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LIBERAL POLICY AND FRONTIER MISSIONS: BOLIVIA AND ARGENTINA COMPARED

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The study of liberalism in nineteenth-century Latin America has enjoyed a resurgence in recent years. This is in part due to the tide of neoliberalism that has swept the region about a century after the ideology's initial triumph. In many cases, the new study of the nineteenth-century version can help us understand the differences in Latin American society, but also many of the issues unresolved from that period. As is always the case -at least to some extent- historians mirror contemporary interests and in the case of nineteenth-century liberalism they have focused on problems addressed most prominently in the present version. For this reason, studies of liberalism have focused primarily on two issues: trade policy and changes in land tenure, especially the fate of corporate communities, both of the Catholic Church and Indian villages[1]. These aspects are vital for understanding nineteenth-century liberalism, but there are other topics which have received much less attention.

Another aspect which has only been broached implicitly because virtually all studies are based on individual countries or on grand overviews, is that liberal policy in its multiple aspects had different effects on different countries. While all Latin American countries by the late nineteenth century had adopted many aspects of a liberal program, they varied in the portions of the program that they implemented. This meant that the effect of liberal policy on the community and individual differed widely from country to country (and, as Florencia Mallon's study has recently made clear, from region to region within countries)[2]. For example, the wholehearted adoption of a liberal land program in Mexico led to the disappearance of communal lands in ways that was simply not the case for Peru. In Peru, the anticlerical aspects of the liberal program were much more muted and brought about less conflict than in Mexico.

A comparative perspective can be very useful in determining the penetration of liberal ideas and the effects of these policies on selected populations within a particular nation-state. This is even the case for issues rarely studied in the recent historiography, such as the growth of individualism (a key plank of liberal ideology) and the implementation (or lack thereof) of

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an effective federalism. In this paper, I will examine two mission systems, one in southeastern Bolivia and the other in northwestern Argentina. The Bolivian mission system was relatively successful, whereas the Argentine one failed to thrive. I selected these cases in large part because it is possible to dispose of many comparative issues that might otherwise make a focus on the role of the state problematic. These two mission systems were run by the same order -the Franciscans- at about the same time in both countries. Indeed, some friars moved from one country to the other in their careers as missionaries. In addition, both mission systems attempted to convert many of the same ethnic groups in adjacent and geographically similar zones, part of the larger region known as the Gran Chaco. The creole economies of the Chaco was very similar as well, based primarily on ranching, with sugar plantations in the last Andean valleys to the west representing important agro-industrial enterprises by the late nineteenth century. Thus, the differential success of the missions can be attributed in large measure to the actions of the multiple levels of the state rather than exogenous factors, such as different types of missions or the culture of the indigenous groups to be missionized. My intention is not just to contribute to the study of Franciscan frontier missions, but also, through the lens of the missions, characterize the effects of liberal policy in Bolivia and Argentina.

Missionary experiences in the Bolivian and Argentine Chaco

As suggested above, the mission system in each country suffered a rather different fate. To summarize briefly the Bolivian case, the Franciscan convent in Tarija was able to recreate a successful mission system between the Jesuit expulsion in 1767 and independence. These missions were destroyed during the independence wars. In 1840, infused with new friars from Italy and Spain, the Tarija convent returned to found missions among the Chiriguanos, Tobas, and Matacos. They were able to establish a string of seven missions up to 1872, at which point the Franciscan convent from Potosí took over from a faltering Tarija convent and founded six more missions between 1876 and 1903. In all, approximately 10,000 Indians resided on the missions in Tarija, Chuquisaca, and Santa Cruz departments around the turn of the century, the mission system's high point. Only at the turn of the century, when the anticlerical Liberal Party took over the government in the Federalist War (1898-1899), did the missions suffer some setbacks. None of the three most recent missions founded in the first years of the twentieth century by the Potosí friars survived more than six years. In 1905 a new law on missions was passed and the government secularized two of

the oldest missions, San Antonio and San Francisco del Pilcomayo. The Liberals gave the adjacent missions, housing mainly Tobas and Matacos, to a German merchant firm that promised to dam the Pilcomayo river and turn the Chaco into agriculturally productive land. While the firm did not fulfill its promises, the ex-missions became the nucleus for one of the most important creole settlements in the Bolivian Chaco, now called Villamontes. Thereafter, subsequent governments repeatedly attempted to turn all the missions over to secular control, but failed to do so with the most important ones. Only the invading Paraguayan army destroyed many of the missions and finally in 1949 the remaining missions were turned into agricultural cooperatives[3].

