning. These public punishments were always excessively violent and gruesome and were meant to be made examples of what could happen when a slave stepped out of line.

There was a variety of reasons why slaves were punished by their masters. Sometimes it was because they were working too slowly or carelessly, because they were behaving recklessly, because they were not producing the quota that was required, or because they showed signs of rebellion or a desire to escape or because they engaged in some sort of group activity that the

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<sup>16</sup>Cardoso, Gerald. *Negro Slavery in the Sugar Plantations of Veracruz and Permanbuco, 1550-1680: A Comparative Study*. (Washington, D.C., University Press of America, 1983), 46.

owner disapproved of to name a few. Whether it was in a big plantation or in a small farm, whether there was only one or two slaves or there was dozens of slaves, one thing was certain for all slaves alike, the threat of violence or abuse at the hands of their masters, overseers and patrollers was always a constant threat for which they had almost no protection against. This was due in large part to the social indifference that Spaniards felt toward African slave.

Another source of tension between Spaniards and African slaves was the presence of African women within the household and the community. African women were considered to possess great beauty. Many European men placed them not only parallel to European women but above them. Their bodies and qualities were noted by many European men. Their beauty was such that many European men soon forgot the color of their skin and the ideas connected to its darkness. Because of the disproportion of females to males in the colonies, many Spanish male colonists took them as companions, concubines and some even as wives. They found their freedom, simple ways, and flirtatious demeanor enticing and exciting since it was so different than that of their more modest and reserved European counterparts.<sup>17</sup>

The proximity of slave women to their masters gave way to temptation causing many Spanish males to take their slaves as concubines. This practice was so common that slave owners would excuse it by saying that there was no sin in taking a slave woman for himself because she of his own money and property therefore he could do as he wished with her.<sup>18</sup>

It was for this reason that many Spanish women in New Spain, both in large plantation and smaller farms, saw African slave women as a threat. They knew that their proximity to their

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<sup>17</sup> Camba Ludlow, Ursula. *Imaginarios Ambiguos, Realidades Contradictorias: Conductas y Representaciones De Los Negros Y Mulatos Novohispanos Siglo XVI Y XVII*. (Mexico, Colegio de Mexico, 2008), 116-117.

<sup>18</sup> Cardoso, Gerald. *Negro Slavery in the Sugar Plantations of Veracruz and Permanbuco, 1550-1680: A Comparative Study*. (Washington, D.C., University Press of America, 1983), 47.

husbands and sons was a temptation and sought to prevent these unions by all means possible. This created great tension.

Most documented legal interracial unions are between African women and males of another ethnic group, mostly of lower classes and mixed blood. However, there are many reports of *amancebamiento* or concubinage between African women, most of them slaves, and Spanish and other European men. Most of these men were in the upper classes and held some role in Spanish community as leaders or businessmen. These unions are much less well documented than their native counterparts.<sup>19</sup> The fact that unions between African women and males of the lower classes were much more often legalized than those with European elites is a reflection of the way in which the upper classes viewed Africans. Recognizing a union with an African woman would grant her status as more than property and thus would tamper with the social equilibrium of the slave system.

Few people of colonial Veracruz seemed to have a problem with the presence of African slaves in the area. It seemed that the public opinion regarding this matter was to allow people to make their own decisions on whether to engage in the system or not and to then let them deal with their slaves as best they saw fit.

Society as a whole allowed slaves to preserve some aspects of their culture and heritage but this however was done for the benefit of the dominant group, in this case the Spanish. They knew that for all the dehumanization and deculturization that they could implement the slaves

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<sup>19</sup>Velazquez Gutierrez, Maria Eliza. "Orgullo Y Despejo." Iconografia de Las Mujeres de Origen Africano en los Cuadros de Castas del Mexico Virreinal." In *Pardos, mulatos y libertos: Sexto encuentro de Afromexicanistas* edited by Adriana Naveda Chavez-Hita (Xalapa, Veracruz, Biblioteca Universidad Veracruzana, 2001), 32-33.

would find a way to preserve their heritage. The Spanish allowed them to this only in the aspects that were favorable to them as a whole.<sup>20</sup>

One reason for the lack of references to the immorality of African enslavement might be that those who protested against the abuse toward natives made no distinction between natives and Africans. However, their lack of distinctions makes this assumption difficult to prove.<sup>21</sup> Another reason perhaps was that those who cared enough to be concerned with the fate of slaves or even with the morality of the system were pressured to keep their opinions silent by those involved in the system. They knew that voicing their negative comments on the matter of slavery meant the possibility for discontent amongst their neighbors and family. This was a system in which almost everyone participated and they did not want to be critiqued by the few who did not agree with it.

