superb, regionally focused study of indigenous life over several centuries in Chiapas. De Vos is well aware of the influence of social power at all levels of historical interpretation. He acknowledges the limitations of his own situation as a foreign scholar, and empathizes with contemporary indigenous demands for self-description. His book skillfully combines extensive engagement with existing historical sources and a recognition of their inadequacies and limitations. It is divided into three main parts, including the conquest (1524–44); the colonial era (1545–1821); and the century from independence through the revolution (1821–1911); De Vos then extends his discussion of this latter period through the land reforms of the Cárdenas era (1934–1940).

In addition to De Vos's perceptive discussion of the issues challenging historians conducting research in Chiapas—documents that are "the vision of the victors," archives that have been burned, extensive oral history traditions—each part of the book makes important contributions. De Vos recognizes that resistance takes varied forms and can combine heroic with avaricious moments. He carefully documents specific ways that indigenes were victimized under colonialism, while also conclusively demonstrating their inventive capacity to respond, at times in ways that preserved substantial autonomy. His portrayal of the region's microcomplexity along ethnic lines, including the growth of "nahuát [sic] chiapaneco" (p. 83) due to colonial-era transfers of indigenous populations from the central valley into Chiapas, is quite fascinating. De Vos also comments perceptively on indigenous politics in colonial and neocolonial contexts, on ethnic hierarchy and the emergence of racism in Chiapas, and on the development of debt peonage in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Readers interested in more recent events will find relevant his discussion of Cárdenas-era land reforms, his criticisms of caciquismo, and his call for pluralism within both indigenous communities and the Mexican national space.

Both of these works are sophisticated enough for the specialist, though intended for the general public. They contain extensive documentary appendixes, and are attractively packaged and illustrated. The scholarship is current and provocative, and the books highly recommended.

JAMES KRIPPNER-MARTÍNEZ, Haverford College

Crecimiento económico y transformaciones sociales: esclavos, hacendados y comerciantes en la Cuba colonial (1760–1840). By PABLO TORNERO TINAJERO. Madrid: Ministerio de Trabajo y Seguridad Social, 1996. Figures. Appendixes. 390 pp. Paper.

Pablo Tornero has written this study of colonial Cuba to help explain the historical causes of Cuba's underdevelopment. He has selected the period from 1760 to 1840, because for him this era marks the origin of the island's dependency, its monoculture, and thus its underdevelopment. The Cuban sugar plantation system, which Tornero claims came to fruition in the mid–nineteenth century, persisted until 1959. Based on thorough research in Spanish primary sources, Tornero shows how slavery, fed by the

Downloaded from http://read.dukeupress.edu/hahr/article-pdf/78/1/135/715174/0780135.pdf by guest on 12 December 2024

freeing of the slave trade from its formerly mercantilistic restrictions, developed as "the motor nerve" (p. 29) of the eighteenth-century Cuban economy. The greatly expanded Cuban slave trade, a feature of the island's economy until after the U.S. Civil War, determined Cuba's demographic and racial future up to the present.

In a very useful chapter, albeit limited to the period 1774 to 1817, Tornero summarizes the impact on Cuban demography of the huge influx of African slaves. He argues that Cuba's demography was shaped by its economic structure, and shows how the slave population developed distinct demographic characteristics in the sugar-producing areas of the island. There, slaves constituted an overall majority, whereas in the mixed agricultural areas they never exceeded 40 percent of the total population. In the mixed areas the percentage of female slaves was also considerably higher.

Tornero also is convinced, despite recent historiography to the contrary, that Cuban slavery endured until economic contradictions in both Cuba and Spain destroyed it. He views the debates over the end of slavery and the slave trade, beginning in 1811 and continuing through to the abolition of slavery in 1886, as almost indivisible in nature, pushed by an industrializing, expanding Britain, but resisted by a creole plantocracy determined to preserve slavery and the slave trade at all costs, and supported by Spain, caught in an obdurate rearguard action to protect its last imperial treasure. There is little room in this explanation for the many nuances brought on by changing nineteenth-century circumstances in each of the countries involved. The overarching conceptual frameworks are accepted and reinforced in this study, rather than subjected to the same rigorous analysis that Tornero brings to the demographic and economic data he uses.

Tornero echoes Manuel Moreno Fraginals in arguing that slave labor discouraged Cuban planters from utilizing modern technology, although he does believe that Spain should share the responsibility for keeping Cuba tied to a regime of slave production longer than might otherwise have been the case. He states that if Spain had possessed either industrial capacity or financial wealth, she could have provided the technology to modernize the Cuban sugar industry and bring an earlier end to slavery. Is this a realistic historical hypothesis resting, as it does, on the inevitable triumph of capitalism over slave production? The two are not as antithetical as Tornero would have us believe. Both capitalism and slave production in Cuba revealed greater capacity for adaptability and flexibility than some historians have been willing to admit. Tornero's study is excellent in its detail of the transformation of the Cuban economy in the early nineteenth century, but he leaves plenty of room for further debate on the larger historical issues enveloping Cuba throughout the century.

DAVID MURRAY, University of Guelph

Downloaded from http://read.dukeupress.edu/hahr/article-pdf/78/1/135/715174/0780135.pdf by guest on 12 December 2024