9 Hybrid thinking
Bringing postcolonial theory
to colonial Latin American
economic history*

Karen B. Graubart

In...the house of the accountant Sebastián de Mosquera, there was found
in his service a young Indian boy called Martín, he knows no other name,
and he said that he is a native of La Chimbote in Arequipa and he was born
in the home of the said accountant, and he does not know who his parents
are, other than that he is said to be a mestizo. And the accountant certified
that said boy is a mestizo although he was wearing the clothing of an
Indian, and that he is twelve years old.

(Contreras 1968: 416)

This entry from a 1613 padrón [tributary census] of the Indians of Lima,
Peru, establishing the tax burden on indigenous communities (Figure 9.1),
encapsulates some of the contradictions around ‘race’ categories in
colonial Latin American economic history.

In a document that purported to count the population of ‘Indians’ in this
diverse urban center, the census-taker had difficulty in setting on a single
label for certain residents. This paragraph particularly confounds conclu-
sions: Martín is a “young Indian boy,” yet he himself claims to be a mestizo,
or the child of a Spanish and an Indian, as “certified” by his Spanish
employer. The census-taker indicated his skepticism and in a marginal nota-
tion ultimately tallied the boy among the Indians, thus holding him respon-
sible for producing tribute for the Spanish colonists. The anxiety between
the boy’s ethnic self-ascertainment and the demands of the tributary economy were
simultaneously highlighted in the text and brushed away in the margins.

We are, of course, in the same position as the census-taker: faced with
discrete concepts to explain a fluid and ambiguous world, we take our
interested best guess and generally ignore the pieces that do not fit.
Economic history regularly takes categories such as those of the census as
‘given’ for its production of quantitative data, but it rarely questions how
those categories were produced.1 But by not historicizing the very

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1 For example, Cook’s introduction to Contreras (1968) and Cherny’s (1988) study of this
census.
concepts from which we begin, we run the risk of assuming our conclu-
sions. Instead, I want to suggest that by explicitly examining the ways in
which people's lives did not conform to discrete categories, we can in-
terrogate how these categories were formed, and what social processes they
might represent. By examining the cultures that produced and consumed
economic flows in colonial Latin America, and the social identities of
those engaged in that production and consumption, we approach a less
quantifiable but ultimately more expressive and explanatory narrative, one of postcolonial hybridities rather than modernist dichotomies.

Historians of Latin America have been slow to incorporate the ideas emerging from postcolonial studies. This absence is in part because, as Jorge Klor de Alva (1995) reminds us, Latin America is still not postcolonial in any meaningful sense. Its nineteenth-century revolutions were predominantly civil wars between creoles (individuals of European ancestry born in the Americas) and their “peripheral” (Iberian) cousins (Pagden 1987). For the non-white majorities, little of import has changed since colonization. But even if these cavets, postcolonial theory has much to offer historians of colonial Latin America. Most important for this essay will be its insights into the instability of social identity, for example as formulated by García Canclini (1995). García Canclini uses the notion of “hybridity” not to suggest that monocultures are “pure,” but to argue that culture is always already hybrid. To describe a culture as “pure” is rather implicitly to critique its “impure” opposite as inauthentic. Thus the search for a pure Indian population clearly represents an ideological and political battle – one that calls for a more careful analysis of the economic history that marks and is marked by such battles – rather than a simple question of description.

An analytic division of the population into two discrete categories was in fact a staple of Spanish colonial administration, which posed separate “republics” of Indians and Spaniards. Members of these republics were subject to their own structures of governance: had different economic and social obligations; and were ideally to be more or less segregated, the “Indians” in reorganized rural towns, the “Spaniards” in new cities (Lockhart 1984). This categorization followed upon the demands of colonization: as Klor de Alva (1995: 243) has argued, this enterprise was predicated upon the elimination of the native majority by a European minority who lived among them, and thus it also produced “border figures” who sought to distance themselves from the original population, physically as well as culturally.

From the earliest years of colonial administration, then, bureaucrats affixed distinguishing labels to subaltern individuals – indio [Indian], mestizo [mixed Indian/European descent], negro [African or African descent], mulato [mixed African/European descent] – yet even those labels were neither stable nor self-evident. The high number of recorded cases of contested identities within colonial documents, such as the document here, suggests that it is misleading simply to invoke a biological concept of race or even a stable cultural concept of ethnicity (as identity)

when discussing this period. That is to say, while the colonial encounter produced subordinate 'Indians' from the perspective of European invaders, these Indians would have no self-consciousness as a distinct ethnicity for at least another century. Those at the borders of cultural contact — peoples of mixed ancestry, but also those Indians who left their rural birth communities for the new cities — often had unstable or ambiguous cultural identities.