Social dynamics within the Spanish colony grew even more complicated with the introduction of African slaves into their society. Mexico imported over 120,000 Africans just between the years of 1519 and 1650, making it the greatest importer of slaves in Spanish America at the time.<sup>22</sup> With this influx of differing population it would be impossible for society not to have been impacted or altered in some way. Many natives and poorer citizens sympathized with the slaves since they themselves had been in similar situations in years past. Yet all they could do was offer their sympathy and lend a helping hand in some cases. In the case of the middle and higher classes, they seemed to care little about the welfare of the slaves

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<sup>20</sup>Juarez Hernandez, Yolanda. "Afromestizos en el Puerto de Veracruz." In *Pardos, mulatos y libertos: Sexto encuentro de afromexicanistas* edited by Adriana Naveda Chavez-Hita. (Xalapa, Veracruz, Biblioteca Universidad Veracruzana, 2001), 208-210.

<sup>21</sup>Palmer, Colin. *Slaves of a White God: Blacks in Mexico, 1570-1650*. (Cambridge, Harvard University Press. 1976), 41-42.

<sup>22</sup>Cardoso, Gerald Da Silva. *Negro Slavery in the Sugar Plantations of Veracruz and Pernambuco, 1550-1680: A Comparative Study*. (University of Texas At Austin, Benson Latin American Collection Microforms, reel 1, 13.

and their treatment in the plantations. Their view in this matter was to let the owners deal with their slaves as best they saw fit. African slaves found themselves in a very uncertain situation upon their arrival into Veracruz since they were at a disadvantage against the Spaniards and because they found little aid from the natives and lower class. They were left to face indifference, discrimination and apathy from their new society on their own. It would seem that in an area in which three such distinct races had come together they would have found a way to coexist and unify themselves yet, on the contrary, they created divisions and separation between the groups isolating some and abusing many. The intermixing of their races mattered little in most cases as they continued to classify each other and create resentment amongst the different groups.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Aguirre Beltran, Gonzalo. *La Poblacion Negra De Mexico, 1519-1810: Estudio Etnohistorico*. (Mexico, D.F., Mexico, Ediciones Fuentes Cultural, 1946), 153.

## CHAPTER V

### GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT: THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND THE SYSTEM OF SLAVERY IN VERACRUZ

One major factor in the expansion of slavery in Veracruz was the involvement of the Spanish government. Without its support the institution would not have been able to grow as it did. Government was greatly responsible for the acceptance of African enslavement in the colony and provided a way for the system to be established and promoted. Both the monarchy and local officials had a special interest in the expansion of slavery in Veracruz as it meant a substantial increase in capital both for the king and queen and for officials in the lower levels. This is why government officials on almost all levels supported the enslavement of Africans and pushed for their importation into the colony.

Great projects and changes such as the establishment of a slave system within a society take effort and time to occur. They require commitment and dedication from everyone involved for them to be successful. Spain and its subjects, both in the mainland and in the colonies, were more than willing to do whatever was necessary in order to ensure that slavery in New Spain grew into a major and fruitful institution. The involvement of government, both local and monarchical, was a major factor in its creation and support.

The discovery of New Spain meant great changes in the mentality of colonists and Spaniards with regards to slavery. Slaves were already present in Spain so it was just a matter of changing the way in which the system worked and the way in which colonists and Spaniards viewed slaves. Queen Isabel, mother of Alfonso XIII, had amongst her personal companions an African slave girl named Maria Marline, whom she favored greatly. Maria Marline would play the guitar for the queen on a regular basis and was said to be very talented.<sup>1</sup> On another instance Carlos II adopted under his care a young girl, Chicava, originating from Guinea. She grew to become a prominent religious figure in Spain.<sup>2</sup>

Although slavery had been present in the Old World for many years in Spain it was never based on the color of skin. Before the colonization of the Americas, Spain had enslaved people as a result of religious persecution, financial misfortunes and criminal offences. They held these to be just motives. In Spain a slave was considered to be a social subordinate and not property as was the case in the Americas. By contrast, serfs in medieval manors were considered to be socially subordinate yet they could not be transferred along with the land that in which they worked. In many cases wives were also thought to be subordinate since they held little rights or protections but their transfer was almost impossible. These subordinates enjoyed some rights such as the profession or job they chose to do, they held some protections against their masters and they had the possibility of working their way of their bonds if the opportunity presented itself.<sup>3</sup> Spain was involved in the bondage of these people because even as subordinates they held some kind of rights and protections.