The story is rather different for the Argentine missions. The Salta convent, staffed by many of the same recruits brought over from southern Europe that filled the Tarija and Potosí convents, worked in the Chaco region of Salta province. The Salta Franciscans established their first mission among the Matacos in La Esquina Grande in 1856. It was suppressed in 1860 because settlers claimed that the land belonged to an independence-period general who had received it as a grant from the government. The next mission, Purísima Concepción, was established along the Bermejo river in 1859. Three years after its foundation, the missionaries had to abandon the settlement because labor recruiters from the sugar plantations in Salta and nearby Jujuy province took most able-bodied adults to work in the cane harvest. Only in the late 1860s did the friars return to claim the settlement.

Another mission, Las Conchas, established in 1861 near Concepción after much resistance from local ranchers, also had labor recruiters take many of its Indians to the plantations, but managed to survive. By 1863, the provincial and national governments had turned against the missionaries, accusing them of the 1863 uprising that encompassed many of the tribes in the Argentine Chaco. When the missionaries resisted legal pressures, creole ranchers in 1864 sent a group of 60 to 70 armed men into the mission, threatening the friars and effectively shutting down Las Conchas. In 1868 the Franciscans founded their last mission in the Salta Chaco at San Antonio. In 1875 flooding from the Bermejo river forced the abandonment of the mission, as well as that of the other missions under the Salta convent. At no time in the nineteenth century did the total number of Indians on the missions total more than 1,100 souls[4]. In 1900, the Franciscans tried again. They founded two missions in Formosa territory; the Salta Franciscans San Francisco de Laishí for the Tobas, whereas the convent in Corrientes founded La Nueva Pompeya in 1900, bringing together mainly Matacos. These missions remained in service until the mid twentieth century.

Contrasts and Comparisons

As can be seen, the Franciscan experiences in Bolivia were much more positive than in Argentina. Missions lasted longer in Bolivia, there were more of them, and the missions incorporated larger numbers of Indians into their systems. In the case of the nineteenth-century missions in the Salta Chaco, constant flooding of wide swaths of territory along the Bermejo river made the missions much more tenuous. The major problem was access to good land above the floodplain. This was essentially a problem with the government, for the Salta provincial government did not give the friars grants to prime territory. This experience was different in the Bolivian case, where the friars asked and received land grants for the missions at the sites of the indigenous settlements[5]. Only in Formosa at the turn of the century were the Franciscans able to found a pair of missions that were relatively successful.

Settler resistance was common in both countries, for ranchers had no interest in having the friars monopolize indigenous labor in the region, making it difficult to exploit the Indians. Also, they did not want some of the land to be turned over to the Indians, for this meant less grazing lands for their herds. As in the case of Las Conchas in Salta, in Tarija (Bolivia) the ranchers tried to turn the Indians against the Franciscans before a mission in Tarairí could be established. In both cases they failed, at least in preventing the establishment of the missions[6]. Eventually in Las Conchas, bands armed by the ranchers were able to shut down a mission. In Bolivia, settlers were never able to muster sufficient force or coherence amongst themselves to achieve such a result.

Although there are some differences in the geographic location of the missions and in the ability of the creole settlers to present a united front against the missions, the most important factor in determining the relative success of the missions was the role of the state and how well it followed liberal precepts. Three manifestations of liberalism warrant closer examination: First, the way in which the missionary enterprise itself was conceived, and what the intended results of the missions were. Second, the rather different setup of the state itself and the support it gave the missionaries in each country. Thirdly, and closely related to the last point, the role the creole members played in frontier society and the relative authority the Franciscans over the mission Indians. Let us examine each aspect in detail.

The Mission Defined

Catholicism in the nineteenth century was under attack throughout much of the world by Liberals both in Europe and Latin America. Perhaps not

surprisingly, as during the sixteenth-century Reformation and Counter-Reformation, Catholicism gained new vigor during the nineteenth century in an effort to present a palatable alternative to what it considered the godless anticlericalism of nationalist reformers. In effect, the traumatic experiences in nineteenth-century Spain and especially Italy, where the formation of the Italian national state entailed a drawn-out battle between Liberal nationalists with the universalistic Pope and his territorial claims over the Papal States, engendered a revival among certain middle-class and working-class sectors of deep Catholic spirituality. Many sons and daughters of these deeply Catholic families joined the Church as priests, friars, and nuns in an effort to aid in reviving the influence of Roman Catholicism in their countries and throughout the world. The Franciscans who left southern Europe for other territories were imbued with this missionary impulse and saw the missions as ideal communities in which the souls lost in increasingly secular Europe might be made up among the savages of the New World.

This meant that the spiritual dimension was foremost on the missionaries' minds when they arrived in the wilds of the Gran Chaco to covert the heathen. However, converting the natives meant more than just a change in faith for the Indians, for the Franciscans realized that conversion to Christianity meant a whole package of ideals and concrete practices. This package encompassed what nineteenth-century creoles and missionaries called "civilizing" the Indians. In effect, "civilization" implied living in permanent settlements, wearing European clothes, and working regularly in regular jobs, whether it be as yeoman farmers in the European mold, as an agricultural proletariat on estates, or, for a small minority, a killed workers in such jobs as carpenty, bricklaying, shoe making, weaving, etc. The regularity of the job and the permanence of settlement were crucial in this vision of the "civilized" natives, which both creole governments and the European missionaries shared.

