

Capítulo 2:

Economic Impact of Immigration and Commercial Capital on the Emergence of a Rural Bourgeoisie: Buenos Aires in the Early Seventeenth Century.

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The land issue is probably most important to understanding the development of class formation and economic relation in Buenos Aires province, for it was responsible for establishing Argentina's most politically powerful social class in forging the latifundist system.

Twentieth century liberal historians point out at the outset of colonization in the late sixteenth century Buenos Aires rural surroundings were settled by impoverished yet self-sufficient encomendero farmers who produced a marketable surplus.¹ They portray Buenos Aires encomendero settlers as desperately poor to make the smuggling activities of the colonists seem legitimate. Conversely, the historians of the national left discuss this same rural group of interest in the light of their historical role in colonial development and core/periphery relations; particularly since the Buenos Aires settlers had access to the port.²

Liberal historians make little more of the smuggle activities of encomendero settlers other than that it attested to their dire poverty and their consequent need to supplement their incomes. However, the encomendero settlers engaged primarily in barter and were generally agriculturally self-sufficient. Further, since they were outside the cash economy, cash income was hardly useful. Thus, the historians of the national left find it easy to make the case that the agricultural activities of the encomendero settlers were not of key importance in the colonization process to Spain. The national left thus sees smuggling activities not as a product of alleged poverty but as the key role played by the settler class as intermediaries or middle men in the silver/slave trade between the South American silver mines and the Portuguese ports (Bahia-Luanda). In this way the national left historians claim that the silver/slave trade was the historical *raison d'être* for the settler class whose agricultural activities were both marginal and incidental to their existential importance as a group of interest in the world market system at the time. Unlike liberal historians, the national left asserts that apparent rural poverty was a cover for wealth accrued from smuggling. Thus, the divergent characterization of the colonization process in Buenos Aires and of the role of the rural settler class is linked not only to ideology but to divergent understandings of that process. The liberal historians assess the importance of this group of interest in terms of apparent rural conditions and the importance of the settlers to the colony itself, while the national left concentrates on the factor which made them important as an entrepot.

However, none of the scholars belonging to the aforementioned schools of thought illustrated the process by which a commercial penetration encouraged the formation of a large-scale, export-oriented landowning bourgeoisie in seventeenth-century Buenos Aires.

In light of this, I shall evaluate the impact of commercial penetration on Buenos Aires rural colonization to show how non-encomendero entrepreneurs, unlike the Buenos Aires encomendero settlers, resorted early in the seventeenth century to wage and slave labour, public and private land,

marketable credit, capital-intensive investments, monopoly over the meat supply and agricultural partnerships for the sake of expanding their businesses. Furthermore, the access to surplus land by which non-encomendero and "junker" oriented entrepreneurs articulated the surroundings of Buenos Aires was closely related to the division of labour and the ongoing intra-colonial struggle. In Buenos Aires, contradictions existed within the different sectors or factions of the group of interest or *estamento* that had held a dominant position since the late sixteenth century. These contradictions led to successive shifts in the control over manpower and the state apparatus.

Nevertheless, these shifts did not generate, as they had in Europe, real wage labour because the socio-economic organization and the colonial superstructure were conceived only to produce a commercial growth and to avoid any type of real capitalist development. Thus, the dispossession of a farm-oriented self-sufficient petty commodity producer (usually a small encomendero) by commercial capital did not function to the essential detriment of the system, but as a change of hands of the rural estates, which started being organized and worked in a "junker" strategy of rural development (large-scale market-oriented agrarian production), as against a farm strategy (petty commodity production), in order to fulfill the socio-economic functions assigned by commercial capital.

The narrow fringe of land settled by the first residents of Buenos Aires consisted of several different countries. These different countries were ecologically distributed. While Monte Grande county, to the north of the city, subsequently called the San Isidro coast, was distributed by governors with the goal of sowing wheat, the land of Magdalena to the south and Lujan to the west was distributed by governors with the goal of establishing the basis from whence to organize the great hunting (*vaquerias*) of wild cattle.

