

# **Commercial Capitalism on the Banks of the Río Plata: The Meat Industry Between Empire and Independence (1780s-1850s)**

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# Commercial Capitalism on the Banks of the Río Plata: The Meat Industry Between Empire and Independence (1780s-1850s)

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It is impossible to look at a map of South America without being struck with the manifest importance of the Río de la Plata in a commercial point of view.  
(Woodbine Parish)<sup>1</sup>

The aim of this paper is to reconstruct the rise of the salting meat plants (*saladeros*) along the Río de la Plata between the 1780s and 1850s as an expression of the region's deeper integration into the wider capitalist market through the creation and tentative management of a new commodity chain. The *saladeros* were one result of private and public attempts to extend the commodity form, and contributed to processes of local economic and social change. Alfredo Montoya described it as the "first industry based on investments" of the region, which hinged on an export-based political economy of livestock products.<sup>2</sup> Horacio Giberti stressed how labour organisation in the *saladeros* was similar to big industry, insofar as it was based on a rational division of labour and the disconnection between the worker and his product.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, Stephen Bell noted that it was the place where "industrial technology first appeared on a significant scale".<sup>4</sup> However, Claudio Bellini denies the industrial character of the activity, as it was just "the most outstanding example of raw material processing".<sup>5</sup> Finally, Jonathan C. Brown wittily interpreted it as "the crucial funnel of the entire economic system: into it flowed the cattle of the *pampa* and out of it passed the raw material of international trade".<sup>6</sup>

This definition encapsulates the perspective of this paper. The *saladero* was the locus in which the natural product of the Argentine Pampas (the wild and tame cattle, and to a lesser extent horses and sheep, that in the eighteenth century were the main inhabitants of the region, having been first introduced by the Spanish in the sixteenth century) was processed into a series of commodities that were traded in the global capitalist market. These commodities sustained the deeper integration of different capitalist societies in the Atlantic basin. The processed commodities were salted and jerked meat, as well as hides, tallow and sebum. A particular focus is placed on the political support to the industry, in order to highlight the continuities between

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<sup>1</sup> Woodbine Parish, *Buenos Ayres and the provinces of the Rio de la Plata: from their discovery and conquest by the Spaniards to the establishment of their political independence*, London: Murray, 1852, p.349.

<sup>2</sup> Alfredo J. Montoya, *La ganadería y la industria de salazón de carnes en el periodo 1810-1862*, Buenos Aires: Editorial El Coloquio, 1971, p.131.

<sup>3</sup> Horacio C. E. Giberti, *Historia económica de la ganadería argentina*, Buenos Aires: Solar/Hachette, 1970.

<sup>4</sup> Stephen Bell, 'Early industrialization in the South Atlantic: political influences on the *charqueadas* of Rio Grande do Sul before 1860', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 19:4 (1993), p.400.

<sup>5</sup> Claudio Bellini, *Historia de la Industria en la Argentina de la Independencia a la crisis de 2001*, Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 2017, p.32.

<sup>6</sup> Jonathan C. Brown, *A socioeconomic history of Argentina, 1776-1860*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979, p.109.

the colonial and postcolonial period in respect to state promotion of commodity production. In fact, as would be the case for twentieth-century postcolonial polities, the new independent state relied on colonial economic activities to foster economic development.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, the Río de la Plata became one of the main centres of the nineteenth-century Atlantic meat industry, together with other regions such as the Brazilian Rio Grande do Sul and Ireland.

The first section describes the context of the eighteenth-century Bourbon reforms, a series of administrative and economic innovations that imperial authorities envisioned to better exploit the economic potential of their empire. The second discusses the appearance of the *saladeros* on the Río de la Plata (1780s-1800s); while the third is focused on the development of the industry after independence from Spain (1810s-1850s). The final section is devoted to the description of two main final segments of the *saladeros* commodity chain (Britain and Cuba). Brazil was also an important recipient of processed meat, due to the huge demand from plantations, while hides were exported (or re-exported by British merchants) to other markets, such as Antwerp, Genoa, Spain and the United States. However, detailed study of these is outside the scope of this paper.<sup>8</sup>

This case study illustrates theories that have tried to understand the interrelated processes of local economic development and integration into a global capitalist market, while challenging the primacy that modernisation theory has had in those discussions. World-system theory has focused on uneven surplus-value creation on a regional level to explain economic integration as an extractive relation established since the early modern period between metropolitan Spain and the Americas. Unequal commodity chains linked the shores of the Atlantic through an exploitative economic relationship, in which value-adding activities were located in the central regions of the system, thereby allowing profit accumulation and economic modernisation. The Spanish Empire was therefore an extractive institution, promoting underdevelopment in its peripheral dominions through the control of valuable commodity chains, and this colonial heritage strongly affected postcolonial states in their attempts to modernise their economy.<sup>9</sup>

Informal imperialism provided an additional explanation for postcolonial underdevelopment.<sup>10</sup> Even without formal imperial control, European powers – mainly Britain – were able to affect the developmental path of independent Latin American polities, bending it to the needs of European empires. The extension of agricultural commodity chains was therefore detrimental to local industrialisation, since those exports were paid for with cheap

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<sup>7</sup> See the introductions of Andres Guerrero & Mark Thurner (eds), *After Spanish Rule: Postcolonial Predicaments of the Americas*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2003, and Mark Thurner (ed.), *The First Wave of Decolonization*, London & New York: Routledge, 2019.

<sup>8</sup> See Manuel Llorca-Jaña, *The British Textile Trade in South America in the Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014, pp.147-8.