That is not to say that the Franciscans did not emphasize spiritual aspects. Settling Indians in permanent communities was necessary to make sure that they observed the many religious rituals, such as going to Mass and celebrating the important feast days of the Roman Catholic liturgical calendar. The mission communities also permitted close supervision and the abolition of polygamous practices, abortions, premarital sex, and other such customs deemed un-Catholic. The national governments shared these goals, but their primary interest was in asserting control over their frontiers, which meant access to mission Indian labor and making sure that the Indians did not contest the creoles' control of the frontier territories.

In Bolivia, the Franciscans were able to implement their emphasis on spiritual aspects in ways that proved impossible in the Argentine Chaco. This can be best seen through the role of the schools. Unlike the colonial period, nineteenth-century Catholic missionaries did not generally attempt to convert adult Indians. The Franciscans saw, perhaps rightly so, the adults as too set in their ways to be likely converts. At best, the friars endeavored to baptize grown men and women only on their deathbeds, because at that point their heathen practices were not an issue and their souls would be saved without too much more sinning. Rather, the missionaries concentrated on the children, who, they felt, might be brought up in mission schools to be ideal Catholics, free from the taint of their parents or the increasingly secular societies in the core areas of the nation-state[7].

The relative success of the mission schools is thus a good indicator of the overall accomplishment of the missionaries' goals. Here the differences between the Bolivian and Argentine cases is palpable, for in Bolivia the mission schools thrived, whereas in Argentina they were unable to accomplish much. In Bolivia, a large proportion of the Indian children went to school. Although there were many problems in keeping especially boys in the mission schools into their teenage years, the mission schools in the Bolivian Chaco were in many ways models for the rest of the country. The Franciscans could boast, for example, that about half of the total number of children who went school in Tarija department were the mission Indian children although the missions represented only a fraction of the department's total population. All in all, about a third of the total population of the Tarija missions were in the mission schools[8].

The curriculum in the Bolivian mission schools was quite strict, with great emphasis on teaching all aspects of "civilization". This included indoctrination into the Catholic faith, going to Mass daily, daily catechism classes, as well as reading and writing. Even the older children who had jobs were required to show up at 5:30 in the morning to go to Mass and pray before they were let off to go to work. Each mission had its own school building; in the larger establishments boys and girls had classes in separate buildings and girls slept with their female teachers at school[9].

In the case of the nineteenth-century Salta missions, the situation was very different. Whereas 35 children out of a total population of 456 went to the mission school at Concepción in 1870, there was no school in San Antonio. There, as in the Bolivian missions, the curriculum emphasized the teaching of the basic tenets of Catholicism and the memorization of the multiple rituals required of the faithful. In the case of Concepción, in addi-

tion to the preaching of the missionary, the teacher and her assistant taught "reading, sewing, Christian doctrine and polite behavior [*urbanidad*]"[10]. In sum, the missionary schools in Argentina were poorly organized, few children attended, and the infrastructure for the schools was virtually non-existent.

The mission schools in Formosa were not much better. By the early twentieth century the function of the schools had changed substantially by incorporating a type of job-oriented education that left little of the inculcation of Catholic values or aspects the European "civilization" as had been the case in the nineteenth century in the Salta missions and was still the case in the Bolivian missions. José Elías Niklison, an inspector for the Argentine National Department of Labor and an acute observer of the Chaco ethnic groups, asserted in 1916 that "I have not received a worse impression in San Francisco de Laishí than that produced by my visit to its only school, installed in a poorly furnished building, without supplies, and frequented by fifteen or twenty boys...although there exist in the mission 74 boys and 40 girls... in terms of schooling nothing that can be dignified by calling it that has up to now been done in San Francisco"[11].

In the case of the Toba mission schools, however, Niklison did not blame the problems of the school on an overemphasis on religious instruction, as Bolivian officials did in the early twentieth century in their country. Instead, Niklison pointed to the missionaries' lack of concern to anything but training the Indians to become the agricultural proletariat to the surrounding estates. In other words, the Franciscans by the early twentieth century in Argentina had changed their plans completely. Rather than resisting the labor recruiters as they had in the nineteenth century in their Salta missions, the friars now worked with the surrounding creole landowners at the expense of other objectives in "civilizing" them. Niklison blamed this emphasis on a lack of the coherent plan for "civilizing" the Indians, but it is more likely that the friars had learned from their previous experience.