As a result of the growing demand for foodstuffs from the sugar plantations of Northeast Brazil as well as the need for supplying caravans of slaves travelling from Angola in transit to Peru and Upper Peru, military troops arriving from Spain in transit to Chile (General Alonso de Sotomayor in 1583, General Martínez de Leyva in 1601, General Mosquera in 1605, and Captain Francisco de Mandojana in 1623, and troops coming from the interior to defend Buenos Aires (1594, 1616, 1625 and 1645), the rural frontier expanded in the 1620s and 1630s.³ Thus, the sugar demand from Europe, the Araucanian wars in Chile, the Guaycurú invasions in Santa Fé, and the threat of foreign invasions had a positive impact upon Buenos Aires' agrarian economy. Land and Indian *encomiendas* were granted by the crown through the governors in order to assure the provisioning of military troops. Subsequent governors, such as Rodrigo Ortiz de Zárate (1583-85), Juan de Torres de Vera y Aragón (1587-89), Hernandarias (1591-94, 1602-09 and 165-18), and Diego Rodríguez de Valdéz y de la Banda (1599-1602), gradually moved the frontier towards the north of Buenos Aires province by distributing the land that corresponds to Matanza, Conchas, Cañada de la Cruz, and Areco counties. Later on, in the 1620s and 1630s, governors Francisco de Céspedes (1625-30), Pedro Estéban Dávila (1631-37), Francisco de Avendaño y Valdivia (1640) and Mendo de la Cueva y Benavçídez (1638-40) distributed Arrecifes county, further to the north, and moved Magdalena county further to the south, as a result of the need to retribute those Buenos Aires residents who helped them to set up military expeditions against the Guaycurú and Calchaquí Indians of the Bermejo area. The total distributed land embraced about 800 square leagues (see Table 1).

However, because of the increasing scarcity of capital and local *encomendado* Indians, most of the Buenos Aires founding families who did not receive land in the last distributions relied upon a farm strategy of rural development, an almost subsistence economy, and an extended household. As a result, many of of Buenos Aires' old founding families left and sold their own properties. According to Miguel Angel Lima, of the 64 *encomenderos* and landowners of Juan de Garay's expedition of 1580, 21 (or 33 percent) left the city in the following two years. Also, in the military review of 1602 M. A. Lima found only seven remaining settlers of the 64 who founded Buenos Aires. And out of the 84

members of the 1602 export permission, only 14 founders were mentioned.⁴ But new residents settled in Buenos Aires after 1580. Already in 1582 Captain Juan de Espinosa arrived in Buenos Aires with several new settlers from Santa Fé. A year later, in 1583, Alonso de Vera y Aragón's ship and General Sotomayor's fleet from Spain arrived in Buenos Aires. Many of the accompanying soldiers deserted and remained in Buenos Aires. Governors classified these settlers and their founding families on a scale of five degrees seniority in order to assign the right to export flour and jerky to North Brazil. The older ones were assigned the title of first settlers and the new ones the dignity of fifth settlers.⁵ Nevertheless, descendants from these settlers remained in the city. According to my data, 31 settlers (or 48 percent) were still present in the 1602 export permission.⁶ Another 23 descendants from the first encomendero settlers were similarly present as landowners in 1602. But out of 54 surviving first settler's families that held rural estates in the first half of the century, 30 residents, or 56 percent, sold 57 farm estates, or 35 percent of all farms sold in this period, and 24 residents, or 44 percent sold 32 ranch estates, or 29 percent of all ranches sold in the first half of the century (see Tables 2 and 3). Likewise, out of 60 surviving first settler's families that possessed urban real estate in 1602, 37 residents, or 62 percent, sold 62 houses and urban lots in the first half of the century (see Table 4). According to my data, six first settlers sold 20 estates, two third settlers sold five estates, three fourth settlers sold eight estates, and seven fifth settlers sold seventeen estates. Thus, these figures further corroborate the existence of a social and economic displacement.