In this sense hybrid identities are not simply mixtures of other purer identities, but represent an exaggeration of the tensions exhibited by all identities in this period. Instead of simply repeating the analytic categories of the nascent colonial state, we should examine the specific and local cultural constituents of ethnicity — in this case, particularly the relationship between spatial locations, clothing, and identity, rather than the more modernist discourses of physiognomy, skin color, or ancestry. But following colonial legal rhetoric, historians of Latin America have long accepted that, even if there were not two physically separate republics, it was somehow obvious to divide the early colonial population into discrete ethnic groups, including the mixed categories generally known as "creoles." 

By the latter part of the twentieth century, mainly due to a persistent concern about recovering history from below, most historians of Latin America called attention to the interdependence of the separate "replicas." As studies since Sánchez-Albornoz's (1978) path-breaking demographic analysis have shown, colonial Peru was never static. Indians continuously resisted Spanish economic domination by migrating between the rural towns designated for Indians, and also into the urban centers designated for Spanish settlers. Even spatial segregation was only theoretical, never achieved in everyday life, where multietnic cities and households were the rule, and even the most rural areas received European and African residents. These studies emphasized Indians' quick adaptation to colonial legal procedures and their cultural resilience if not outright rebellion in the face of what earlier historians had often characterized as uncontested rule.

More recently, social historians have also begun to question the stability of ethnic or racial markers in the early colonial period, instead illustrating the fluidity and ambiguity of colonial social categories. Cope (1994: 5).

3 See Himesford (1996) for an overview of the intellectual history of the biological concept of "race," for an example of the difficulties of producing accurate demographic data for this period, see Hango (1993).
5 The classic works on these categories in Mörner (1967); see the more recent commentary by Cahill (1994).
6 See viceregal Peru, these include Powers (1995a), Spalding (1994), and Stern (1993).
Hybrid thinking

who argues persuasively for the analytic superiority of a class-based categorization over a racial one for seventeenth-century Mexico City, summarizes thus: "... ethnic status is not fixed permanently at birth, by official fiat, but constitutes a social identity, that may be affirmed, modified, manipulated, or perhaps even rejected – all in a wide variety of contexts." He supports this contention by noting that one individual might be referred to by various ethnic labels even within a single document, and by showing how members of subaltern groups, under certain conditions, often assimilated into the ethnicity of a spouse upon marriage. Similarly, Tumin (1999: 25) has noted that legitimacy of birth – a concept with an inextricable relationship to ethnicity in Latin America – was another such malleable identity, which "could be changed, or even achieved." Being labeled in one way or another was somewhat determinate of one's social position and possibilities, but the question remains open as to whether the label always preceded status, or if status could produce a new label. While, by the eighteenth century, legitimacy and whiteness could be purchased – literally, with a document issued by the Crown – the early colonial period was characterized by both a fluidity of identity and a clear anxiety over hierarchy and discipline. The economic and social data which come down to us are thus frozen manifestations of this anxiety rather than objective description.

In this essay, then, I will examine some of the socio-economic influences upon the production of identity in early colonial Peru: the tributary economy for Indians, the local market economy, and changing forms of status. I will concentrate upon the newly created cities, like Lima, where groups mixed far more on a daily basis than they did in rural regions, although rural areas were also undergoing these structural changes. By interrogating social identity in this way, I hope to produce a genealogy of ethnicity that counters the more simplistic, and ultimately less descriptive, set of labels that confront us in the colonial archives.

The creation of social order in a tributary economy

The early colonial period was the site of contestations over economic and social positions among European colonizers, colonized natives, African slaves and free persons. Access to wealth and social status had to be determined in this new environment, and elites had to establish a hegemonic hierarchy within which their places could be secured. In this context, mestizaje – or ethnic mixing – as a cultural concept was a double-edged sword, representing both the anxiety of bodies unaccounted for in the socio-economic schema, and also the (desirable) product of the cultural encounter.