Perhaps there was a difference in the spirit of the Franciscan missions in the early twentieth century, when liberalism had swept Latin America and became virtually the only acceptable discourse (just as has again occurred in late twentieth-century). The friars apparently accepted liberal discourse to a much greater degree than was the case among the Bolivian Franciscans, at least in terms of seeing the utility of training the Indians as workers with little concern for other matters. This fits in very well with the triumph of Social Darwinism and the racial categorization of the Indians as manual laborers who, because of their inherent inferiority, would never be able to

compete in higher-level positions in Argentine society. The surprising level of congruence with early twentieth-century Positivist thinking among the Franciscans in Argentina is understandable. The sense one gets when examining Church-state relations in Argentina throughout the republican era is that the Catholic Church was relatively weaker than in Bolivia and more beholden to the state that made it difficult to present an alternative discourse to that of the national government. The Roman Catholic Church was especially weak after the 1880 dispute with Julio A. Roca, when state education and civil marriage became law[12].

The Franciscan acceptance of quintessentially liberal tenets among the Toba missions can also be seen in their emphasis on individualism. Individualism, the acceptance of each person as an independent actor free of corporative restrictions and participating through the mechanisms of private property and the market, is one of the central postulates of liberal political philosophy. The friars fomented this individualism by distributing mission lands among the Indians for each household, the product of which could be sold on the market. All the Indians' labor was to be paid the prevailing wages and any communal authority was discouraged. The missionaries encouraged through these actions the idea of private property, a concept not very strong among the seminomadic Tobas[13].

While the Bolivian missions also in practice tried to implement policies that focused on the formation of private property, such as giving families individual plots and paying the wages for their work, the Franciscans there tried to create a more communal, less individualistic outlook. For one, traditional chiefs maintained much greater power in the Bolivian missions than appears to have been the case in Argentina, maintaining a much greater sense of community[14]. Secondly, the friars did not permit the indiscriminate use of Indian workers on the surrounding estates, in fact often actively opposing the seasonal migration to the haciendas or to the sugar plantations in northern Argentina. They did this precisely because they saw as the effect of this migration the corruption of the Indians into selfish, individualistic people who brought about untold problems to the missionary community. The Franciscans in Bolivia saw this as an impediment to true "civilization", as expressed in 1883 by the Tarija mission prefect, Fr. Doroteo Giannecchini:

> The greed of some hacendados within and without the republic who through a thousand ways and means exploit the ignorance of the neophytes, stealing them from the paternal care of the Fathers who took them out of the jungle: the impious doctrines, the principles of liberty, synonymous with libertinage that some officials have predicated

> and taught with impudence, through slander, satire, lies and hate against the Fathers who are the bulwarks of the true progress of Christian civilization[15].

The Bolivian government in the twentieth century tried to change this communal emphasis in the Chaco missions. The 1905 mission law, implemented by the Liberal Party that had recently won the Federalist War of 1898-99, brought widespread denunciation from the Franciscan communities in Bolivia. In Tarija, the prior asked for reactions to the new law from his friars in the missions. Their written responses, some quite lengthy and contesting each point paragraph by paragraph, are preserved in the Tarija convent archives. The most important point that most missionaries made was that the state would gain much greater authority in the missions and that the new rules would turn the missions into mere labor reserves for frontier ranchers rather than remain Christian communities that would truly "civilize" the natives through the Catholic faith. Indeed, the official Tarija convent historian, a French friar, refused to write about the missions any longer after 1906 because he thought that they were no longer truly Franciscan enterprises[16]. Thus, the missionaries in Bolivia never accepted the kind of liberalism that their counterparts in Argentina apparently had when they established new missions at the turn of the century in Formosa province. In this sense, the internal regimen and the goals of the Franciscan missions were quite different between Bolivia and Argentina by the early twentieth century. Liberalism had penetrated into the Argentine Chaco, but not to the same extent in the Bolivian sector.

The Structure of the State

The way in which the Argentine and Bolivian states were organized had also much to do with the relative failure of the Argentine missions. Argentina's political structure was federalist, whereas that of Bolivia remained resolutely centralist. This made a great difference in the amount of control exerted on the local level. In Argentina, frontier settlers were politically much more powerful than in Bolivia, and this was detrimental to the missions in the former country.

As we have seen, frontier settlers had similar interests in Argentine and Bolivian Chaco, for in both countries they viewed the missions similarly: during the early phase of frontier expansion, the government and the ranchers saw the missions as useful because they controlled the Indians in ways that neither the army nor the ranchers could. However, once the military balance had shifted in favor of the national state and the creoles, the

frontier settlers were loath to have the missions around, for they made it more difficult to exploit Indian labor. As we shall see, this was much more the case for Bolivia than Argentina. More importantly for Argentina, the creoles coveted mission lands, often founded at major indigenous settlements and of good quality for agriculture or grazing. As a result, the creoles attacked the missions as unnecessary and wished that the friars would move quickly even farther out on the frontier to control new Indian populations.