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<sup>1</sup>Moya Palencia, Mario. *Madre Africa: Presencia del Africa Negra en el Mexico y Veracruz Antiguo*. (Mexico, Miguel Angel Porrúa, 2006), 59-60.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 60.

Spain and its monarchy had a very peculiar relationship with its colonies; on one hand it was interested in all the riches and resources that they signified but on the other it was also very suspicious of its subjects since they were so distant and could not easily be monitored. To the Spanish crown the only subjects in the Americas that it could trust were the peninsulares as they had more ties to the mother country and loyalty towards the crown. It felt that both natives and Africans held great resentment towards them and these feeling were transferred over to their intermixed descendants, the class known as the *criollos*. They felt that since they were born away from the mother country their loyalty was swayed and diluted. This is in part what led to the creation of the Administracion Colonial or colonial administration whose primary purpose was to assign classifications to people based on their lineage and race. This ultimately led to the great separation and importance placed on castes.<sup>4</sup>

Despite their hesitations Spain soon began to capture and import bondsmen or slaves into its colonies. The term slave was used to describe individuals to whom another person holds certain rights to and which rights can be transferable to a third party in exchange for payment. The slave was purchased with the intention of serving as a unit of labor, mostly in agriculture. They would work in gangs of workers under the close supervision for most of the day.<sup>5</sup> It was because of this change in ideology that Spanish society was hesitant to embrace the system. They had to adjust their views about bondsmen with some rights and protections to accommodate for a new system in which African slaves had almost no rights or opportunity for

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<sup>3</sup>Curtin, Philip D. *The Rise and fall of the plantation complex: Essays In Atlantic History*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998), 40.

<sup>4</sup>Aguirre Beltran, Gonzalo. *La Poblacion Negra De Mexico, 1519-1810: Estudio Etnohistorico*. (Mexico, D.F., Mexico, Ediciones Fuentes Cultural, 1946),153-155.

<sup>5</sup>Curtin, Philip D. *The Rise and fall of the plantation complex: Essays In Atlantic History*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998), 40-41.



freedom. Both society and government had to make the necessary adjustments to accommodate this new system into their social order.

However, the Spanish monarchy and other government officials soon recognized that there were many forces at work at this time and soon their hesitations regarding the system diminished. They realized that money was the driving force behind advancement of all empires and thus they needed to remain a significant power in world trade. As new colonies were being discovered by European powers, their economic systems began to change from mercantilism to capitalism. In this new system it was no longer the accumulation of wealth from new discovered resources that mattered. Pressure from external influences forced the Spanish monarchy to ignore their hesitations and engage in this practice. They knew that every kingdom was in a race to acquire territory and wealth and their involvement in the slave trade would ensure that they remained a contestant. As money began to drift into Spain from the slave trade, social opinion on the issue began to shift. Spaniards realized that there was a lucrative business in slave trade and sought to participate in it in some manner so that they, too, would benefit from it. New Spain was also undergoing the same changes.

The desire to colonize their new acquired territories also played a role in forming Spain's position on the issue. The Spanish king knew that in order for his colonies to be successful, he had to ensure that his subjects were present in the area. It was not enough to subdue the natives; the Spanish needed to rebuild the social structure of New Spain into a Spanish one. This meant that Spain had to provide some incentive to motivate Spaniards to relocate into a new colony. The Spanish king promised aspiring colonists a chance for adventure and social mobility, an opportunity to establish a business, gain personal wealth and a better quality of life. Colonists were interested in having a leisurely lifestyle and for that they turned to enslaving others who

could perform the work that they did not wish to do. When the king abolished the encomienda system, the demand for a new labor force increased pushing the monarchy to allow Africans to be introduced into their territories.