Sixteenth-century Peru was dominated by what Spalding (1984) has termed a "plunder economy," a post-conquest social structure initially characterized by an unsuccessful attempt to replace the conquered native
elites with a small aristocracy of Spanish settlers, known as encomenderos, who received grants (encomiendas) of Indian labor in reward for their military service. As compensation, encomenderos received whatever goods they could extract from these populations; at first this was a vast array of commodities, especially precious metals, and eventually it became a standardized set of foodstuffs, cloth and silver, delivered twice annually.

Nearly all adult Indian males between 18 and 30 were legally liable for the production of their community's tribute burden. Native elites, generally known as caciques (chiefs), were legally responsible for making sure that tribute was delivered in full and on time. The state assessed tribute rates based upon the number of eligible males in residence, although entire communities - men, women, and children - and their caciques were held accountable for meeting the quota. Tributary Indians were also required to participate in mist or forced labor rotations, most notoriously in silver and mercury mining, but also in urban construction, irrigation cloth manufacture, and other domestic industries. These labor rotations were also organized and enforced by caciques. Thus the smooth extraction of surplus depended largely on a good relationship between Indian and Spanish elites as well as between caciques and their communities (McLeod 1984, Spalding 1984, Treilles Arésteogli 1991).

For the most part, in the Andes as in Europe, an extractive hierarchy had been commonplace since long before the conquest, and had often been solidified by sexual alliances between elites (Ramírez 1987, Pease 1992, Spalding 1998). In the context of the European invasion, interethnic alliances were sometimes secured through sexual relationships between elite Indian women and Spanish conquistadors or encomenderos, the Spaniards thus gaining access to substantial agricultural properties as well as political legitimacy within Indian communities. The Spanish Crown, in fact, initially encouraged these alliances, at least among the elite, arguing in 1503 that the parties "might communicate with and teach one another, becoming indoctrinated in our sacred Catholic faith, and likewise as they work their properties and become knowledgeable about their estates, and the Indians become men and women of reason" (Krenzlik 1953: 12-13).

Such alliances produced not only the desired mutual understanding and assimilation of properties, but also children who would not be easily subsumed into either legal republic. The children of these early and often celebrated relationships remained elite themselves, like the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, the illegitimate son of a Spanish encomendero and a female member of the Inca royal family, who became one of the most famous chroniclers of Peru for Europeans. Born in 1539, Garcilaso was raised as a noble with strong ties to both elite heritages, though his writings made it clear that while he had great pride in his royal Inca blood, he had little empathy for lower class 'Indians.' His unmarried parents were forced to separate under a new colonial policy that required encomenderos to marry
immediately, preferably to elite Spanish women. Both parents remarried, his father to a Spanish woman, his mother to a less prominent Spaniard, and García was deprived of his ability to inherit his father’s estate, though he did move to Spain and began his writing career. While marriages between Spaniards and Indians fell off after the first post-conquest generation, illicit and informal relationships continued as before. In this way, from nearly the earliest years of colonial policy mestizaje became synonymous with illegitimacy, and it was less the supposed stain of ethnic difference than the loss of honor due to illegitimacy that tainted these children of elites.7

García’s dilemma, that he could be neither fully Spaniard nor Inca, was not simply a personal identity crisis, but a reflection of the ambivalence of Crown policy as it recognized a “mestizo problem” — children of Spanish men and Indian women who were “wandering lost” from their proper position. A 1533 order complained that these children lived with their Indian mothers. Instead, it argued, they and their mothers should be maintained in institutions where they might be raised properly; orphaned mestizos should be placed in a trade or with a Spanish family.8 In 1535 the Queen asked Spanish fathers to raise their mestiza children themselves, to avoid them “going about like savages,” and by 1555 the local administrators in Guatemala were concerned about a growing population of “young mestizo orphans” wandering the streets with “poor inclinations” and no occupation. Suggestions for dealing with this rising tide of patriarchless children with no fixed social position included establishing convents, schools, and even sending them back to Seville.9

It is clear that the issue was less one of controlling an ethnic category — the mestizo — than undermining social structure than of resolving a legal and economic problem. The children of elite Spanish men and Inca princesses were not running “like savages” in the streets: their problem was more specifically gaining legitimacy in order to inherit family estates, a dilemma resolved through more common legal means including application to the courts for certificates of legitimacy.10 The mestizos frowned upon by the local officials were, however, the children of lower-class Spaniards and Indians, often the product of sexual violence, informal relations, and in coercion, neither provided for by their fathers’ estates nor included within Indian communities, and living free of tribute obligations. These placeless