The federalist structure of the Argentine state gave the local creole frontier population much more power over the Franciscan missions than in centralist Bolivia. The provincial government in Salta was much more beholden to the settler point of view than the prefects of Tarija or Chuquisaca departments in Bolivia. In the case of Salta, ranchers were often relatives of the governors or were members themselves of provincial legislatures. In Bolivia, the prefects might also be related to the frontier creole population, but the prefects were appointed by the president and creatures of the central government in Sucre or La Paz, with little independence of action.

These differences were evident throughout the history of the missions in both countries. In the case of Argentina, the nineteenth-century missions, as we have seen, suffered the attacks from the creoles, the most egregious example when in 1864 an armed band of creoles threw out the missionaries from Las Conchas. The Salta provincial government did nothing to support the friars or sanction the ranchers despite this violent confrontation. Nothing of the sort happened in Bolivia, where the national government assiduously supported the missionaries throughout the nineteenth century. In the case of La Esquina Grande in the Salta Chaco, the friars had to abandon the mission because of trumped-up land claims from the independence era. There were similar claims in Bolivia, where independence hero Francis Burdett O'Connor had claims over the colonial-era Salinas mission. However, there the friars were able to get the mission back and charge rents for its use[17].

One might argue that Argentina on the national level was more liberal and thus more anticlerical. Domingo Sarmiento, president of Argentina between 1868 and 1872, certainly wrote in his youth tracts such as the famous *Facundo* which saw the Catholic Church as a regressive force in colonial history. However, by the time Sarmiento became president, his government generally supported the missionary efforts in the Chaco[18]. It was the Salta government that uniformly upheld the creoles' claims against those of the missionaries, thus showing the disadvantages for the Franciscans of the fe-

deralist arrangement. The federal government could take a larger view, agreeing that the missions served a useful purpose in frontier policy. It is unlikely in any case that the ranchers in the poverty-stricken far northeastern corner of the country could have much influence on the Argentine state, based largely on the thriving export economy of the littoral region.

In Bolivia, only when the national government fell into the hands of the anti-clerical Liberal party in 1899 did the Franciscans suffer setbacks in their missionary program. The 1905 regulations restricted missionary independence, but more importantly the government secularized two thriving missions, San Antonio and San Francisco, that same year. Settlers had wanted to gain access to mission lands, but they had been unsuccessful in pressuring previous governments because the few ranchers on the lowland eastern frontier could muster very little influence on the national level. Even in the 1905 secularization, control passed not to the local ranchers, but a multinational German corporation. After all, in Bolivia mining interests from the highlands held sway and could safely ignore frontier ranchers' protests.

To sum up, the interests of the creole frontier population mattered little to the national governments in either country. Indeed, the national government discerned greater advantages in supporting the missions than the ranchers. However, the federalist structure of the Argentine government gave the creoles on the Salta frontier much greater influence over the missions than was the case in centralist Bolivia. Only with the accession to power of the Liberal Party at the turn of the century did the Franciscans find their missions under threat.

Access to Indian Labor on the Frontier Missions

The relative power of frontier creoles in affecting the missions is also illuminated in a closely related issue, that of access to the labor of mission Indians. One of the important functions of the missions was to provide access to Indian labor for settlers, in a pattern that had existed since the early colonial period[19]. This was certainly also the case with the Chaco missions on both sides of the border. Labor remained relatively scarce throughout the region, as few creoles or European immigrants moved there. Rather, the Indians were the primary sources of labor for all creoles, whether ranchers (the large majority) or agriculturists. Indeed, the indigenous groups in the Gran Chaco were a vital labor source for enterprises on the margins of the Chaco as well. This was especially the case for the sugar plantations of Jujuy and Salta, which thrived in the low, hot valleys to the east of the Andean mountain range.

Both Bolivian and Argentine missions supplied the plantations with large numbers of workers. Labor contractors fanned out into the countryside in search of Indians in the Chaco willing to come for the sugar cane harvest. When voluntary measures were insufficient, plantation owners got the Argentine army to visit Mataco settlements in the Chaco as an incentive for the Indians to show up for work. Until the 1930s, the majority of workers of the plantations and in the *ingenios* were Chaco natives[20]. The grasp of the labor contractors extended into the Bolivian side of the Chaco, where Bolivian Indians migrated, often permanently, to the sugar cane fields in search of work. Eventually, this led to a serious labor shortage in the Bolivian Chaco and many failed attempts by the government to stop this exodus[21].

In the case of Bolivia, the friars tried to contain the emigration not only because many Indians never returned, thus depleting the missions, but because the habits their charges picked up in the plantation work camps were detrimental to the good discipline they tried to inculcate in the missions. The Bolivian government viewed the missions as a way of preventing the Indians to leave the country. Although authorities were initially somewhat equivocal in the policies towards Chaco Indian migration to Argentina, in the end they wholeheartedly supported the Franciscan attempts to limit the number of Indians leaving the country. By the early twentieth century, the Liberal-led government saw as one of the primary functions of the missions the retention of Indians on the Bolivian side of the border[22].