Those old founding families that did not become discouraged by the economic strength of the new rank of slave-traders constituted the core of the *Benemérito* political faction. They were very few and owed their economic success essentially to having been involved in an internal market-oriented trade and having purchased black slaves without becoming indebted to the Portuguese slave-traders, who happened to constitute the core of the *Confederado* faction. These included Pedro Gutiérrez, a landowner who bought five slaves and who have been both the attorney of the inheritors of the Adelantado Juan de Torres de Vera y Aragón in 1611 and the Alcalde de Primer Voto chosen by Governor Céspedes in 1629; Cristóbal Naharro, a mill owner who acquired ten slaves; Francisco Pérez de Burgos, an encomendero who possessed five slaves; Miguel del Corro, and Andrés Ximénez de Fuentes. The case of Hernandarias, although a resident of Santa Fé city, numerically is the most outstanding, because his widow declared more than 64 slaves, most of whom had been obtained by her husband through custom forfeitures while he was a judge in proceedings related to confiscation of prohibited goods.⁷ In other words, the core of the *Benemérito* faction owed their economic strength essentially to extra-economic means of obtained manpower. Later on, in the 1630s, this pattern of economic behaviour continued. General Gonzalo de Carvajal and General Amador Vaez de Alpoin, both internal market-oriented producers and the first one a well known *Benemérito* leader, were able to freely get Indian manpower in their failed expeditions for the recuperation of Concepción del Bermejo.⁸

The emergence of a large-scale market-oriented agrarian production and slave-oriented trade gradually removed from the Buenos Aires ruling elite those landowners whose social base had consisted of local encomendado Indians. The urban non-encomendero entrepreneurs emerged as the chief agents in driving up the wages of labour in competition with the encomenderos. The low profitability of the encomienda system convinced many encomenderos to migrate. Some preferred to sell their right to Indian encomiendas rather than return to their locations of origin. This happened with Captain Víctor Casco de Mendoza, who in 1609 resigned the encomienda of the Guatoma nation as well as the Guatabu people in Paraguay province.⁹ Similarly, Captain Juan de Vallejo, Buenos Aires royal treasurer delivered in 1633 the Indians of the repartimiento of Guana in Chile to General Diego Xaraquemada.¹⁰ But the non-encomendero entrepreneurs were not the only ones to hold African slaves. In 1613 when the encomendero-merchant Sebastián de Horduña hired out eight Chaná Indians from his own encomienda of Baradero, he served as bondsman together with Miguel Rivadeneyra, Cristóbal Naharro and Juan Nieto de Humanes for slave-trader Hernán Gómez to introduce 129 Angoolan slaves. Later on, in the 1620s this trend increased.¹¹ Table 5 shows us how Sebastián de Horduña was a partner

in eight transactions introducing 70 slaves; and Lorenzo de Lara, an encomendero in Magdalena county, was a partner in three transactions introducing 48 slaves; and Alonso Guerrero de Ayala, another encomendero, introduced 198 slaves.

The old Buenos Aires farmer families or clans linked to the encomienda acquired the first piece of land through non-cash transactions (inheritances, dowries, or donations). This mode of estate acquisition represented the transfer of wealth within the existing landowning elite. The new rural sector of non-encomendero landowners, shown in Tables 6 and 7, instead entered the ranks of the landed by acquiring royal property, or through donations and purchases from a non-relative. There was a fairly widespread belief among non-encomendero landowners that land of acquisition might be more freely alienated than inherited land. These newcomers represented the "nouveau riche" linked to the emergence of a large-scale, market-oriented production that exported wheat and flour to Northeast Brazil. They accumulated sufficient wealth through the slave trade and smuggling to buy or trade their way into the landowning class.

To know whether the old or the new ranks or estates were holding their interests in farms or ranches will certainly clarify the issue. While farms were usually owned by external market-oriented interests (a new rank), ranches were owned by internal market-oriented producers (an older rank). An easy way to determine this is by means of analyzing the way each one of these two kinds of properties were acquired. Purchases used to be the only way for the smuggling class to trade its way into the landowning rank.

Inheritances instead, was the most common way for the old rank class of founding settlers to keep the name of the land. From what can be deduced from Table 8, the history of Buenos Aires rural land tenure confirms that sale was among farm real estate a more common means of transfer than inheritance (bequeaths plus dowries). Between 1602 and 1642 farm real estate changed hands a total of 226 times. Only 89 of the 226 transfers were through bequeaths and dowries, the remaining transfers (61 percent) were by sale (Table 8).

