

Greg Carrington
Professor Lyndell O'Hara
HIS 114
02/03/20

Tlaxcalan Cabildo

The cabildo are at a crossroads, and their way of life is being threatened. They are focusing on the cochineal, but their real concern is with the cultural shift that is taking place. Common men and women now have the capability to develop wealth and independence never before achievable in the old hierarchy. One of the cabildo's main focuses was on the women and the newfound liberty they have been experienced. They used them to show the vast departure from roles the women once played in their society with the hopes of portraying them in a negative light. Women drinking receiving pay was supposed to show a decline in morals, with cochineal being the root cause. The cabildo claims to be critical of people showing off their wealth because it made them prideful and idle, but this is not the actual reason. The reason was if the cochineal farmers continued to show off their wealth, others would want to take part in the profits, and then the cabildo would have to witness a more significant number of their subjects depart from the old ways.

This article shows us that through the network with Spain, the ordinary farmers were able to cross the economic lines of being commoners to wealthy individuals due to the demand for their product. Through this new network activity, the farmers had a new source of revenue and way of life.

I believe the cabildo understood the problem they saw well enough to know that they had to do something about it. However, I do not believe that the cabildo knew it well enough to know how they needed to handle it. For example, they resolved to limit the number of cactus plants to

ten and thus minimizing the amount of cochineal harvested. They also will bar women from gathering dye. This does not seem like a practical measure to me because the people have already been introduced to a new way of life; they have already experienced wealth and the liberation that comes along with it. Another reason I do not think this measure will work is because of the trade network already established with Spain. Limiting the amount of cochineal produced can cause an unwanted conflict with Spain. This hierarchy was ill-prepared to handle its network connection. They lost touch with something very dear to them, and they had no measure in place to secure it and were forced to act reactively instead.