The Spanish monarchy was more involved in the slave trade once it allowed for African slaves to be imported into its colonies. The enslavement of Africans in Spanish colonies was first permitted on September 3, 1501 when Nicolas Ovando, Governor of Espanola, was granted a license to introduce Africans into the island on the condition that they were converted into Christianity prior to their arrival. Other colonies like Santo Domingo, the Indies and the Antilles soon followed suit. King Ferdinand agreed to Africans being introduced into his processions on the requirement that the slaves be taken from Africa to Spain for conversion and allowed to be transported into the New World only after it was confirmed that they had embraced Catholic beliefs.<sup>6</sup> This was most likely due to the monarchy's desire to ensure that all souls under its crown were saved. Having slaves first brought to Spain before arriving at their final destination gave them more control over the situation and greater success of slave conversion. It may have also been a tactic to control the number slaves that were introduced into the colonies. By having the slaves first sent to Spain, the monarchy attempted to ensure that only the allowed number were being captured and enslaved. This tactics also appease religious controversy on the issue and as a measure to ensure that illegal smuggling was kept to a minimum by verifying that only a predetermined number of slaves were being introduced into its colonies.

This stop in the slaves' journey was not only costly to merchants but also made the trade very time consuming, for some time the Spanish monarchy was willing to undertake the

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<sup>6</sup>Cardoso, Gerald. *Negro Slavery in the Sugar Plantations of Veracruz and Permanbuco, 1550-1680: A Comparative Study*. (Washington, D.C., University Press of America, 1983), 9-10.

economic disadvantages that it signified in exchange for their being able to monitor the system more closely.

However, the Spanish monarchy soon discovered this was not cost efficient and began to reconsider their trade regulations. As Spain wished to remain a significant power in world trade it needed to reconsider their slave trade regulations. This is why on 1518 King Charles I put two amendments into practice regarding African slave trade. The first change stipulated that Africans could now be transported directly from their point of purchase in Africa to their destination in Spanish America. The second change in the system was the introduction of the *asiento* system, a royal license for an importation monopoly to a specific American colony.<sup>7</sup> With the *asiento* system and more efficient transportation of slaves in Spanish colonies the number of slaves that could be imported increased dramatically. Merchants were now willing to invest more in the slave trade as it meant a higher profit for themselves. In August 1518 Laurent de Gouvenot received a license to import 4,000 slaves from Guinea and other areas without having to first register them at the Casa de Contratacion de Sevilla. He was able to do this under the provision that upon their arrival they would be converted into Christians.<sup>8</sup>

The Spanish slave trade was well underway to becoming a productive and established system. The Spanish monarchy began to slowly embrace the system more openly as profits began to pour in from the transport, sale and work of slaves. The supply and demand ratio continued to increase accordingly. African countries continued to supply prisoners of war and kidnapped individuals to European merchants as slaves while colonists in the New World continued to demand that more be imported every year. Colonists realized that Africans were a

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<sup>7</sup>Carroll, Patrick J. *Blacks in Colonial Veracruz: Race, Ethnicity, and Regional Development*. (Austin, University of Texas Press, 1991), 27.

<sup>8</sup> Aguirre Beltran, Gonzalo. *La Poblacion Negra De Mexico, 1519-1810: Estudio Etnohistorico*. (Mexico, D.F., Mexico, Ediciones Fuentes Cultural, 1946), 5-6.

good alternative for the labor that the natives could no longer perform. Their interest in the purchase of African slaves began to rise. They realized that Africans could work equally as hard, if not more, as natives when given the right incentives. The market for African slaves continued to grow in the Spanish colonies. However, their supply was to this point highly restricted due to limitations on the number of slaves that could be imported and prohibitions that had to be met regarding their transportation.

King Charles actions greatly differed from that of his parents, Ferdinand and Isabella, who regulated the slave trade much more strictly. His changes in the slave trade dramatically changed the social make up of Spanish colonies. The slaves that were now being introduced to the colonies were *bozales*, un-Hispanicize African slaves. This meant that they had not been converted into Catholic religion and Spanish culture and thus continued to embrace their African cultures, beliefs and values. They had not yet accepted their new fate and posed a threat to colonist and Spanish social structure. The threat of rebellion was constant after this.

Four years later this fear became a reality in Hispaniola when *bozales* and *ladinos* (Hispanicize Africans) united against Spanish colonists. Although this revolt was crushed, King Charles saw that the unrestricted importation of Africans directly from their countries of origin to the Americas was causing his *ladinos* to become corrupted and for this reason he halted all imports of Africans into all of his colonies. In 1520, however, due to the high demand for slaves in the Caribbean he was forced to reconsider and allow the slave trade to restart.<sup>9</sup> The threat of a new rebellion was always present in the memory of the monarchy and colonists after that, they embraced the system openly due to the profits it signified but always with a wary eye and a cautious mind.

