

Primary Source:

15.1 The evils of cochineal (Tlaxcalan cabildo, 1553)

Questions:

1. The cabildo focuses on cochineal, but what are they really upset about? Why do they focus, for example, on the activities of women? And why are they critical of people showing off their cochineal-obtained wealth? How does this source show network activity, threatening hierarchy?

The cabildo is furious because no one seems to care about other things that people require, save for the cochineal cactus. Because the proprietors of the cochineal cactus are only concerned with their cochineal cactus, everything has become more expensive. The cochineal acquires all of their money, cacao beans, and clothing. The cabildo is critical of the cochineal owner flaunting their cochineal-obtained wealth because they carelessly give away their money and cacao and do not care how lord God bestowed their fortune on them, instead squandering it. They are swaggering and pompous because of their affluence. They concentrate on women's activities in order to disperse them, make them their kin, and force them to gather dye for them. This source demonstrates how network activity threatens hierarchy in the same way that cochineal has made people lethargic. After everyone started planting cochineal cactus, there was even more intoxication and swaggering. To end the inactivity, the members of the cabildo determined that the cochineal cactus needed to be reduced.

2. How well do you think the cabildo understands the problem they are seeing? What measures do they propose to deal with the problem? How practical do those measures seem to you? How well equipped is this hierarchy to manage its network connections?

I believe the cabildo has a decent understanding of the problem they are confronted with. They noticed that the more cochineal they planted, the more idleness they experienced. They claimed that planting cochineal was vital since it caused inactivity. They wanted to see other plants being cultivated because these are the things that will be consumed, and I believe that this is the best way to address the issues they are experiencing. I think they did an excellent job drawing up the regulation that ten cactus plantings must be kept. That is why I believe this hierarchy is capable of managing its network connections. They recognized the issue and devised a plan to address it.