<sup>9</sup> Stanley J. Stein & Barbara H. Stein, *The colonial heritage of Latin America: essays on economic dependence in perspective*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1970.

<sup>10</sup> John Gallagher & Ronald Robinson, 'The Imperialism of Free Trade', *The Economic History Review*, 6:1 (1953), pp.1-15; Peter Winn, 'British informal empire in Uruguay in the nineteenth century', *Past and Present*, 73 (1976), pp.100-26; Matthew Brown (eds), *Informal Empire in Latin America: Culture, Commerce and Capital*, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008.

European manufactured goods. Political independence did not bring economic independence, but a new kind of extractive relationship.

The underlying assumption of these theories was that external political powers hindered the process of local economic modernisation (first Spain and later Britain). However, the modernisation theory framework impeded a focus on the local processes of economic change fuelled by the deeper integration with the global capitalist market, as well as local ideas that supported this path of economic development. While the power relations between Latin America and Europe were unevenly balanced in favour of the latter, it is nonetheless important to highlight the local agency in the process of economic change fuelled by the gradual extension of the commodity form – a local agency that nevertheless included forms of violent dispossession, social exploitation and natural resource extraction.

Recently, the concept of commodity chain has focused less on the assessment of uneven production of value than on a micro-analysis of the wider social consequences this economic social relationship has had on the different actors forming the chain.<sup>11</sup> The inclusion of an ecological perspective into world-system analysis was another beneficial addition to this field: the concept of commodity frontiers shed new light on the intended and unintended consequences that extractive economic activities had on the natural environment, focusing on the social transformations that economic growth fuelled in the countryside.<sup>12</sup> In this way, it is possible to dethrone the central role that traditional industrialisation has always had in the studies of modern economic development, in favour of an assessment of the transformative role that trade could have on local rural and social landscapes.

The concept of commercial capitalism opens the possibility to highlight the (public and private) agency involved in the creation of commodity chains and their management, as well as the global scope of capitalism, intended as its ability to connect different and far-flung modes of production and labour regimes for the sake of increasing profit accumulation.<sup>13</sup> Commercial capital is not considered a subordinate to industrial capital, it is rather understood as an active agent in “concentrating and rationalizing production”, in gaining state support for commodity production, and in managing the vertical integration of commodity chains.<sup>14</sup>

Indeed, commercial capitalism enables the integration of diverse historical experiences into a theoretical whole, and the dismissal of industrialisation as the main requirement of capitalism responds to the necessity of avoiding narratives based on success and failure.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, it allows a deeper reflection on the very word ‘industrialisation’, given that many processes of commodity processing had a transformative social role similar to ‘traditional’ industrialisation – processes that were often dislocated in non-European areas.

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<sup>11</sup> Steven Topik et al. (eds.), *From Silver to Cocaine. Latin American Commodity Chains and the Building of the World Economy, 1500-2000*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.

<sup>12</sup> Jason Moore, *Capitalism in the Web of Life. Ecology and the Accumulation of Capital*, London: Verso Books, 2016; Sven Beckert et al., ‘Commodity frontiers and the transformation of the global countryside: a research agenda’, *Journal of Global History*, 16:3 (2021), pp.1-16.

<sup>13</sup> Jairus Banaji, *A Brief History of Commercial Capitalism*, Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2020.

<sup>14</sup> Georges Lefebvre quoted in Banaji (2020), p.16.

<sup>15</sup> Andrew David Edwards et al., ‘Capitalism in Global History’, *Past and Present*, 249:1 (2020), pp.1–32.

Finally, the concept links together multiple political regimes, both imperial and post-imperial. In fact, the attempt to integrate and control commodity chains for the sake of (private and public) profit was a concern shared by different political regimes, under the aegis of commercial capitalism. Empires tried to integrate and exploit commodity chains through specific means such as monopolies or chartered companies. These economic institutions were inherited, refused or adapted by nation states. The history of the *saladeros* of the Río de la Plata is taken as an example of the process of global capitalist market integration driven by public and private attempts to create commodity chains through the extension of commodity frontiers. Moreover, this paper contributes to recent literature in social and economic history, which has unquestionably proven that the Río de la Plata (and especially the province of Buenos Aires) experienced a process of economic growth from the late colonial time well into the nineteenth century.<sup>16</sup> The qualitative perspective on the *saladeros* commodity chains that is employed will place this literature in a wider Atlantic framework, highlighting the local specificities of the global process of capitalist markets integration.

### **Imperial attempts at economic reform in the Atlantic context**

The debate over Ibero-American economic performance between the end of imperial rule and the age of independence touches upon a wider discussion over the backward or modern character of Iberian economies, and therefore the ability of Spanish rule to reform the economic system of its overseas territories. For instance, Zacharias Moutoukias has noted that late eighteenth-century economic growth was little affected by the Bourbon reforms, insofar as the political economy on which it was based was the same that characterised the Río de la Plata during the colonial age: silver export to overseas territories alongside the structuring of internal markets for local products.<sup>17</sup> The structural continuity between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries meant that Bourbon monarchs did not want to liberalise economic regulation, but just sought to establish a more rational and centralised system of financial control.

However, recent studies have reassessed the role of the Bourbon reforms, which are now considered as an attempt to establish a more sustained commercial integration between the different constituencies of the Iberian monarchy.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, reform plans were a shared concern in the wider context of the Atlantic imperial world, where projects of administrative reforms and improvement of economic extractivism were also discussed by British, French, Portuguese and Dutch authorities.<sup>19</sup> Especially after the Seven Years War (1756-1763), it was evident that empires should be reformed because of their increasing defensive costs, and this military

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<sup>16</sup> Raul Fradkin et al. (eds.), *En busca de un tiempo perdido. La economía de Buenos Aires en el país de la abundancia 1750-1869*, Buenos Aires, Prometeo Libros, 2008.