Instead, among ranch real estate, sale was much less common means of transfer than inheritance. Ranch real estate changed hands a total of 245 times. Only 100 of the 245 transfers were through bequeaths and dowries; the remaining 111 (53 percent) were by sale. The lack of notarial records before 1602 makes it hard to assess the frequency of farm and ranch sales in the sixteenth century. Thus, these figures further corroborate the fact that a market-oriented production that exported flour to Brazil encouraged a high mobility within the farm land market, leaving instead the ranch land market almost stagnant.

In Monte Grande county, a farm county, out of 46 pieces of property distributed in 1582, one lot changed owners through sales four times, another three times, seven twice, and 28 at least once in the period between 1602 and 1640. Of the 64 pieces of property in Monte Grande county in 1582, only one changed owners exclusively through bequeaths and dowries during 60 years. In Matanza and Las Conchas counties, because of the land being in less valuable locations, property was less mobile and there seemed to have been stronger attempts to "keep the name on the land". Of the almost 50 pieces of property in Matanza county in 1610, only three were exclusively through bequeaths and dowries more than 60 years. Two of these pieces were the one granted by Governor Hernandarias to Simón de Valdéz in 1609 and donated to the Dominican order by his inheritors in 1709,¹² and the piece of land granted by Governor Hernandarias to Mateo Leal de Ayala in 1609 and sold by his grand-daughter, Petrona Cabral de Ayala, to Andrés de Ávila in 1728.¹³ Similarly, the piece of land granted by Governor Juan de Torres de Vera y Aragón to Christóbal Naharro in June 1588 was sold by his great-grandson, Diego de Giles, to Francisco Rodríguez de Estela in April 1682.¹⁴ Of the almost 50 pieces of property in Conchas county in 1610, only seven were owned by the same family 60 years later. Very persistence in

"keeping the name on the land" was unusual due to the increasingly expanding land market. Out of seven cases, the longest case involved the farm of Domingo Griveo. In May 1594, Governor Fernando de Zárate granted a piece of farmland (*suerte de chacra*) of 400 varas to Domingo Griveo. Two centuries later, in 1823, his great-great-grandsons, the Ibarrola family, sold this property to José Las.¹⁵ However, the existence of free land in the rural frontier conspired against a long persistence in "keeping the name on the land".

In contrast to the almost absolute monoculture of Brazilian sugar plantations, wheat farms in Buenos Aires province were commonly diversified, many of them growing wheat for feeding the farm's population as well as for sale in Buenos Aires market and for export to northeast Brazil. Moreover, wheat and corn husbandry in Buenos Aires was much less labour-intensive than sugar in Brazil. In other words, the work of preparing the soil, sowing, harvesting and processing the crop was much more evenly spread out through the year. Besides this, wheat and corn do not spoil immediately on harvesting like sugar, so the field African slaves and wage earning Indians could also be employed in ensinking, grinding, and making flour and bread.

Large-scale export-oriented agrarian production in Buenos Aires province during the first half of the seventeenth century was attempted only by those producers who were prepared to compete in an embryonic "junkie" way in order to make a profit. By a "junkie" way of acting I understand the combination of both the hiring of a wage working force, the hiring of a managerial class of overseers and foremen, the subordination to commercial capital through long-term credits, and the capital intensive way of investing. The main exponents of this kind of production during the first half of the seventeenth century were a score of almost 20 settlers (see Tables 6 and 7). For example, Amador Vázquez de Alpoim, originally a slave-trader, became a farmer and a rancher in 1605 when he bought from Pedro Alvarez Gaitán the right to his lands, urban lots, ranches, etc., for \$130.¹⁶ Three years later, Vázquez bought 1,000 frontage varas of farm land in Monte Grande county and 3,000 varas of ranch land in Paraná county. In 1622, Vázquez de Alpoim purchased a farm in Conchas county worth \$80.¹⁷ A year later in 1623, Vázquez de Alpoim hired Juan de la Torre at \$100 per year and half of the harvest of his farm in Conchas county. In addition, Vázquez was obliged to give Torre ten Indians.¹⁸ A few months later, he hired foreman Francisco López at \$60 per year to run his *estancia* in Paraná county.¹⁹ Finally, a year later, in 1624, he decided to share with Juan Bernal "the farm he possessed in Conchas county to sow wheat and corn for the third part of the harvest".²⁰ Moreover, Vázquez de Alpoim became indebted four times between 1626 and 1643 for a total amount of \$2,979.