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7 Burns (1999: 20-1) discusses García’s story and the greater sexual context of illegitimacy and mestizaje; see also Matteselli (1993).
8 Konorski (1953: 2, 4; 62, 77, 140).
10 For an example, see Kohnke (1953: 295-6). See Burns (1999 Ch. 1) for a discussion of the fate of elite female mestizas in the early colonial years.
Mestizaje were often illegitimate and not likely to receive recognition from their fathers or the state. The Crown, piecemeal, began to draw tenuous but significant lines between Indians, Spaniards, and mestizos. While plebeian Indians were defined as tributaries, mestizos were not, and thus were free to leave their Indian birth communities and avoid the shared burden of tribute payments. And whereas Indians could not hold certain offices reserved for Spaniards, such as encomendero, high level bureaucratic or Catholic priest, mestizos were differently restricted in terms of occupations and offices. They could not hold offices in Indian communities, nor easily ascend in the colonial administration.

Mestizos thus were problematic because they upset both the production of wealth and the production of honor. They slipped through the cracks of the legal structure of the republics, designed for the collection of payments from the Crown's vassals; they represented the failure of the Catholic Church to eradicate concubinage and other extra-marital sexual relations. Mestizaje was not an ethnic identity, but a condition, and could be ascribed to anyone who was out of place in the lower orders. It represented, in fact, the lack of a stable juridical identity; the law could not decide conclusively when these men and women were Spaniards and when they were Indians (Powers 1995b).

Producing consumers: cultural transformation in the Americas

The division of the American world into two republics, flattening existing hierarchies and identities, and replacing them with new forms of social control, also produced new identities, more diverse and vital spaces where hybrid identities could be negotiated. In particular port cities like Lima became spaces where the external trappings and manifestations of identity—clothing, hairstyles, language, membership in community organizations and institutions—could also be improvised and experimented with. In an economy increasingly dependent upon the constant circulation of local and imported products, expansion of the consumer base to include native peoples was often seen as a benefit (Lamon and Harris 1995). Yet this also ran the risk of making visual identification of Indians, and hence social control, that much more complicated.

11 This correlation between mestizaje and illegitimacy is substantiated by Manzanillo's (1992: 168-70) analysis of birth registers in two Lima parishes over the seventeenth century, whereby about twenty percent of 'mixed' children were registered as legitimate.

12 See documents in Konetzke (1980: 498, 499, 512), freed Blacks and those with African ancestry were legally liable for tribute, although not as state (labour) service, by the 1570s (Geopolitique 1973: II: 130).
hybrid thinking 223

Because tribute was levied upon Indian communities, we have noted that many residents fled their homes for other rural towns or to the new urban centers. For one purpose, this flight had two important effects: one, it, along with disease and violence, contributed to the depopulation of rural areas and led to a new industry of tisis or censuses aimed at counting and recounting the tributary population to set tax rates; and, two, it led to an enormously mixed and interdependent population within colonial cities. Although colonial policy continued to speak to the segregation of ethnic groups along the lines of the 'republics,' within cities these lines were neither enforceable nor desirable. Even the city council of Trujillo as early as 1554 issued an Indian mat the right to own a building lot in the supposed restricted center of the city 'because he is married and lives like a Spaniard' (Consejo Provincial de Trujillo 1969: 150). And more commonly, Spaniards, Indians, and Blacks shared residences and workplaces in a variety of relationships ranging from slavery to service to tenancy.

Most of the Indians who lived in Lima in this period had migrated there from rural communities, although 'migrated' is probably too active a word in this context, since many were brought to Lima by Spanish employers as very young children. So, for at least some urban immigrants there remained only tenuous connections with their birth communities (Glave 1989). On the other hand, Lima offered many ways to create new cultural matrices, including religious confraternities, workplaces, and the plaza market. As a major economic center, Lima's streets were lined with shops and vendors, and the plaza itself was the workplace of many Indian men and women, who set up their stalls to sell produce, artisans, and other goods (Lowry 1991). Ships registered with the Spanish Crown (as well as much clandestine trade) entered Peruvian ports regularly and goods traveled overland from all over the Spanish colonies (Andrien 1985). Religious organizations provided small loans to members to alleviate the constant shortages of cash. A new type of market culture was being cultivated in the Americas, and the Indian majority would become its dominant producers and consumers.