<sup>17</sup> Zacharias Moutoukias, 'El crecimiento en una economía colonial de antiguo régimen. Reformismo y sector externo en el Río de la Plata (1760-1796)', *Archivos do Centro Cultural Calouste Gulbenkian*, 34 (1995), pp.771-813.

<sup>18</sup> Jeremy Adelman, *Sovereignty and Revolution in the Iberian Atlantic*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006.

<sup>19</sup> Federica Morelli, 'La redefinición de las relaciones imperiales: en torno a la relación reformas dieciochescas/independencia en América', *Nuevo Mundo Mundos Nuevos*, 8 (2008); Sophus Reinert & Steven Kaplan (eds.), *The Economic Turn: Recasting Political Economy in Enlightenment Europe*, London: Anthem Press, 2019.

exigency brought with it discussions about the political and constitutional framework of overseas territories. Indeed, Ibero-America experienced a general economic efflorescence during the eighteenth century, thanks to reforms that stimulated a revival of silver extraction (price subsidies for necessary inputs – mercury and gunpowder; harsher enforcement of coerced labour), an increase in slave imports to provide manpower, and the concurrent explosion of European demand for tropical goods and raw materials.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, the Spanish monarchy is now considered a “stakeholder empire” rather than a predatory state, thanks to a better assessment of the fiscal redistributive machine that sustained it, as well as a nuanced consideration of the relationship between political authority and commercial elites.<sup>21</sup>

Recently, Gelman and Moraes have offered a new assessment of the impact of the reforms on Río de la Plata economic development during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. If that was a period of overall economic growth stimulated by the Atlantic conjuncture, the reforms were important in the revival of mining, the increase in trade and in channelling considerable financial transfers from Potosí to Buenos Aires.<sup>22</sup> The Bourbon decision to move the centre of gravity of the Potosí silver economy from Lima to Buenos Aires was thus a fundamental economic stimulus for the capital of the newly created Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata (1776). In fact, the imperial fiscal system relied on silver: managed locally, it was based on indirect taxes on trade and consumption, and on transfers (*situados*) between different but cooperative treasuries (*cajas*). Therefore, the volume of trade directly affected the volume of fiscal revenues, and the silver economy generated lucrative markets in foodstuff and commodities to sustain it.<sup>23</sup>

As a result, the population of Buenos Aires grew from 37,130 to 72,168 between 1778 and 1810, while that of Montevideo increased from 2,720 to 12,472.<sup>24</sup> The commercialisation of the countryside responded to the exigencies of the process of urbanisation, as well as to the Atlantic demand for commodities. In fact, the progressive liberalisation of commercial legislation expanded the overseas markets available to Buenos Aires merchants and producers. Legal trade was established with other Spanish American ports (1778), and the activities of smugglers (from time to time sanctioned by special royal permissions) continued to link Buenos Aires with the other empires of the Atlantic. Alongside silver, increasing quantities of hides were traded, given the wide availability of cattle and horses in the countryside (See Appendix

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<sup>20</sup> Jorge Gelman, ‘Los cambios en la economía atlántica entre los siglos XVIII y XIX. Desarrollo capitalista, globalización y desigualdad en América Latina’, *Nuevo Mundo Mundos Nuevo* (2014).

<sup>21</sup> Regina Grafe & Alejandra M. Irigoien, ‘A stakeholder empire: the political economy of Spanish imperial rule in America’, *The Economic History Review*, 65:2 (2012), pp.609-51. The implication of this argument for Spanish American independences are found in Regina Grafe & Alejandra M. Irigoien, ‘The Spanish Empire and its legacy: fiscal redistribution and political conflict in colonial and post-colonial Spanish America’, *Journal of Global History*, 1:2 (2006), pp.241-67.

<sup>22</sup> Jorge Gelman & María Inés Moraes, ‘Las reformas borbónicas y las economías rioplatenses: cambio y continuidad’, in Jorge Gelman et al. (eds), *Iberoamérica y España antes de las independencias, 1700-1820: crecimiento, reformas y crisis*, México: Instituto de Investigaciones Dr José María Luis Mora/El Colegio de México, 2015, pp.31-74.

<sup>23</sup> Carlos Sempat Assadourian, *El sistema de la economía colonial: el mercado interior, regiones y espacio económico*, México: Editorial Nueva Imagen, 1983.

<sup>24</sup> Gelman & Moraes (2015), p.67.

Table 1).<sup>25</sup> As large herbivores and carnivores were absent, the Pampas had been “the ideal territory for the spontaneous reproduction of European cattle” since its first introduction in the sixteenth century.<sup>26</sup> Soon *vaquerias*, spontaneous herds of wild cattle, were formed, which provided an easy meat recourse for European and indigenous communities. The economic expansion of the eighteenth century accelerated the gradual disappearance of the *vaquerias*. External and urban demands coupled with profit-oriented rationalisation of productive activities increased the number of *estancias* – smaller or larger estates dedicated to the breeding of cattle, horses and sheep in the Pampas.<sup>27</sup>

Even if cattle meat was not regularly exploited economically before the late eighteenth century, it was the basic staple food of the population. Indeed, in order to maintain a regular urban meat supply, a 1775 reform created three urban stockyards, where public authorities supervised the meat trade. Here, an inspector verified that the cattle introduced displayed a registered brand mark, and he implemented the local government’s decision regarding the number of heads to be slaughtered and the prices of cattle and meat.<sup>28</sup> While during colonial time one person was in charge of urban provision, the reform liberalised this market, where many producers or brokers were in competition under a system of fixed consumer prices. The increasing amount of meat needed by the urban stockyards fuelled labour specialisation, signalled by the appearance of the *corraleos* – brokers who bought cattle from the bigger or smaller producers in the countryside and drove it to the city. The circuits of trade grew in complexity, as the *corraleos* were usually linked to merchants who advanced cash for the purchase of cattle in exchange for hides. Commercial capital was the lifeblood of this economic environment, where different actors (merchants, brokers, producers) could try to profit from economic opportunities under a system of regulated competition.