The Franciscans were moderately successful in stemming the tide of mission Indians to Argentina. They were able to keep labor contractors out of the missions, though they found it impossible to keep the Indians, often under the leadership of the chiefs, from leaving the missions voluntarily. They were more effective when the missions became targets for labor contractors from the rubber regions of the Bolivian Amazon. The Bolivian government decreed in 1906 that the missionaries were obligated to hand over five percent of the adult male population to the rubber contractors. The friars refused to carry out these orders; in addition, the Indians were loath to go to the Amazon where few ever returned and where the exploitation of labor was severe. As a result, the Bolivian national legislature soon reversed itself, much to the relief of the mission population[23]. In other words, the Franciscans in Bolivia had some success in keeping their charges on the missions, even in opposition to decrees by the national government. Only in the cases when the Indians wanted to go, the missionaries found it very difficult to keep them from leaving.

In Argentina the situation was very different. The Franciscans also did not like to see the adult males going to the plantations, for many of the same

reasons that the missionaries in Bolivia professed. However, they found it impossible to stop the labor contractors. As we have seen, the problem with labor contractors was so severe that the missionaries had to shut down Concepción mission in the early 1860s because the plantation agents took with them most able-bodied men. Indeed, wherever the friars founded a mission, they were soon inundated by requests for labor which they found impossible to refuse. Why was this the case? Most importantly, the legislation governing the missions in Argentina prevented the Franciscans from impeding the Indians to go to work off the mission grounds. As a result, labor contractors entered at will and took the Indians they needed, without worrying about the effect on the missions. In Bolivia, in turn, the Franciscans could refuse to let non-Indians onto the mission. Except for a brief period between 1906 and 1910, they were able to control who could use Indian labor. The missionaries asserted that they only let those creoles who treated their charges well and who paid them on time to recruit workers from the missions[24].

Although the Franciscans in Argentina did not have that authority, they eventually hit on a new system that made it possible to keep most of their charges. In San Francisco de Laishi they transformed the mission into an agricultural enterprise that depended on making money and thus keeping the Indians at full (and paid) employment at the mission. This had other consequences, slighting what otherwise might have been the principal goal of the mission: "civilizing" the natives. As we have seen, the friars neglected the religious aspects as well as schooling, the traditional means of acculturating the mission inhabitants As José Niklison remarked: "Synthesizing my impression in respect [to the mission], I will say that it is equivalent at present to an [agricultural] colony and a factory. Nothing more"[25]. In many ways, this was the logical extension of liberalism: create missions not to inculcate religion or create a sense of religious community, but to create an establishment in which economic considerations came first. The emphasis on individualism, also marked in this mission, reinforces this impression. The Indians would become a type of *homo economicus*, a common laborer, as turn-of-the-century liberals envisioned the lower orders of Latin American society.

Conclusion

The comparison of these missions provides not only interesting case studies of differences in the ways of acculturating Indians or the way in which the various levels of the state shaped the missionary experience and its relative successes or failures. It is possible to turn the analysis around and see how the different experiences of the missions tells us something

about the larger societies of which they were part and the relative permeability of these societies to liberal impulses. These differences can be seen in the three aspects of the mission experience discussed above.

In Argentina, liberalism was much more deeply established, even in the second half of the nineteenth century, than in Bolivia. The goals of the missions were in general terms similar, that of "civilizing" the natives, but the way in which the missionaries tried to implement these goals were quite different. In Argentina, despite the emphasis that Domingo Sarmiento had put on education, mission schools lagged. Both in terms of the number of students as well as the resources put to schooling Argentina lagged behind Bolivia. This had as much to do with external factors -the friars had less control over their charges than in the Bolivian Chaco- as it did with a de-emphasis on schooling especially noticeable in Laishi. In Bolivia, the Franciscans were able to emphasize more the spiritual aspects of their mission because they were better organized and had state backing.

Another important aspect is that in Argentina the adoption of liberalism meant -at least by the second half of the nineteenth century when the Interior Federalists had won against the Rosas regime- an acceptance of the principles of federalism. This had real consequences on the local level (an aspect often ignored in Argentine history) in that regional elites had much greater influence on government policies than more centralized states. In the case of Argentina, frontier ranchers were able to attack the missions with impunity because of their influence on the provincial level, as occurred in 1864. In the case of Bolivia, the alliance of the Franciscans with a firmly centralist government made these kinds of actions impossible. Frontier creoles attempted to undermine the missions, but were stymied by departmental officials appointed by the central government and beholden to them, not the local elites.