While European goods were supposedly shipped to the Americas to satisfy the needs of colonial settlers, it was expected that natives, too, would crave these commodities. Columbus (1569: 89) himself had brought goods like "five amber beads ... some red slippers and a glass bottle of orange-flower water" to barter for gold with Caribbean residents. Emperor Charles V in 1521 argued that the best way to convert the natives

13 Although migration did not necessarily entail aversion to tribute payments (Wightman 1990; Flowers 1995a).
14 On depopulation, see Cook (1981); on ethnicity and migration, see Flowers (1995a), Wightman (1990), Sánchez-Albornoz (1978); on colonial cities, see Lowry (1993); on the instability of the state see Sánchez and Guarra-Gal (1994).
to Christianity - the justification for the conquest after all - was through developing new markets, "that there be intercession between the said Indians and the said Christians...having between the one and the other trade and business by means of exchange and commerce, as exists in our Kingdom..." (Konetzke 1953: 71). Clothing, alongside weapons and horses, rapidly became one of the more important status markers in the colonies. Columbus's (e.g., 1969: 55, 60) persistent proclamation that the Caribbean natives were "naked as when their mothers bore them" was followed up with a series of laws to ensure that they went about (properly) clothed. A law first promulgated in 1552 required that "priests of the doctrine should persuade the Indians...especially that they go about clothed, for more honesty and decency of their persons" (Reconquisc 1973 II: 194). While New World silver and gold generally went directly to European coffers, local and imported clothing dominated its domestic markets.

But the volume of trade in the colonies - and the new debt that merchants rapidly foisted upon native elites - produced some anxiety over social order. Already in 1509 King Ferdinand had expressed great concern that the Christian settlers in the Caribbean were spending too much of their money on silks and clothing rather than on expanding their settlements, and set stringent (but ignored) regulations on the importation of expensive clothing and furniture, which he termed "disorders" (Konetzke 1953: 23). Indian elites quickly entered the competition for status through dress. Caciques and other ethnic leaders adapted their own politicized fashions to incorporate Hispanic garments and especially fabrics, creating a hybrid style that mimicked the colonizers while maintaining cultural authority in their own political milieus (Dean 1999: 161-2; see also Figure 9.2 for a rendition of elite and plebeian Indian dress).

Such "disorders" were followed by sumptuary laws restricting the public display of certain markers. Non-Europeans were restricted in their use of luxury goods, saddles, and weapons such as swords, partly due to fear of anti-European violence but also because of their status implications (Solórzano y Pareira 1948 I: 449). But not all Europeans supported these restrictions. Arguing against the expansion of sumptuary laws, in 1567 the Spanish jurist Matienzo argued that it would be a good thing for elite Indians to wear European fashions, because they come to love us and our clothing...they begin to have some human essence...because being dressed like Spaniards, they will be ashamed to sit publicly in the plaza, eating, drinking and getting drunk....[and] because the more they buy, that much more merchandise from Spain will be sold, which will all be to the benefit of the royal accounts....

(Matienzo 1967: 66-70)
Despite the economic benefits of assimilation, policies continued to demonstrate ambivalence around cultural hybridity and ethnic mixing. Beginning in 1578 mestizos, negros, and mulatos were periodically evicted from Indian towns as bad influences; mestizos were banned from becoming caciques of native communities but also from being colonial officials, notaries, priests, and even lawyers for Indians. While the colonial state envisioned hispanicization as an ideal, it also punished mimicry by not admitting mestizos to settle in either legal status. Colonial hegemony thus was founded in idealized notions of ethnicity that had little to do with the ways in which actual individuals coped with their environment, or even saw themselves.

“Dressing like an Indian”: ethnic ambiguity in the census
The 1613 tributary census of Lima demonstrates the anxiety of this disconnect between policy and daily life. Despite the firmness of the

15 See the royal orders in Konetzke (1953: 513, 491, 564, 378, 436, 512) and also Recapilación de leyes (1948: 246).
numbers that have been extrapolated, the document itself contains a running commentary on ethnic ambiguity. As we have seen (Figure 9.1), the census is made up of paragraphs corresponding to residences, describing the Indian inhabitants. In its margins, Contreras, the census-taker (in this case acting as his own scribe) recorded in two columns the ages of each male and female Indian, for tallying later. Thus while the text could be ambiguous, the marginal notes recorded the final decision as to whether individuals were officially counted as "Indians" or not, producing apparently stable quantitative data. In various ways the census-taker could indicate his ambivalence about or outright disagreement with the stated ethnicity of the respondent, although in the end he had to make a distinction. It is not unlikely that the desire to produce a large total number of Indians affected his judgment of who counted as an Indian, of course.10