### **The development of *saladeros* in the colonial era**

The intertwining of state intervention and commercial capital was evident since the very beginning of the history of *saladeros*, as imperial authority promoted the activity in different ways. In 1776, José de Gálvez y Gallardo was appointed as *Ministro de Indias*, and he supported the establishment of the meat industry in the Río de la Plata, relying on a plan that was sent to the king by Antonio Josef del Castillo in 1771.<sup>29</sup> He solicited the Buenos Aires governor to sponsor this economic activity, and the latter gathered a *junta* of landholders to discuss what were the industry’s requirements. The project was intended to provision the Real Armada with

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<sup>25</sup> Miguel A. Rosal & Roberto Schmit, ‘Del reformismo colonial borbónico al librecomercio: las exportaciones pecuarias del Río de la Plata (1768-1854)’, *Boletín del Instituto de Historia Argentina y Americana Emilio Ravignani*, 20 (1999), p.77.

<sup>26</sup> Osvaldo Barsky & Jorge Gelman, *Historia del agro argentino. Desde la conquista hasta fines del siglo XX*, Buenos Aires: Grijalbo Mondadori, 2001, p.34.

<sup>27</sup> Samuel Amaral, *The rise of capitalism on the pampas: The estancias of Buenos Aires, 1785-1870*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

<sup>28</sup> Juan Gabriel Flores, ‘Hacendados, Cabildo y “corralleros”. El acceso de los hacendados al abasto de carne a partir del estudio de dos estancias de la campaña sur de Buenos Aires. (1785-1809)’, *Sociedades Precapitalistas*, 4:1 (2014).

<sup>29</sup> Alfredo J. Montoya, *Historia de los saladeros argentinos*, Buenos Aires: Editorial Raigal, 1956, pp.14-15.

salted meat.<sup>30</sup> Viceroy Juan Jose Vertiz de Salcedo agreed that “nothing could give more growth incentive to that province than the salting of meats”, given the availability of cattle and salt.<sup>31</sup> The industry would exploit the meat that was wasted in the countryside because animals were slaughtered for their hides rather than flesh. The economic benefits included the reliance on a ‘national industry’ for military provision, instead of buying products from foreigners.

Metropolitan authorities, local ministers and the local Buenos Aires government (formed mainly by local merchants) discussed the opportunity to establish a chartered company for meat production and trade, but finally local interests opposed this option. Finally, a *Compañía Marítima* was established by Carlos IV in 1789. It was created to foster and integrate fishing and the fish-salting industries of the royal domain, and it was also granted the rights to create and manage salting-meat plants, “to incite this Branch of the National Industry”.<sup>32</sup> However, it does not seem that it carried out successful operations in the Río de la Plata.

Summing up government attitude toward industrial interventionism, Governor Marques de Loreto noted in 1789 that “the main incitement of things, lies in providing them”.<sup>33</sup> In 1782, the government of Buenos Aires was planning an expedition to the Salinas Grandes, south-west of Buenos Aires. However, in his 1784 report to Marques de Loreto, Francisco de Viedma noted that the newly established city of Carmen de Patagones (on the Patagonian coast) could become a secure supplier of salt to Buenos Aires and Montevideo, because “its abundance renders it convenient for salting meat, thus exploiting the economic potential of the meat that now lies wasted in the countryside”.<sup>34</sup> Given the difficulties involved in organising the expedition to Salinas Grandes, Marques of Loreto granted to every individual the right to extract salt from Patagonia, to cope with the scarcity in the city.<sup>35</sup> The expedition to Salinas Grandes occurred in 1790-91, and the salt was then sold at a fixed price to “*pulperos* selling salt and bakers who supply this town”.<sup>36</sup> However, salt remained a concern for the government: producers asked the Virrey to organise another expedition in 1800, and Viceroy Liniers tried to establish a contract for salt provision with the Indian Pehuenches and Ranqueles in 1809.<sup>37</sup> Besides the

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<sup>30</sup> See Ricardo Levene, *Investigaciones acerca de la historia económica del Virreinato del Plata*, Vol. 2, Buenos Aires: Librería El Ateneo Editorial, 1952, pp.84-8.

<sup>31</sup> Sigfrido A. Radaelli, *Memorias de los virreyes del Río de la Plata*, Buenos Aires: Bajel, 1945, p.136.

<sup>32</sup> Real Cédula erigiendo la Real Compañía Marítima, 19 de septiembre de 1789, in Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, Documentos para la Historia Argentina. Tomo IV. Comercio de Indias, Comercio Libre (1778-1791) Buenos Aires: Compañía Sud-Americana de Billetes de Banco, 1915, p.412.

<sup>33</sup> Radaelli (1945), p.240.

<sup>34</sup> De Viedma reported from a mission to Patagonia that was ordered by Viceroy Vertiz. Francisco de Viedma, ‘Memoria dirigida al Señor Marqués de Loreto...’, in *Colección de obras y documentos relativos a la historia antigua y moderna de las Provincias del Río de la Plata*, Tomo III, Buenos Aires: Editorial Plus Ultra, 1969, pp.660-1.