The support the Franciscans enjoyed from the government also affected the control they could exert on their charges and their relationship with the sugar plantations. While mission Indians left for the sugar cane fields in both Argentina and Bolivia, in Argentina the friars were powerless to stop the exodus of adult workers to such an extent that it closed down one mission. Only when the Franciscans themselves embraced the agro-industrial model of the plantations on the missions themselves were they successful in stopping the hemorrhage of laborers. In Bolivia, the migration of mission Indians to the sugar plantations was an issue as well. However, the Franciscans there were able to keep labor contractors at bay because of the greater authority they exercised on the missions. It also helped that most Indians

wanted to go the plantations on the other side of the border, going against the nationalist impulses of Bolivian officials. Even when the government became anticlerical and explicitly liberal in its policies after the 1898-99 Federalist War, it did not but briefly dispute the friars' role as arbiters of the Indians' work outside the missions. In the end, the Liberal government saw it in its interest to keep the Indians close to the missions and protect them from the exploitation common on the frontier through the missionaries' intercession.

The efforts of the Bolivian Liberal regime between 1906 and 1910 to force five percent of the mission Indians to work outside the missions failed, in the process showing some of the differences in the Bolivian and Argentine states. First, it showed the limits of the centralist model, for the Bolivian government could not guarantee the Indians' safe return, especially from the lawless rubber regions to the north of the Chaco missions. In the end, frontier settlers in the Chaco lost more of the labor force through this government policy than by having the missions regulate access to the Indians. In the federalist model of Argentina, local creoles would not have permitted Indian workers to leave the region. Secondly, it showed that the missionaries were actually some of the most effective agents the government possessed on the frontier if they wanted to keep native labor in the region. This was ironic, given the government's political ideology of anticlericalism. Thirdly, and most importantly, the missionaries' effective resistance against these policies and the overturning of this regulation showed that the Catholic Church had much more clout, on both the local and national levels, than was the case in Argentina. Liberalism, with its fervent anticlericalism, had not set roots the way it had in Argentina since the nineteenth century. Those brave souls who were willing to question the Catholic Church existed also among the Bolivian elites, but they were in the long term much less effective than in Argentina.

Notas

[1] The bibliography on these two issues is vast. Two recent collections are emblematic of this trend: Joseph Love and Nils Jacobsen, eds., *Guiding the Invisible hand: Economic Liberalism and the State in Latin American History* (New York: Praeger, 1988) and Robert H. Jackson, ed., *Liberals, the Church and the Challenge of Reform in Nineteenth-Century Spanish America* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997).

[2] I am referring to Florencia Mallon, *Peasant and Nation: The Making of Postcolonial Mexico and Peru* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

[3] Antonio Comajuncosa and Alejandro M. Corrado, *El Colegio Franciscano de Tarija y sus misiones* (Quaracchi: Tipografía del Colegio de S. Buenaventura, 1884); Angélico Martarelli, *El Colegio Franciscano de Potosí y sus misiones: Noticias históricas*, 2. ed. (La Paz: Talleres Gráficos Marinoni, 1918); Bernardino de Nino, *Continuación de la historia de misiones franciscanas del Colegio de PP. FF. De Potosí*, 2ª ed. (La Paz: Talleres Gráficos Marinoni, 1918).

[4] Pedro María Pelichi, *Relación histórica de las misiones del Gran Chaco sobre el Bermejo* (Buenos Aires: Imprenta del Porvenir, 1865); *Misioneros del Chaco Occidental: Escritos de Franciscanos del Chaco salteño (1861-1914)*, ed. Ana A. Teruel (Jujuy: CEIC, 1995). Ana Teruel is completing a major study of the Franciscan missions in Salta and I am grateful for her help in gathering information on this case. For the Formosa missions, see José Elías Niklison, *Investigación en los Territorios Federales del Chaco y Formosa*, v 3:3-4 (Buenos Aires: Departamento Nacional del Trabajo, 1916)

[5] See Erick D. Langer, "Mission Land Tenure on the Southeastern Bolivian Frontier, 1845-1949", *The Americas*, 50:3 (January 1994), 399-418.

[6] For Las Conchas, see Pelichi, 28-30; for Tarairí, see Erick D. Langer and Zulema Bass Werner de Ruiz, *Historia de Tarija: Corpus Documental*, v. 5 (Tarija: Universidad Juan Misael Saracho, 1988), 309-310.

[7] For a comparison between colonial and republican missions, see Erick D. Langer and Robert H. Jackson, "Colonial and Republican Missions Compared: The Cases of Alta California and Southeastern Bolivia", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 30:2 (April 1988), 286-311.

[8] There were 1,644 children in mission schools out of a total of 3,392 children going to school in the whole department. At the turn of the century the Franciscan missions in Tarija held a population of 2,610 inhabitants; all of Tarija department contained 77,887 people. See Luis Paz, *Informe que en cumplimiento de la ley eleva al Supremo Gobierno el Prefecto y Comandante General de Tarija, sobre la administración del departamento* (Tarija: Imprenta de El Trabajo, 1891), 19; Oficina Nacional de Inmigración, Estadística y Propaganda Geográfica, *Censo general de la población de la República de Bolivia en 1900*, v.2 (Cochabamba: Editorial Canelas, repr. 1973), 742, 744.