Other less complicated examples were those of Juan Barragán, who hired 15 Indians between 1622 and 1652 and possessed a farm in Conchas county and ranches in Luján and Magdalena counties; Gaspar de Gaete, who hired five Indians between 1634 and 1639 and owned 29 slaves that worked on his estate in Magdalena county; Marcos de Sequera, who in 1632 bought two farms of 700 frontage varas in Conchas county worth \$240 and three *estancias* in Luján county of 9,000 varas in 1637 and 1638 worth \$3,290.²¹ Sequera hired 11 Indians and owned 33 slaves, of whom ten of the latter worked on his estates in Luján and Conchas counties. Also, in 1637 he hired foreman Juan de Silvera for the term period of one year at \$120.²² Furthermore, Sequera became indebted four times between 1633 and 1640 for a total amount of \$14,570. Likewise, in 1633, Juan de Tapia de Vargas purchased 857 frontage varas in Matanza county worth \$103. In 1638, he bought 700 frontage varas more in the same place worth \$185.²³ Tapia de Vargas hired eight Indians and owned 60 slaves that worked on his farms in Monte Grande and Matanza counties as well as on his ranch in Arrecifes county. Also, in 1636, Tapia hired foreman Sebastián Gómez for a one-year period at \$100.²⁴ In addition, Tapia de Vargas became indebted four different times between 1633, the year he purchased his first farm, an 1640, for a total amount of \$7,947. Similarly, Bernabé González Filiano bought in 1634 a farm in Monte Grande county worth \$120 and in 1639 an *estancia* in Luján county worth \$280.²⁵ Moreover, González Filiano hired two Indians and owned upon his death 28 slaves that worked on his farm in Monte Grande county

as well as on his ranches in Luján and Cañada de la Cruz counties. Finally, González Filiano became indebted three times through personal loans between 1634 and 1640 for a total amount of \$3,657. Also, he became indebted for \$500 through a mortgage loan in 1632.²⁶ Thus, the combined activities of buying land in the market, hiring Indian and foreign labour, and purchasing African slaves characterized the embryonic capitalist-oriented nature of Buenos Aires agrarian production.

There were, moreover, cases where landowners, who have inherited real estate, also acted in a "junker" way. This was the case of Enrique Enríquez, a former shipowner who inherited rural land in Matanza county from his father-in-law, Francisco García Romero, who had in the past been involved with the *Confederado* faction. During his administration, he hired foremen on two different opportunities. In 1622, he hired Sebastián de Almirón for a one-year period at \$90. In 1632, he hired Manuel Gómez Viera for a one-year period at \$120.²⁷ Besides his inherited real estate, Enríquez purchased in 1632 an estancia in Matanza county worth \$100.²⁸ Six years later, in 1638, Enríquez borrowed \$2,000, offering an estancia as collateral, which he cancelled in 1658.²⁹ Moreover, in 1644, Enríquez borrowed \$1,364 to repair his rural establishments and to buy slave manpower.³⁰ The emergence of a mercantilist landowning stratum benefited, then, from the fixity of money borrowed under long mortgage term while prices and production rose.

Large-scale cattle production was guaranteed by means of hiring a qualified supervisor. To be an efficient overseer one had to be extraordinary versatile and able to tackle all manner of jobs, from cart-making to midwifery. The total which absentee landlords employed most frequently to assure the service of overseers was the *concierto* (notarial contract) which specified the duties and rights of the landowner and the overseer. It established the amount of the salary and the term period agreed for the performance of the service. Table 9 registered 20 contracts of this type which 20 different landowners contracted between 1622 and 1642. The salaries fluctuated around an average of \$100 yearly. The highest salaries did not surpass \$160 annually. For example, Diego López, the son-in-law of Sebastián Romes, hired Gregorio Botello at \$160 per year. The lowest salaries did not fall below \$50 per year (see Table 9).