<sup>35</sup> Decreto del virrey para que se remedie la escasez de sal con lo que se traiga del Rio Negro, mientras no se realiza la expedición a Salinas, 21 de noviembre de 1783, in Juan Agustín García (ed.), *Documentos para la historia argentina. Tomo IV. Abastos de la ciudad y campaña de Buenos Aires (1773-1809)*, Buenos Aires: Compañía sud-americana de billetes de banco, 1914, pp.398-9.

<sup>36</sup> Oficio del Cabildo sobre distribución de sal a los que abastecen de este artículo y utilización de su producto, in García (1914), p.424.

<sup>37</sup> Oficio y Bando sobre la necesidad de realizar una nueva expedición a las Salinas por la circunstancias especiales que se exponen, 29 de julio de 1800, and Expediente obrado a fin de encargar a los caciques pehuenches y ranqueles el abasto de sal de Buenos Aires 2 de junio de 1809, in García (1914), pp.442 & 447.

provision of salt, the imperial government repealed duties on meat export in 1780, and renewed the repeal every ten years.

In his report, de Viedma cited the activities of Francisco Medina in Patagonia as a virtuous example of economic entrepreneurship. Medina, a prominent character of Río de la Plata's economic life, arrived in America from Spain in 1770, and he established a warehouse in Montevideo between 1771 and 1773.<sup>38</sup> He then moved to other activities among which were whale fishing and supply provisioning for the Spanish army. In June 1784, he proposed to the government the establishment of a *saladero*. He offered to ship to Spain 8,000 quintals of salted meat over four years and to teach salting techniques to everyone that might be interested in it. In exchange for this service, he asked for the sale of the *estancia* 'Don Carlos', a large estate between Montevideo and Colonia del Sacramento. The project was partly accepted (although he was not permitted to buy the desired *estancia*, and was instead offered the let on another, 'La Colla'), and the resulting salting plant comprised a country house, ranches, sheds, corrals, the factories for salting and several warehouses on a huge area. In 1788 the *estancia* owned 25,000 head of cattle, 2,000 horses and 100 oxen. Besides labourers, foremen and other skilled workers, seventeen slaves worked in the plant. Medina also owned the ships needed to carry the trade and to organise expeditions to the salt marshes of Carmen de Patagones, having signed a contract in 1785 for the provisioning of salt to Buenos Aires.<sup>39</sup>

The government met the increasing demand for workers with the sanctioning of legal slave trade in the region and the introduction of the first vagrancy laws.<sup>40</sup> While the criminalisation of lazy and vagabond population had been enacted since the early eighteenth century, the compulsion to work was introduced as punishment between the 1780s and 90s (forcing participation in the harvest or in military service), and non-proprietors were obliged to carry a work permit obtained by their employer.<sup>41</sup>

The *saladero* produced salted meat and jerked meat (*tasajo*), and it processed other derivatives such as hides (used in the leather industry), and tallow and sebum (used in the candle and soap industry).<sup>42</sup> The production of salted meat involved cutting it into chunks and soaking it in brine for one month. After that, it was packed in barrels consisting of one layer of meat and one of brine. Jerked meat was different: the meat was cut into wide and thin strips, which were placed over a hide and covered with a thin layer of salt. Different layers were stacked up, left in the sun for several days, squeezed and then packed. Meat production was a seasonal activity, as it took place between November and March, when more meat could be obtained from the animals and the climate was colder. Carlo Wedovoy noted how jerked meat production did not

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<sup>38</sup> Alfredo J. Montoya, *Como evolucionó la ganadería en la época del Virreinato*, Buenos Aires: Plus Ultra, 1984, pp.109-53.

<sup>39</sup> See Enrique Wedovoy, 'Burguesía comercial y desarrollo económico nacional: examen del problema a la luz de la historia ganaderil: 1770-1837', *Humanidades*, 35 (1960), p.74.

<sup>40</sup> See Alex Borucki, *From Shipmates to Soldiers: Emerging Black Identities in the Rio de la Plata*, Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2015, Chapter 1.

<sup>41</sup> Fabián Alonso et al., 'Los vagos de la campaña bonaerense. La construcción histórica de una figura delictiva (1730-1830)', *Prohistoria: historia, políticas de la historia*, 5 (2001), pp.171-202.

<sup>42</sup> Montoya (1956), pp.23-8.

need any costly or particular inputs (besides salt), while salted meat required a dedicated space for brining, as well as barrels for the packaging.<sup>43</sup>

After the sudden death of Medina in 1788, the *estancia* La Colla and its *saladero* returned to the state. In 1792, it was rented to Tomás Antonio Romero (one of the most powerful merchants of Buenos Aires, and a prominent slave trader), who entrusted Manuel José de Lavardén with its management.<sup>44</sup> Familiar with enlightenment economic literature, he envisioned plans to expand the scale of operations in La Colla, thanks to butter and soap production. He was also the first to introduce Merino sheep in the region. Nevertheless, salted meat remained the principal activities of La Colla, as signalled by a contract with the Spanish government for providing over five years 4,000 quintals of salted meat annually to the arsenals of Cadiz and El Ferrol.<sup>45</sup>

In 1802, there were thirty *saladeros* in the Banda Oriental (contemporary Uruguay), whose development was strongly influenced by the demand of the slave economies of Brazil and Cuba, as well as for the provision of the Real Armada and of the ships passing through Montevideo and Buenos Aires.<sup>46</sup> The absence of *saladeros* in colonial Buenos Aires was due to a high number of droughts, an excessive price of cattle and the constant danger of Indian raids in the Pampas.<sup>47</sup> The establishment of the salting industry was an integral part of the imperial project to enhance the economic profitability of the region. Local elites were actively involved in envisioning those projects, and their opinion was taken into account as the refusal of the chartered company testifies. Prominent economic actors took advantage of government sponsorship, and they were used by the government to foster the plans for economic improvement. However, the industrial concentration of La Colla was more an exemption rather than a rule.