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<sup>9</sup>Carroll, Patrick J. *Blacks in Colonial Veracruz: Race, Ethnicity, and Regional Development*. (Austin, University of Texas Press, 1991), 27.

Between the years of 1519 and 1650 over 120,000 African slaves were introduced into New Spain. At first they were introduced in small numbers by explorers and early colonists but as the colony began to grow they began to be imported in bigger numbers from other Spanish possessions where the system was already well established. Spanish colonists, those who owned ingenios and obrajes in particular, appealed to the Spanish Crown to send in more African slaves to the central regions of Mexico, Puebla, Veracruz, Michoacan, and present day Guerrero. The monarchy agreed.<sup>10</sup> By the eighteenth century the Spanish colonists were relying heavily on the use of slaves born in Mexico, *negros criollos*, and reducing the number of African slaves imported into Mexico. This was the case until 1827 when slavery was abolished in Mexico.<sup>11</sup>

In the latter part of the sixteenth century the Spanish monarchy's involvement in the slave trade once again grew. The Crown began granting licenses to individuals so that they could begin importing slaves into New Spain. Juan de Armenta and Hernando Paez were given such licenses on March 11, 1531, on March 1, 1535 so was Rodrigo de Albornoz and on the same year Eynger and Albert Coun received such a license. Many individuals who received such a license did not wish to participate in the slave system directly so they sold their licenses to others who wished to profit from the slave trade. Such was the case of Dona Maria de Toledo, wife of the Viceroy of New Spain, who authorized Melchor de Carrion and Diego de Aranda to transport three hundred slaves to the Indies. Later that year Fernan Sanchez Dalvo paid 1,300 ducats to Dona Maria so that he could import two hundred slaves.<sup>12</sup> By the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century there

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<sup>10</sup>Camba Ludlow, Ursula. *Imaginario Ambiguos, Realidades Contradictorias: Conductas y Representaciones De Los Negros Y Mulatos Novohispanos Siglo XVI Y XVII*. (Mexico, Colegio de Mexico, 2008), 50.

<sup>11</sup>Githiora, Chege. *Afro-Mexicans: Discourse of Race and Identity in the African Diaspora*. (Trenton, African World Press, 2008), 20-23.

<sup>12</sup>Cardoso, Gerald. *Negro Slavery in the Sugar Plantations of Veracruz and Permanbuco, 1550-1680: A Comparative Study*. (Washington, D.C., University Press of America, 1983), 11.

were 16,000 Africans in the central region of New Spain, in comparison there were 12,000 Spaniards and 2,300 mestizos. By 1650 there were 35,000 Africans, 13,780 Spaniards and 100 mestizos.<sup>13</sup> This shows that many, from monarchy to merchant, were interested and invested in the expansion of African capture and trade. Their capture meant a profit for everyone who was involved in the trade. Their capture, sale, transport, import and export all meant profits along the way.

The monarchy and local government was also involved in regulating the relationship and coexistence of natives and African slaves. In some cases where conflict developed between slaves and natives such as market rights local officials would be forced to intervene, most of the time they favored the natives. In the 1590s there were several laws passed to regulate market policies. It was decided that no slave or free African could go to the plazas at the same time that natives were there to sell their products. It also prohibited Africans from buying products from the natives with the intention of reselling them. The punishment for breaking these laws went as far as 200 whippings.<sup>14</sup>

It was not until the eighteenth century that the Spanish monarchy took a more direct legislative approach to the issue of ensuring the safety and well-being of African slaves in their colonies. In what is known as the *Siete Partidas* King Alphonse X discussed and clarified issues on several social aspects of everyday life in the colonies, one of them being slavery. In these documents the king grants African slaves some rights and protections such as the insurance that no permanent bodily harm or death may be caused to a slave at the hands of his owner. He also granted judges and local officials the power to punish those slave owners who did not obey this

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<sup>13</sup>Camba Ludlow, Ursula. *Imaginario Ambiguos, Realidades Contradictorias: Conductas y Representaciones De Los Negros Y Mulatos Novohispanos Siglo XVI Y XVII*. (Mexico, Colegio de Mexico, 2008), 50-51.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 78-79.