The position of cattle freighter, or fleet foreman, in contrast to the *mayordomo de estancia* (overseer) warranted a higher social status. In effect, cattle freighters earned higher salaries than the *mayordomos de estancia* or were generally paid with a percentage of the cattle driven. Salaries for cattle freighters fluctuated between \$300 and \$500 yearly. For example, landowner Pedro Gutiérrez hired in 1634 a couple of foremen, Gerónimo Villarroel and Marcos Morales, for \$300 and \$400 each,³¹ and Juan Crespo Flores hired Juan Herrera for \$500.³² These high salaries resulted from the fact that foremen had to hire with their salaries the Indian to do the job. By contrasting Table 9 with the list of non-encomendero employers of Indian that I have in my Data Bank, I discovered corroborating the previous statement, that foremen Manuel Gómez, Diego Serrano, and Juan Bautista Manso hired numerous Indians.

The land concentration process did not occur only by means of *mercedes de tierras* (royal grants). It also resulted from the use of endogamic marriage as a way of reinforce land concentration. Table 10 shows us a list of 25 landowners who married daughters of real estate owners. Among these clan negotiators, urban land was preferred to rural land. Looking specifically at the rural real estate obtained through marriage, I found that farms and ranches constituted 14 percent of the total value of all dowries and slaves 24 percent (see Table 11). Examining specifically those urban real properties that had been obtained through marriage, I found in a sample of 88 dowries, out of a universe of 200 dowries processed in Table 11, that houses and vacant lots constituted 26 percent of the total value of all dowries.

Large-scale cattle production was also advanced by means of capital-intensive investments. To

that purpose, prospective cattle breeders in Buenos Aires bought bulls and cows. For example, in 1632, Bartolomé Ramírez, a former wheta producer, in company with Captain Pedro Hurtado transported from Santa Fé 300 head of cattle.³³ Similarly, in 1639, Sergeant Major Marcos de Sequera purchased from Diego López Camelo 200 cows and 500 bulls at \$250.³⁴

Large-scale cattle production was also furnished by the way meat was distributed for public and private consumption. The exclusive right to supply Buenos Aires with meat was contracted by the Cabildo to individuals for a one-year term under competitive bidding. When there were no private bidders at all, the Cabildo itself assigned the exclusive right to slaughter in rotation, one week per cattle owner.

Slaughtermen obtained a monopoly over their trade in return for subjection to Cabildo supervision and price control. The reason for this monopoly was to provide the city with meat at the lowest price possible by making only one individual responsible and thereby avoiding the ups and downs of a free and competitive market.³⁵ Nevertheless, the forces of the market did come into play, especially on the supply side. The growing creole land-owning oligarchy profited from the monopoly over the meat supply. Although it was in theory completely open to public bidding, the exclusive right to supply Buenos Aires with meat or the abasto contract was effectively limited to those large landowners like Blas de Mora in 1618 or Antón Higuera de Santana in 1620 who could themselves supply the necessary livestock or to those merchants like Martín de Avila in 1605 or Francisco Gómez Prieto in 1608 who had sufficient capital to buy what they needed (see Table 12).

When directly administered by the city government, the abasto continued to channel the livestock of the creole landowning oligarchy to Buenos Aires. Although the creole landowning oligarchy exercised a monopolistic control over the city's meat supply, political structures allowed access to others willing to sell meat. For example, in 1616, because the governor of Buenos Aires had forbidden the slaughter of cows in the pampa (to prevent their extermination), no single landowner was willing to commit himself to supply the city with meat. The Cabildo ordered residents who possessed cattle to slaughter only on Saturdays and then only in rotation with other persons having livestock.³⁶ However, later on, in the 1630s, the prohibition to kill cows, became a pre-condition demanded by meat suppliers.³⁷