Jerked meat production was mostly scattered in the countryside, and this responded to various state concerns. Felix de Azara noted how the expansion of the commodity frontiers through the foundation of cities could help to secure the frontier with the Portuguese empire, as well as to increase the wealth of the region and the revenues of the crown. A state-sponsored committee should supervise the project, drafting a manual to be distributed among the new settlers to teach them the best practices in rural industry and breeding, “inspired by the small *estancias* of Paraguay, which breed the most fat, subdue and tame cattle; they are run with less workers, and with half or even a quarter of horses. In addition, every *estancia* breeds sheep, and exploits all the meat, drying or salting it”.<sup>48</sup> The expansion of the commodity frontier in the colonial era was concentrated in the Banda Oriental, and considered as a way to tame Portuguese expansionism, as well as to enhance profitable commodity production.

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<sup>43</sup> Wedovoy (1960).

<sup>44</sup> See Montoya (1984), pp.320-38.

<sup>45</sup> Montoya (1984), pp.253-8.

<sup>46</sup> Félix de Azara, ‘Memoria sobre el estado rural del Río de la Plata en 1801’, in Félix de Azara, *Memoria sobre el estado rural del Río de la Plata y otros informes*, Buenos Aires: Bajel, 1943, p.22.

<sup>47</sup> Montoya (1956), p.32.

<sup>48</sup> Azara (1943), p.10; also Pedro Antonio Cerviño, in *Semanario de Agricultura, Industria y Comercio*, 18 April 1804.

Local merchant elites were trying to gain control of the commercialisation of rural meat production. In a 1794 petition, the proposal for the creation of a chartered company in charge of meat provision and commercialisation was put forward, a plan that was echoed in 1801.<sup>49</sup> The company “should only be engaged in the maritime trade of the salted meats produced from cattle and pork, with the permission of trading it to all parts of the world [...] without intervening in any way in the manufacture of meat, because this should be peculiar to all the *hacendados* of the Province and other Neighbours.”<sup>50</sup>

Salting-meat was part of the rural activities that should be encouraged, according to the editor of the *Semanario de Industria*. The Viceroyalty owned all the necessary raw materials, and the local production of salted meat could “wrestle [this trade] from the hands of the Northern Powers”.<sup>51</sup> The *Semanario* also provided useful knowledge for rural production, explaining different processing methods according to the final consumer, whether local (*para uso común*) or foreign (*para países cálidos y para la navegación*).<sup>52</sup> Reformers were aware that their journals were not read in the rural areas, but they were pushing landowners and clerks to spread useful knowledge among the population.

The Río de la Plata was inhabited by a grid of smaller commodity producers in a highly commercialised countryside. In this economic environment, a pivotal actor were the *pulperos*, the owners of small grocery stores scattered throughout the countryside.<sup>53</sup> The *pulperías* were linked with merchants in Montevideo or Buenos Aires, and their goal was to “commercially articulate a more or less defined rural space”.<sup>54</sup> This was the main market intermediary, insofar as it sustained the circuits of exchange: the *pulpero* received commodities from merchants (tobacco, *aguardiente*, salt, textiles, manufactured goods), collected commodities from peasants and mid-size *estancieros* (grain, hides, salted or jerked meat) and in addition offered credit and industrial inputs (salt) to small producers. The degree of market entanglement was overall very high for every inhabitant of the *pampa bonaerense*, as is signalled by the ratio of *pulpero* per inhabitant, the highest of Spanish America.<sup>55</sup>

The meat commodity chain contributed to the higher commercialisation of the countryside of the Río de la Plata, initiated by urbanisation of Buenos Aires as a viceregal capital. Merchant capital contributed prominently to the political reforms, fostering economic improvement by financing the few meat-producing plants based on rationalisation and concentration of labour (the *estancia* La Colla being the most important) and trying to implement a putting-out system among the scattered meat producers in the countryside.<sup>56</sup> The

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<sup>49</sup> The petition is summarized in Wedovoy (1960), pp.89-93.

<sup>50</sup> *Telégrafo mercantil, rural, político-económico e historiográfico del Río de la Plata*, 11 October 1801.

<sup>51</sup> *Semanario*, 6 October 1802.

<sup>52</sup> *Semanario*, 9 November 1803.

<sup>53</sup> See Daniel Alberto Virgili, ‘Las esquinas de la pampa. Pulperos y pulperías en la frontera bonaerense (1788-1865)’, in Carlos Mayo (ed.), *Vivir en la frontera. La casa, la dieta, la pulpería, la escuela (1770-1870)*, Buenos Aires: Editorial Biblos, 2000, pp.99-122.

<sup>54</sup> Jorge Gelman, ‘Los Caminos del Mercado: Campesinos, estancieros y pulperos en una región del Río de la Plata colonial’, *Latin American Research Review*, 28:2 (1993), p.109.

<sup>55</sup> Julián Carrera, ‘Pulperías rurales bonaerenses a fines del siglo XVIII. Número, distribución y tipos’, in Mayo (2000), pp.87-98.