[9] See Angélico Martarelli, *El colegio de Potosí y sus misiones*, 2.ed. (La Paz: Talleres Gráficos Marinoni, 1918), 217-222.

[10] Joaquín Remedi, "Informe enviado al excelentísimo gobierno de la Nación" (1873), in Teruel, *Misioneros*, 82-84. For Bolivia, see for example "Reglamento para la escuela de niñas. Cuevo, Ene 1°, 1928, de P. César Vigiani", Archivo Parroquial de Cuevo, Archivo Parroquial de Macharetí.

[11] Niklison, 88-89.

[12] For Argentina, see Cayetano Bruno, *Historia de la iglesia en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Don Bosco, 1966-71). For Bolivia, see William Lofstrom, *La presidencia de Sucre en Bolivia*, tr. Mariano Baptista G. (Caracas: Academia Nacional de la Historia, 1987); Josep M. Barnadas, *La iglesia católica en Bolivia* (La Paz: Editorial Juventud, 1976); and Erick D. Langer and Robert H. Jackson, "Liberalism and the Land Question in Bolivia, 1825-1920", in Jackson, ed., *Liberals*, 171-192.

[13] Niklison, 35-36.

[14] See for example Erick D. Langer, "Mandeponay: Chiriguano Indian Chief on a Franciscan Mission", *The Human Tradition in Latin America: The Nineteenth*

Century, eds. Judith Ewell and William H. Beezley (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1989), 280-295; and "Caciques y poder en las misiones franciscanas entre los Chiriguanos durante la rebelión de 1892", *Siglo XIX: Revista de Historia*, 15 (January-June 1994), 82-103.

[15] Doroteo Giannecchini to Archbishop of La Plata, Aguairenda, December 12, 1883, "Libro 2° Copia = Notas de la Prefectura de las Misiones Franciscanas del Colegio de Nra. Sra. de los Angeles de Tarija", 61-62, Archivo Franciscano de Tarija.

[16] "Anales de este Colegio Franciscano de Tarija, Libro Segundo", 19-22. Fr. Larroua's arch-traditionalist opinion was wrong. The missions endured, very much as Franciscan enterprises, until at least the Chaco War in the 1930s. Unfortunately, the historian as a result of Larroua's ill-temper lacks the kind of mission overview of the Tarija missions available for earlier years.

[17] Mi Dorado to Minister of Interior, Tarija, August 20, 1836; Francisco de Paula Aráoz to Provincial Governor, Tarija, August 22, 1836, Ministerio del Interior 59: 30, Correspondencia Oficial, Archivo Nacional de Bolivia.

[18] This is apparent in the reports the missionaries periodically wrote the national government. See for example Joaquín Remedi, "Memorial presentado al Presidente de la República Argentina Domingo Faustino Sarmiento por el prefecto de Misiones [1870]", in Teruel, ed., 67-80.

[19] Some classic discussions of this issue include Alexander Marchant, *From Barter to Slavery: The Economic Relations of Portuguese and Indians in the Settlement of Brazil* (Baltimore. 1942); Mathias Kieman, *The Indian Policy of Portugal in the Amazon Region, 1614-1693* (Washington, D.C., 1954).

[20] Viviana E. Conti, Ana Teruel de Lagos and Marcleo A. Lagos, "Mano de obra indígena en los ingenios de Jujuy a principios de siglo", *Conflictos y procesos de la historia argentina contemporánea*, 17 (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1988); Marcelo Lagos, "De la toldería al ingenio: Apuntes de investigación sobre el trabajo de las aborígenes chaqueñas", *Población y trabajo en el Noroeste argentino: siglos XVIII y XIX*, Ana Teruel, ed. (San Salvador de Jujuy: UNIHR/Facultad de Humanidades, 1995), 125-142.

[21] For a summary of this pattern, see Erick D. Langer, *Economic Change and Rural Resistance in Southern Bolivia, 1880-1930* (Stanford: Stanford University Press), 142-146.

[22] Langer, 144.

[23] Langer, 145-146.

[24] Angélico Martarelli, *El colegio de Potosí y sus misiones*, 2ª ed. (La Paz: Talleres Gráficos Marinoni, 1918), 205-206.

[25] Niklison, 75. Of course this was not the first time that missions emphasized the economic. For an analysis of the consequences of doing so, in part by using archaeological methods, see Paul Farnsworth and Robert H. Jackson, "Cultural, Economic, and Demographic Change in the Mission of Alta California: the Case of Nuestra Señora de la Soledad", in *The New Latin American Mission History*, Erick D. Langer and Robert H. Jackson, eds. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 109-129.