Partnerships were also an indicator of Buenos Aires large-scale export-oriented agrarian production as well as of the demise of the self-sufficient encomendero. Buenos Aires' landowners entered into partnerships and companies with relatives or friends to combine resources to finance the transformation and consolidation of their estates. For instance, in 1616, Gerónimo de Medrano and Juan Barragán, both friends, purchased a ranch in Luján county. Luis Gaitán and Juan Rodríguez Gaitán, cousins, bought 500 frontage varas of ranch land in Magdalena county in 1619.³⁸ Likewise, the two-person partnerships formed by Christóbal Naharro and Juan Alonso de Vera y Zárate, Luis Cordobés and Gonzalo de Acosta, and Martín de Abila and Juan Domínguez Palermo reached financial settlements in rural businesses in 1608, 1614 and 1615, respectively.³⁹ Partnerships disappeared in the 1630s when landowners had accumulated sufficient capital to purchase the estates alone. This, of course, implied that half the partners succeeded economically at the expense of their partners.

Capitalist accumulation in agriculture can take the form of a capital-intensive type of investment in a given physical area and not in additional physical area alone. In effect, ownership of watermills, windmills, atahonas (grist mills) and percheles (barns) were also factors helping to accumulate capital.⁴⁰ According to Table 13, wills show the existence of 20 grist mills and 13 barns out of 115 wills. Out of 53 wills that included in their items grist mills and barns, 30 or 57 percent, were issued by widows. Thus, it is not surprising that grist mills, along with slaves, must have been the main revenue-producing assets left to widows.

Besides grist mills and barns, the capital intensive type of investments in agriculture took the form of vineyards. Vineyards were also a means to incorporate Buenos Aires into the internal colonial market. Land planted with vines commanded the highest price, required the highest rate of manpower and according to Cushner (1980),

"...were available only to those with substantial sums of money, for the purchaser had to buy the house, store-houses, pressing apparatus and a huge slave labour force".⁴¹

The need to fence the vineyard is one of the reasons why such high rate of manpower was required. In the case of Buenos Aires, four wills and two notarized sales reveal the existence of vineyards (see Table 14). While the farm that had the highest number of vineyard soles was that of Pedro Pedraza Centellas, with 18.000 vineyard soles, or the equivalent of 3,600 wine jars, located at Monte Grande county; the one that employed the highest number of slaves was the vineyard of Antón Higuera de Santana with 28 slaves located also at Monte Grande county and producing around 3,200 wine jars (see Table 14). With regard to wine production, the number of grape-vines cultivated varied by locality. From three counties where wills mentioned the existence of vineyards, the one that took into account bigger vineyards was, according to Table 14, Monte Grande county, followed by Magdalena and the by Matanza county.

Because Buenos Aires' entrepreneurs were intervening directly in agrarian production, commercial accumulation instantly affected the rural relations of proprietorship. The city of Buenos Aires as well as the countryside grew within the context of a change in social relations. As a result of this change, not all of Buenos Aires residents shared the same socio-economic identity. While the wealthiest monopolistic merchants were both urban and rural landlords, those less rich and of a petty commodity nature filled either one or the other category. For instance, a minority of urban landowners, those who were large merchants, were also farm and ranch sellers and buyers. Out of 194 urban land sellers, only 24 were farm sellers and 11 ranch sellers. Some of the urban land sellers were also farmers, ranchers, and slave sellers. As a matter of fact, eight urban land sellers were also ranch and farm sellers; four were ranch and slave sellers; three were farm and slave sellers and another three were ranch, farm, and slave sellers. Likewise, out of 194 urban land buyers, only 34 were also farm buyers and 15 ranch buyers. Some of the urban land buyers were also farm, ranch, and slave buyers. In effect, there were six urban land buyers who were also farm and slave buyers and two who were ranch and slave buyers.⁴²

In short, one can say that the penetration of commercial relations in the countryside accelerated an intense urban and rural land market. In this regard, slave owners did not share a large portion of the farm market. Out of 107 farm sellers, only 14, or 13 percent, were also slave sellers. Likewise, only 10 buyers out of 107 farm buyers were also slave buyers. Besides slave owners, rural landlords were also urban land buyers and sellers. Actually, among 82 purchasers of ranch real estate, only 26, or 32 percent, were also urban land buyers and six were both slave and urban land buyers. Similarly, among 82 sellers of ranch real estate, only 21, or 26 percent, were also urban land sellers and seven, or nine percent, were both slave and urban land sellers. By the same token, among 107 farm purchasers, only 34 or 32 percent, were also urban land buyers. Likewise, among 107 farm sellers, 33 or 31 percent, were also urban land sellers and seven were both slave and urban land sellers. Apparently, ranch-owners shared a larger portion of the slave market than farmers did. In fact, out of 82 ranch sellers, 23 or 28 percent, were slave sellers. In like manner, out of 82 ranch buyers, 16 or 20 percent, were also slave buyers.⁴³