<sup>56</sup> Nicolás Biangiardi, ‘Más allá del saladero. Una mirada sobre la producción de carne salada en el Río de la Plata del siglo XVIII’, *Folia Histórica del Nordeste*, 37 (2020), pp.87-106.

proliferation of producers, intermediaries and merchants resulted in a competitive environment, in which every actor might find new commercial networks fairly easily in case of dissatisfaction.<sup>57</sup>

Structural conditions favoured meat-industry expansion (see Appendix Table 2), as the Bourbon liberalisation of commercial regulation was followed after independence by the beginning of “massive price incentives for export-led growth”, which lasted until the first decade of the twentieth century.<sup>58</sup> Therefore, it can be argued that even if the basic logic of the colonial political economy was not altered by the Bourbon reforms, the stimulus for the economic development of the Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata and the concomitant conjuncture in the Atlantic market resulted in the emergence of a commercialised countryside and of a new commodity chain based on a rational exploitation of natural resources: the salted-meat industry. Imperial authorities backed the industry through patronage, tax exemptions, a chartered company and a more open commercial regulation.

### **The *saladeros* in the age of independence**

The breakthrough of the independence disrupted the economic integration of the Río de la Plata, disconnecting Buenos Aires from the territories that were providing the bulk of its export trade: the Potosí silver mines and the Banda Oriental countryside. The local collapse of imperial rule following the French occupation of Spain (1808) ended the system of the *situados*, and it severely halted imperial trade. The first provisions of the *Primera Junta* of Buenos Aires, the political institution that assumed sovereignty after 25 May 1810, aimed at solving these economic issues: it promulgated a new commercial regulation (allowing trade with foreigners), it organised a military campaign to restore control over Potosí, and it commissioned a plan for the expansion and defence of the southern agricultural frontier.

Commercial reforms reflected Buenos Aires’ need for new commercial partners: Spanish merchants could not guarantee the same volume of trade as in colonial times, and new legislation sanctioned them as foreign merchants in 1812, meaning that they had to pay more custom duties. Therefore, their place was rapidly taken by the British, thanks to their commercial capacities and the connections they already had in the region.<sup>59</sup> Second, the loss of the Banda Oriental and of the Potosí silver (as the military campaign was not successful) urged Buenos Aires merchants to find new commodities to exchange. While the break-up of the colonial economy was a gradual process, the turbulence of the 1810s pushed entrepreneurs to diversify their activities.<sup>60</sup> Therefore, local commercial elites invested heavily in the

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<sup>57</sup> Gelman (1993).

<sup>58</sup> Joseph A. Francis, ‘Globalisation, the Terms of Trade, and Argentina's Expansion in the Long Nineteenth Century’, *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 49:4 (2017), p.713.

<sup>59</sup> Javier Gerardo Kraselsky, ‘Las corporaciones mercantiles y los comerciantes ingleses en el Río de la Plata Surgimiento, apogeo y declinación del Consulado de Buenos Aires, 1794-1821’, *Varia historia*, 36:72 (2020), pp.639-78; Tulio Halperín Donghi, ‘La Expansión Ganadera en la Campaña de Buenos Aires (1810-1852)’, *Desarrollo Económico*, 3:1/2 (1963), pp.80-1.

<sup>60</sup> See Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, in Alejandra M. Irigoien & Roberto Schmit (eds), *La desintegración de la economía colonial: comercio y moneda en el interior del espacio colonial (1800-1860)*, Buenos Aires: Editorial Biblos, 2003.

countryside, as did the British merchants, in order to produce the commodities needed to pay for British imported products.<sup>61</sup> In addition to that, Buenos Aires' *pampa* was shielded from war-related devastation, while the provinces of the Banda Oriental, Entre Ríos and Santa Fe had their agribusiness sector almost annihilated by a decade of internecine and external wars.<sup>62</sup> Political and military contingencies accelerated the process of commodity-frontier expansion in the countryside of the province.

In June 1810, Pedro Andrés García was appointed to lead an expedition to Salinas Grandes in order to obtain salt and to collect information about the situation of the border forts and towns. García was an expert official who started his career in colonial times and counselled the Buenos Aires authorities about the best ways to colonise and govern the countryside throughout the 1810s. His plan included the creation of a new settlement in Salinas Grandes, as part of the establishment of a new frontier that would guarantee the productive settlements of the countryside and good neighbouring relationships based on mutual trade with the *indios*.<sup>63</sup> This was the first comprehensive plan for southern frontier settlement, an issue that became urgent after the emancipation of the Banda Oriental from Buenos Aires' rule. Moreover, the expedition provisioned the city with salt.

The meat industry integrally contributed to Buenos Aires livestock expansion, and the new independent government backed foreign and local commercial capital in their investments. In 1810, the British merchants Robert Staples and John McNeil established the first *saladero* in Buenos Aires province in the *pueblo* of La Ensenada.<sup>64</sup> In a petition to the government, McNeil noted that the decision to open the *saladero* was facilitated by the support they received from the *Primera Junta*, which secured them the necessary protection for this infant industry.<sup>65</sup> In fact, export duties for meat-related commodities were repealed in 1812, together with import duties for the machinery and other factors of production (staves and hoops), "in the attempt to encourage the *saladeros*, as an industry of prime importance to the utility of the country".<sup>66</sup>

In 1818, there were eight *saladeros* owned by locals, foreigners or associations of both, and the number increased to twenty in the period 1822-1825.<sup>67</sup> However, the meat-industry boom experienced a severe backlash between 1817 and 1819, as two years of severe drought and the concurrent boom of salted meat production endangered urban meat provision. Governor Puyrredon stopped the activities of the *saladeros* after a petition of citizens that accused the meat industry of creating scarcity.<sup>68</sup> This decision sparked a fierce debate between the different actors of the meat commodity chain (*saladeros*, big and small *hacendados*, stockyards

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<sup>61</sup> Llorca-Jaña (2014), pp.141-84.