law. If a slave owner was accused of permanently injuring or killing a slave any local government official could issue out the pertinent punishment for his offence.<sup>15</sup> The laws established in the *Siete Partidas* were broadened with time to suit new demands and issues such as education, personal dress, occupation and social interactions regarding the slaves. Legally these laws were modified to reflect a more compassionate treatment of slaves, in reality their situation did not have much change and was subject to their owner.<sup>16</sup>

Local government was responsible for enforcing the laws regarding the treatment of slaves in the colonies passed by the monarchy, yet they seldom enforced this laws. The laws that were created regarding slaves were created to regulate punishment, sale pricing and to ensure the protection of Spanish colonists, not for the protection of the slaves. The few laws that involved the health of the slaves regarded their punishment after an attempted rebellion or escape. They were meant to regulate the level of brutality that they were submitted to. Government passed these laws to ensure that as subjects of the Spanish crown their souls were protected, not because they were worried about the well being of the slaves.

The involvement of government in the development and establishment of African slavery in the Spanish colonies was of great importance for its growth. It required a change in mindset and the involvement of government on both the Spanish realm and local officials. Although at first the monarchy was hesitant to engage in the practice of enslaving Africans in large numbers due to social and religious ideologies concerning the morality of the system. Yet their hesitations were diminished as the system began to establish itself and profits began to come in. Like their monarchy the colonists of New Spain were quick to be convinced by the promise of

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<sup>15</sup>Gonzalez Ibarra, Juan de Dios. *La Negritud Tercera Raiz Mexicana*. (Mexico D.F., Universidad Autonoma del Estado de Morelos, Distribuciones Fontamara, Mexico, 2007), 31-33.

<sup>16</sup>Carroll, Patrick James. *Mexicans Society in Transition: The Blacks in Veracruz, 1750-1830*. (Austin, Texas, University of Texas at Austin, 1975), 201-203.

high revenue for themselves and the possibility of moving up in class and status. The easiness for which both the monarchy and the colonists were able to be convinced to engage in the system of African enslavement shows that when there is enough profit to be made morals and values are quick to be forgotten. Local government involvement was directed at the implementation of the laws that the monarchy passed. Although it was in favor of slavery it many times lacked the ability to enforce the laws that the monarchy passed or chose not to pursue them.



## CONCLUSION

When I first started this research I had formulated many assumptions about the topic based on my own ideas and experiences, but I quickly learned that many of them were wrong and unsubstantiated. I came into this topic with the assumption that the Spanish church was concerned with the conditions to which African slaves were subjected and that it spoke out in regards to the morality of the practice, yet this was not the case.

This thesis was formulated to support my argument regarding the factors that affected the growth of the slave system in colonial Veracruz. I argued that it was the presence of the previously discussed five factors during this time that allowed for the expansion of African slavery in Veracruz. As argued, the decline of the native population due to the presence of new diseases against which they had no defenses, war losses, and their abuse at the hands of Spanish colonists led to the need for a new labor force in Veracruz and other places. This need was solved by the introduction of African slaves into the coasts of Veracruz. Soon merchants and plantation owners saw that there was much profit to be gained from the trade of the African slaves and they began to import more and more of them. The lack of religious opposition allowed them to continue to import slaves almost with no hesitations.

As devout Catholics they adhered to religious doctrines as much as they could. Had the church voices any protests against the practice many would have restrained from engaging in the system at the risk of endangering their souls. Since the church was unconcerned with the morality of African enslavement, more Spanish subjects became comfortable with the

idea. The church did not denounce slaver as immoral so it must not be so. Many colonists saw this as an open invitation to participate in the system, thus making the practice socially acceptable. Those hesitations and objections to the matter were quickly silenced by the majority who favored its expansion. Due to the previous four factors the monarchy's position on the matter shifted cautiously and hesitantly to an eventually willingness to engage in the practice and to finally fully support the system. The need for a new labor force to produce products for exportation, the capital that these resources as well as the slave trade meant, the religious ambiguity regarding the matter and colonial society's acceptance of slavery all played a part in forming and transforming the opinion of the monarchy regarding the matter. There was a cause and effect principal in place here as one factor led to another and together they led to the creation, expansion and acceptance of African slavery in Veracruz.