In summary, this chapter has verified how the capitalist penetration into the Buenos Aires country-side under the control of commercial capital early in the seventeenth century changed patterns

of rural behavior from a farm strategy (petty commodity production), run by the members of the *Benemérito* faction, towards a junker strategy (large-scale, market-oriented, agrarian production), of rural development, run by the members of the *Confederado* faction. Moreover, this chapter has shown that in order to encourage a junker strategy of rural development a non-encomendero land-owning class of entrepreneurs resorted to the purchase of public and private land and slave labor, to the hiring of Indian labor, to capital-intensive investments, to private indebtedness, to the monopoly over the meat supply and to agricultural partnerships in order to supply the Brazilian demand for foodstuffs.

Footnotes

¹ Coni, 1941; and Canabrava, 1944, chapter IV, and Fitte, 1963.

² Vedoya, 1973, 361 and 377.

³ Trelles, 1872, 22.

⁴ Lima, 1980, 20.

⁵ Lafuente Machain, 1944, 183.

⁶ Vedoya, 1973, 428.

⁷ Molina, 1964, 333.

⁸ Cervera, 1907, 1979-82, I, 361.

⁹ Archivo General de la Nación (AGN), Sala IX, Escr. Ant., v.1, f.470.

¹⁰ Ibid., v.19, f.411.

¹¹ Among them we found: Amador Vázquez de Alpoín, Juan Barragán, Gaspar de Gaete, Bernabé González Filiano, Antonio de Govea, Mateo Leal de Ayala, Diego López Camelo, Melchor Maciel, Juan de Matías de Balcázar, Mateo de Monserrate, Blas de Mora, Juan Quintero, Antonio de Rocha Bautista, Pedro de Roxas y Acevedo, Marcos de Sequera, Juan de Tapia de Vargas, Cristóbal de Torres, and Luis de Villegas.

¹² AGN, Tribunales, Protocolos, Registro 2, 1709, f.1.

¹³ AGN, Registro 3, 1728, f.68.

¹⁴ AGN, v.45, f.255

¹⁵ Ibidem, Sala IX, Protocolos de Luján, v.3, f.537v.

¹⁶ AGN, v.3, f.428v.

¹⁷ AGN, v.11, f.309.

¹⁸ AGN, v.12, f.101.

¹⁹ AGN, v.12, f.191v.

²⁰ AGN, v.13, f.135v.

²¹ AGN, v.18, f.196; v.23, f.365; and v.24, f.7.

²² AGN, v.23, f.354.

²³ AGN, v.19, f.60; v.25, f.27v. and 40v.

²⁴ AGN, v.22, f.466v.

²⁵ AGN, v.20, f.315v.; and v.25, f.58.

²⁶ AGN, v.15, f.34.

²⁷ AGN, v.11, f.539; and v.18, f.250.

²⁸ AGN, v.18, f.89v.

²⁹ AGN, v.24, f.512.

³⁰ AGN, v.27, f.538.

³¹ AGN, v.20, f.37 and 38.

³² AGN, v.19, f.471.

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³⁴ AGN, v.25, f.102.

³⁵ Cordero, 1978, 183-186.

³⁶ Acuerdos, Municip., III, 198.

³⁷ Acuerdos, AGN, VIII, 264.

³⁸ AGN, v.8, f.29, and v.10, f.160.

³⁹ AGN, v.2, f.1057; v.6, f.172 and v.7, f.6.

⁴⁰ About the impact of watermills and windmills on Buenos Aires countryside, see Ochoa de Eguileor, 1977, 28-37.

⁴¹ Cushner, 1980, 44.

⁴² Data Bank

⁴³ Data Bank.