Colonial New Spain Overview

**Habsburg Mexico**

***Encomienda*, *repartimiento, congregación*, and *hacienda***

Feudalism

*Encomienda*:

Indians assigned to Spanish encomenderos who were required to protect their charges; in return Indians would provide labor and tribute

Indian caciques played an important role in organizing the ecomienda

Church, crown, and demographic collapse contributed to decline

Church opposed

Crown opposed feudal lords

Demographic collapse deprived encomenderos of subjects

*Repartimiento*:

A compromise between the crown and encomenderos

Crown controlled labor and fixed wages

Indians were congregated in settlements as part of a policy called *congregación*

Contributed to de-tribalization

Crown encouraged private landholdings through grants (*mercedes*)

Gave rise to large estates known as *haciendas*

**Government, religion, economics, and society**

Royalist government

Power struggle between royal government and subjects

Consolidation of royal government through administrative bureaucracy

Viceroy, Audencias, ayuntamientos or cabildos (corregidores and alcaldes mayores)

Heavy bureaucratization undermined efficiency and contributed to corruption

This system economically benefitted office holders

Religion

Church was a crusading institution that imposed a spiritual conquest on Mexico

Associated with Late Medieval developments (Reconquista)

Regular clergy active in the success of spiritual conquest

Franciscans (north), Dominicans (south), Augustinians

Rapid conversion (4 million by 1540)

Conversion of caciques and youth facilitated mass conversion

Priests educated and protected Indians

The Regular Orders were brought under Secular authority of the bishops which allowed the crown to consolidate its authority over the missionaries

Inquisition was active in Mexico, but Indians were exempted in 1571

Economics

The economy was highly centrally managed by royal authorities for the benefit of Spain

However, the hacienda responded to individual Spaniard's need for income, and the royal authorities' need to feed the expanding mining operations and growing cities

Mining and grain and livestock agriculture became the main features of the colonial economy

**Northern expansion, development, and identity**

Less royal political control in North

Mining drove expansion into the Chichimeca frontier

Discovery of silver at Zacatecas in 1546

Precipitated Chichimeca War which was long and laborious, lasting from 1550- 1590

The *hacienda* and village that emerged in the North became central to the socioeconomic development of New Spain

*Hacendados* used Chuch capital to build their holdings

Collapse of Indian population made reliance on *haciendas* for food necessary

The collapse of the population also stimulated slavery

As the *repartimiento* system began to break down, Indians moved to the from their villages to the *haciendas*

Thus the hacienda furthered the acculturation of Indians and contributed to a general identification of people as Mexicans separated from their Indian ethnicities

**Bourbon New Spain**

**Revolution from above**

The Habsburg dynasty came to an end in Spain as Charles II died in 1700 and Philip, Duke of Anjou in France and grandson of Louis XIV assumed the Spanish throne

Thus, the Bourbon dynasty dominated the Spanish throne as Philip became Philip V

In Mexico, three developments transpired through the eighteenth century

1) Demographic and economic resurgence

2) The revival of the mining economy

3) After the ascension of Charles III in 1759, the Bourbon regime instituted a series of political, administrative, religious, and economic reforms

The Bourbons sought to tighten the colonial bond and extract a bigger surplus from the economy

This was to be done by

Encouraging trade

Raising taxes

Centralizing control

Over the Church

Over the society to create an integrated citizenry and economy

These developments copied the Bourbon rule in France and examples in Britain

**Government, religion, economics, and society**

The growth of government regulation and increased taxation provoked popular resentment

Royal monopolies undermined any development of a free market and a commercially based citizenry

The centralization of government authority over the Church undermined the Regular Orders in favor of the secular clergy and reduced the Church's role in the economy, and led to the decay of the mission system on the frontier

As Mexico became over-governed, the colonists became overtaxed

Mexicans contributed 67% more per head in revenue than Spaniards

Also in conjunction with increased centralization and government regulation came a militarization of Mexican society

A regular soldiery was built up, professionalized, and maintained

The army's practice of forced service, activity in pressuring the Church, putting down local rebellions, contributing to local crime rates, and inflating prices led to criticism

The army also became a focus of the rivalry between *peninsulares* and *criollos*

**Insurgency**

By 1810 creole nationalism, and Indian and caste solidarity began to unite against Spain and the *peninsulares*

Napoleon invaded Spain in 1808 and imposed his brother Joseph as king

Mexican creoles declared loyalty to Spanish crown in exile (Seville Junta) and sought independent rule from Napoleon's Spain

The Viceroy also declared loyalty to exiled crown despite opposition of *peninsulares*

*Peninsulares* rose against creoles and consolidated their own local control in 1808

Creoles then capitalized on social tensions that involved Indians and mestizos

Father Miguel Hidalgo seized the opportunity and rose against the *peninsulares* seeking to establish an autonomous government in the name of the exiled crown

Hidalgo captured and executed in 1811

Jose María Morelos 1811-1815

Counterinsurgency

Led by peninsulares, but also by creoles who favored their self interests over independence (Augustín Iturbide)

In 1820 a military coup in Spain toppled Bourbon authority and imposed the liberal Constitution of 1812

Weakened the Church, and undermined clerical and military privileges

In Mexican, the Church and army, as well as oligarchic interests felt threatened

The Mexican creole elite rose in rebellion in 1821

Plan of Iguala

They called for independence, the defense of the Church, corporate privilege, and a constitutional monarchy