The visual cues most often described by Contreras were dress style and haircut. Indian men traditionally wore their hair to their shoulders rather than cropped like European men, and they wore woven tunics rather than the shirt and short pants of Spaniards, as in Guaman Poma’s illustration of the proper dress for elite and plebeian Indian men (Figure 9.2). He noted twenty-four cases where he interviewed an Indian male "with shorn hair and dressed like a Spaniard," although none of these men claimed to be anything other than Indians. Those ‘mistressed’ Indians were servants in Spanish households, artisans, and merchants, thus immersed in the urban economy dominated by Europeans. All but three of them stated that they were raised by Spaniards and could not name their cacique or encomendero; one of the exceptions was himself a cacique and two others remembered a cacique or encomendero but were no longer sure if the individual still held that office. Since Indian women were not counted as tributaries, there was less anxiety over their appearance and status. Contreras did not record his objections to Indian women’s dress or hair styles, but in a number of cases noted "a woman who said she was an Indian [emphasis mine]," which might have been a subtle deviation from the more standard formula, "an Indian woman" (Contreras 1968: 49, 265-6, 289-90, 388, 120, 150). While all of these respondents had agreed that they were indeed Indians despite their appearances, Contreras logged another twenty-seven cases where he disagreed with a subject’s self-assertion, and in most cases overrode it by counting him as an Indian in the margin. Most of these cases involved mestizo males who, according to the census-taker, "appeared" to be Indians, possibly wearing their hair long or dressing in

10 Powers (1955a, 109) states that by the second decade of the seventeenth century, Spanish officials were "aware of most terms of demographic subterfuge."
handwoven tunics rather than European pants. Through Contreras, one mestizo explained his own non-hispanicized appearance:

> In a store belonging to Francisco Hernandez Crespo, a government official, was found an Indian shoemaker who said his name was Juan Belasquez and he was a native of Cusco, parish of San Cristóbal. And he has no curiques because he is a mestizo although he goes about in the dress of an Indian because he is poor.

(Contreras 1968: 60)

Tribute production meant that a great deal of Indian-made cloth was in circulation at relatively cheap prices, unlike the imported fabrics that Spaniards favored (Graubart 2000). As well, the long-standing association between vagrants and mestizos could also affect a poor working man’s choice of social affiliations. Since artisans were often exempted from tribute, there was nothing to be gained from taking on the identity of a mestizo. In this case, Contreras resolved the apparent ambiguity by counting him as an Indian.

While we cannot enter Contreras’s mind as he made these decisions, we can hypothesize about some of his parameters. First, from the perspective of the Crown, there was incentive for an individual to utilize one identity rather than another. The Crown obviously desired more tributaries, and certainly Indians had fled to cities in order to avoid tribute, hence his skepticism might have had firm basis. Second, there was a widespread belief that while Indians might crave European fashions, the reverse was unthinkable. While this probably reflects ethnocentrism as well as class prejudice, it may also be true that social conventions and peer pressure did affect public actions. Europeans made great use of native cloth, for linens, saddlebags, and sails, for example, and poorer people of all ethnicities fashioned the relatively cheap and abundant woven material into garments for themselves, but there is little evidence of non-Indians—other than mestizos and African slaves—adopting Indian dress styles, except under unusual circumstances (Graubart 2000: Ch. 2).

Thus, from the perspective of the census-taker, while acculturation towards hispanicization was understandable (and so ‘Indians’ who dressed as Spaniards were social-climbing Indians), movement in the other direction was unthinkable (and ‘mestizos’ dressed as ‘Indians’ must be Indians in disguise).

Beyond ethnicity: the search for status in Indian Peru

We can see that the two phenomena discussed in the previous section—the demands of a tributary economy for a mass of identifiable ‘Indians’ to work for an analytically separate European elite, and the concomitant need for an acculturated consumer base to purchase the goods that supported the flow of silver around the continents—led to an anxiety of the type hinted at within the 1613 census. As in Iberia or in pre-hispanic Peru,
this tension was partially resolved through the production of complex status categories. In this final section, I would like to pay some attention to visual representations of status, especially from within indigenous communities themselves.