It is my firm belief that much of our character, individual and social, comes from our past experiences. This thesis suggests that much of the discrimination and separation to which many Veracruzanos today are subjected to is a result of lingering ideas that were created during this time. Many people discriminate against Veracruzanos of a certain skin tone or physical characteristics without realizing that this feeling may come from the idea that African slaves were considered inferior. In the same way, these same Veracruzanos may attempt to create a distance between themselves and mainstream society unaware that this may be an idea passed down by their ancestors who sought to stay out of harm's way. In order to fully understand the dynamic present with this group, it is imperative to know the history that led to its present state. We must understand the importance that African slaves played in the colonization of Veracruz

and in the sugar industry that up till the 1980s was considered Veracruz' most prominent economic resources and embrace that knowledge instead of pulling away from it.<sup>1</sup>

Africans have been very apt to assimilate into mainstream society, almost to the point that they are no longer as easily distinguished in the inattentive eye. Brazil and the Caribbean are amongst the few areas in which Negro characteristics are still abundant and easily detectable.<sup>2</sup> In Brazil, like in Mexico, African slaves were imported by the millions during the early stages of its colonization. After slavery was abolished much of African culture and customs were accepted and assimilated into mainstream European society making the end result a country that accepts and boasts both its African traditions and European roots.<sup>3</sup>

Another issue worthy of mention is that African descendants seem to have no claim to their heritage, be it native or African. These people although aware of their mestizaje and of the importance that Mexico placed on cultural and racial mixing after their Revolution on 1910, seem to want no part in it. African descendants, although racially more diverse than natives, seem not to care at all about the richness that their heritage has to offer. They fail to recognize it and to embrace it as part of themselves.<sup>4</sup>

The idea of a historical past can be transferred out into other scenarios. An individual's character is formed by his past experiences and the experiences of his community.

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<sup>1</sup>Coleccion: Enciclopedia de los Municipios de Mexico. *Los Municipios de Veracruz*. (Mexico, Secretaria de Gobernacion y Gobierno del Estado de Veracruz, 1988), 13.

<sup>2</sup>King, James F. "The Negro in Spanish America." In *Latin American Civilizations: reading and essays* edited by Harold A. Bierck. (Boston, Allyn and Bacon Inc., 1967), 53.

<sup>3</sup>De Santana Pinho, Patricia. *Mama Africa: Reinventing Blackness in Bahia*. Translated by Elena Langdon. (Durham, Duke University Press, 2010), 102.

<sup>4</sup>Vaughn, Bobby. "Los Negros, Los Indigenas y La Diaspora. Una Perspectiva Etnografica de la Costa Chica." In *Afromexico: El Pulso de la Poblacion Negra en Mexico: Una Historia Recordada, Olvidada y Vuelta a Recordar* edited by Ben Vison III and Boddy Vaughn. (Mexico D.F., Mexico, Centro de Investigacion y Docencia Economicas, Fondo de Cultura Economica, 2004), 82.

Everything that a person is taught comes from his history or that of his ancestors, thus making his ideas and beliefs a compilation of the two. It is my firm belief that in order to fully understand ourselves and our place in society we must first understand the events that have placed us in our particular situation. We cannot understand our present if we do not know our past.

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## APPENDIX A

## APPENDIX A

### DEFINITION OF VERACRUZANOS

Duran (2012) defines the term Veracruzanos as follows:

Veracruzanos: A person originally from the state of Veracruz, in specific this refers to the individuals that possess physical characteristics resembling that of their African ancestors i.e. broad nose, brownish-red skin tone and thick forehead.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Veronica Nohemi Duran graduated from Pharr-San Juan-Alamo High School in 2006 and then attended South Texas College where she earned an associate's in Interdisciplinary Studies in 2007. She then attended the University of Texas-Pan American where she majored in History and minored in Broadcast Journalism, earning her Bachelors in 2008. She received a Master of Arts with a major in History and a minor in Anthropology in 2012. Her thesis "African Slavery in Colonial Veracruz: The Factors that Aided its Created and Expansion." concentrated on the five factors that created the cause and effect pattern that helped elevate the system.

Throughout her career as a graduate student she has attended several historical conferences such as the Southwest Council of Latin American Studies where she has presented her research to fellow scholars. She has also worked as a teacher assistant for the History Department and functioned as Graduate Student Representative and President of the Phi Alpha Theta chapter at the University of Texas-Pan American.

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