Indians indeed voiced their concerns about the external markers of status, especially with regard to protecting hierarchies between plebeians and elites. Such a perspective on the 'cross-dressing' matter was offered by the indigenous critic Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala, an elite Andean who worked for the colonial government. He exhorted, in an illustrated letter to the King of Spain composed around 1615,

How well each appear in his own dress, the cacique principal dressed like a cacique principal, the Indian like an Indian, and the noblewoman like a lady and the Indian woman like an Indian woman, so that each is known and respected and honored...Dress in such a way as to differentiate oneself from the Indians, and appear like a cacique principal and lord of the land. And if he wears whiskers like a cooked prawn, so that he will look like a mestizo, cholo, bad casta, mulato, zambeco. And thus may no Indian wear whiskers except what is natural to him. And the Spaniard without whiskers will look like an old whore, face of a mask. The whiskers befit a Spaniard and if he were his hair long like an Indian, he would resemble a savage, a brute animal. His true clothing dressed like a Spaniard, and bearded, and short-haired is honor in the world.

(Guaman Poma 1980: 732–34)17

In Guaman Poma's ideal world, then, each ethnic group would have its proper and distinctive uniform (as seen in his drawings in Figures 9.2 and 9.3), and within each ethnic group there would also be class — or status-based markers. Note that in his schema the cacique principal is not an 'Indian' — that is, 'Indianness' is an identity of the masses, not the elites. In his search for an orderly and virtuous world, the distinction between plebeian and elite Indians was at least as great as that between Spaniards and Indians. In fact he apparently made little distinction between elite Spaniards and elite Indians, noting that when Indian caciques married their sons to tributary Indian women, 'their sons are mestizos as are their descendants' (Guaman Poma 1980: 734). Mestizaje, as we saw earlier, was as much a class issue as an ethnic one, and while Guaman Poma indicated that Peru's native culture was threatened by the Spanish invasion, he was not averse to borrowing from Europe's vocabulary of status. Thus his directive to the cacique utilized not only elements of pre-hispanic authority, but important European additions.

Andean elites thus shared with their Spanish overlords an obsession with dress having to do with maintaining their own position tri-i-iti an

17 On Guaman Poma's project to remove the Spaniards from Peru, see Adorno: 1986.
emerging social and economic order. Among plebeians, the conquest signaled changing access to status and authority, and new possibilities for limited social climbing. By the early colonial period, the legal system as well as economic expansion enabled some of those formerly outside the Andean elite to claim elite heritage, through lawsuits, invented genealogies and the adaptation of clothing styles (Powers 1995a, Dean 1999, Graubart 2000: Ch. 5). Garcilaso de la Vega complained about the increased access of the Indian masses to incaque or hawk wing-feathers, previously exclusive to the headdress of the Inca himself.

They tell me nowadays many Indians wear them and assert that they are descendents of the royal blood of the Incas, while the rest make fun of them, since the blood of the Incas has almost completely disappeared. But the introduction of foreign fashions has caused them to confuse the insignia they used to wear on their heads as a mark of distinction, and has embellished them thus and in many other ways: all of them now say they are Incas and Pallas (princesses).

(Garcilaso de la Vega 1989: 375)
Andean elites were producing their own identities (and markers) to protect against encroachment by those of lesser status. Non-elites continued to see status within indigenous communities as well as within larger colonial society. Assuredly, the goal of social mobility was not to achieve a particular ethnic identity, but a more stable economic life. The assimilation of markers became an important strategy for ingress into the new occupations and social strata offered in urban areas. Thus adaptation of European dress or occupations was less a rejection of "Indian culture" than its modification, albeit one that would have long-term ramifications.

The discord in the Lima census between self-ascription (based upon an individual's parentage) and designation (based upon the cultural predispositions of census-taker or subject) suggests not that the "wrong" category was being invoked, but that the categories themselves were incapable of describing the fluidities of people's everyday existence. The conflict between the social milieu in which an individual found him or herself comfortable and the economic ramifications of being labeled with one legal identity or another made it likely that those with the resources would slip between categories. And indeed, the archives regularly present us with individuals whose identity changed, depending upon who was speaking, and for what purpose.

Conclusion: identity as multiple

Ethnicity in colonial Latin America was clearly not a racial (biological) schema. Beyond the local, pre-hispanic forms of self-identification - and local ethnicities among native groups continue to play important roles to this day - there was elasticity in the socio-cultural calculus of "Indians," "Spaniards," and "castas." We have seen that there were good reasons for attempting to move between categories, depending upon the carrot or stick being offered. While such an argument may confound quantitative analysis, it also produces a more vibrant vision of colonial history, suggesting the struggles to secure or consolidate economic position and social status that characterized early colonial life, and the faithful and contradictory efforts at legal codification on the part of the state, are all aspects of the formation of a colonial economic structure. As a conclusion, I offer the story of Francisca Ramírez, an Indian woman who achieved wealth and status, and whether self-consciously or not, moved between ethnic categories during her adult life.

We know her story from four wills she left between 1633 and 1686, as well as a few other public documents.16 In 1633, she was known as

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16 Located in the Archivo Regional de La Libertad, Junín, Perú, in the following notarial protocols: Escobar legajo 136 (1633); Antonio Alvarez legajo 84 ex. 81 (1633); Bernabé Renter legajo 207 (1672); Vicente de Salinas legajo 230 (1686).
"Francisco Ramirez ydza," the common designation for a non-elite Indian woman. At the time she was married to a carpenter whose name bore no ethnic designations and who may have been a Spaniard. Ramirez appears to have been a petty vendor selling painted shawls—local Indian craft—and an assortment of indigenous-style women's clothing, although some were of fabrics imported from Europe and Asia. She also owned some domestic animals, equipment for making Indian corn beer (chicha), a few pieces of jewelry, and some furniture. From this inventory it appears that she was already relatively well-off, but firmly established within the indigenous community.

The will of 1653 is another matter. In contrast to the business-like tone of the first, this one begins with a long Catholic protestation and meticulous instructions for religious services at her funeral. Her inventory of property now included large quantities of corn for making chicha, some of which she had purchased on credit from a Spanish royal judge who also acted as her legal representative and executor. She had other debts with equally lofty citizens, including a local alcalde, and she was owed money by an assortment of Spaniards and Indians. She was selling, along with chicha, imported fabrics and clothing, soap, candles, furniture, jewelry, and religious icons. Of the long list of clothing she possessed, for her own use or for sale, only one item was in an indigenous style ("a velvet chicha [shawl] still unwashed"); the rest were European fashions. Her first husband had since died and she had requested an ecclesiastical divorce from her second, a Spaniard, for mistreatment and the "diminution of her estate." Rather than from a stall or box in the plaza, she was selling out of her own store, unusual for a woman of any ethnicity in this period.

In the third will, of 1677, she was known simply as "Francisco Ramirez," the "ydza" having disappeared, although her mother's plainly indigenous name remained on record. Her inventory gave no indication that her clientele might be indigenous, no longer including chicha, corn or Indian-style clothing. The final will, of 1686, called her "doña Francisca Ramirez ydza," the honorific ("lady") reserved for the highest status members of colonial society, including the indigenous elite. According to the notary's careful inventory of her estate, there is little in this last will to distinguish her from any successful Spanish woman in the period.

Francisco Ramirez's story is not one of 'whitening' or 'passing,' but instead one of social climbing in a society where ethnicity was still a fluid concept, and not the determinant of identity that it may later become. Her ethnic identity was preserved firmly in the earlier documents, but as she grew wealthier it became less prominent. As ethnic markers receded, her ability to climb also presumably increased. Thus while there were certainly limits to individuals' ability to escape the legal status they were born into, it seems also to have been acceptable within society to switch markers as one moved up or down the social scale. In the same way that vagabonds could be considered mestizo, successful
merchants like Ramirez could move between 'Indian' and 'mestizo' or even lose their labels altogether, under proper conditions. Like the men described by the 1613 census of Lima as both Indian and mestizo, Francisca Ramirez spent her life in the intersection of ethnicity provided by colonial hybridities. We have long known that Indian and Spanish lives were not separate, and that in urban centers most institutions—churches, confraternities, plaza markets, and households—were places of interaction and mixture rather than segregation. But we need also to remember that individual identities failed to conform to the seemingly transparent and eternal categories of race, class, gender, and ethnicity. Instead individuals went about their daily lives, these categories trailing after them and sometimes catching up, to impose a tax, assign an obligation, erect a barrier.

Thus, a closer reading of those who fail to fit categories, whose multiple or hybrid identities flow between and through the boundaries, gives us a stronger sense of the mechanisms by which categories come to be. This exploration eventually leads to a richer economic history, which goes beyond simple efforts to analyze the roles and activities of pre-given groups of people, to examine how groups of people come to be relegated to particular roles and activities in and through the process of economic interaction. This thus illuminates the mechanisms by which economic structures come to be constituted, formed, and reformed, something that approaches to economic history that take the analytical categories of their data-sets as 'given,' cannot do.

References