<sup>62</sup> Halperín Donghi (1963).

<sup>63</sup> Pedro Andrés García, 'Diario de un viaje a Salinas Grandes', in Pedro de Angelis, *Colección de obras y documentos relativos a la historia antigua y moderna de las Provincias del Río de la Plata*, Tomo IV, Buenos Aires: Editorial Plus Ultra, 1969, pp.239-392.

<sup>64</sup> For a nuanced description of the establishment of this *saladero*, see Deborah Besseghini, 'Irish Commercial Networks and British Influence on South American Independence, 1808-1822', in Declan M. Downey & Igor Pérez Tostado (eds), *Ireland and the Iberian Atlantic: Migration, Military and Material Culture*, Valencia: Albatros, 2020, pp.234-8

<sup>65</sup> Montoya (1971), pp.135-41.

<sup>66</sup> *Gazeta ministerial del gobierno de Buenos Ayres*, 6 November 1812.

<sup>67</sup> Montoya (1956), pp.68-9.

<sup>68</sup> See Halperín Donghi (1963), pp.74-80.

provisioners, cattle-drivers). The discussion was fashioned according to arguments in political economy, in order to win the support of the government and of the population. The spread of the commodity forms and of the language of political economy allowed the formulation of conflicting economic arguments about the best policies to attain public common good. The underlying assumption of the conflicting positions was that the increase of national wealth driven by the expansion of commodity-producing activities represented the common good of society. The level of meat commodification was the problem at stake, and this discussion signalled the transformative societal role of commercial capital that drove the expansion of the commodity form.

The *saladeros* noted that meat scarcity was produced by the harsh drought and by cattle thieves. Indeed, closing the *saladeros* was not the right policy because their activities fostered competition thus lowering the price of meat. The consequent trade expansion would provide other staple food for the population, given that more meat would be shipped abroad.<sup>69</sup> Antonio Millan accused the *saladeristas* of masking their personal interest as the common good. The export of productive surplus was the right path to enrich the population, but meat was a staple food in the Río de la Plata, therefore the government should guarantee its provision. The salted-meat producers wanted to turn a pastoral country into an agricultural one, but the frenetic pace of meat commodification resulted in high profit for *saladeros*, and food scarcity for the population that was not able to produce enough agricultural commodities for their subsistence. “The *saladeros* want to introduce soup in place of meat as a staple food, because it is not profitable for them to export vegetables, while the meat is profitable, and whoever falls will fall as they rise up”.<sup>70</sup>

Millan noted that production was also not able to meet demand because the countryside was depopulated. However, the salted-meat producers asked: “who is going to establish new towns and to encourage production, without the interest that awakens and fosters the industry?”.<sup>71</sup> The interest was stimulated by commercial relations, therefore in order to remedy meat scarcity the government should promote its trade instead of halting it. The promotion of trade, the destruction of urban provision monopoly and good government of the countryside were the right solutions, according to Juan Manuel de Rosas, a landholder and *saladero* who would become the prominent political leader of Buenos Aires between 1829 and 1852. He proposed the creation of a committee formed by landholders, meat producers and urban provisioners to decide the necessity of urban meat demand, without any interference from the government besides taxation, because “thanks to the competition of buyers and the liberty of the producers to sell, there is no danger of monopoly”.<sup>72</sup>

No official decree restored *saladeros* activities, even if evidence suggests that meat production for export was under way already in 1819. While this conflict polarised Buenos

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<sup>69</sup> Representación de los hacendados de Buenos-Ayres al Exmo. Supremo Director. Para el restablecimiento de los saladeros, exportación libre de todos los frutos del país, arreglo del abasto de carnes, y otros puntos de economía política, Buenos Aires, 1817.

<sup>70</sup> Antonio Millán, Acusación sostenida contra los saladeros, y advertencias a su defensor D. Pedro Trapani, Buenos Aires: Imprenta de la Independencia, c.1820, p.7.

<sup>71</sup> Representación de los hacendados, p.28.

<sup>72</sup> ‘Proyecto de Juan Manuel de Rosas sobre la escasez y la carestía de carne, 10 April 1818’, in Arturo Enrique Sampay, *Las ideas políticas de Juan Manuel de Rosas*, Buenos Aires: Juárez, 1972, p.96.

Aires public opinion, the economic interest of *saladeros* and big *hacendados* finally unified in the consensus for an export-oriented political economy based on the southward expansion of the commodity frontier and law and order in the countryside.

In the following years, the government of the province of Buenos Aires backed livestock expansion with military campaigns against the indigenous population of the Pampas. The politics of treaties that had guided Creole-Indian relations during both colonial times and the 1810s changed drastically.<sup>73</sup> During the 1820s, all the governors of Buenos Aires organised expeditions against the Indians, but the hectic political vicissitudes of the decade, together with the war in the Banda Oriental against Brazil (1825-28), rendered those operations mostly unsuccessful. Juan Manuel de Rosas did not abandon the project and during two campaigns (1833-34) gained 2,900 square leagues for the province of Buenos Aires, extending the frontier up to the Río Colorado.<sup>74</sup> Southward frontier expansion was seen as the “conquest of the desert”, and the process ended in the 1870s, with the campaigns of General Julio Argentino Roca, which basically exterminated the *pampa* indigenous people.

The new territories were initially owned by the state and land was distributed among Buenos Aires’ population through an emphyteusis system (in which the state retained property rights, while granting long-term leases to tenants in return for a small annual fee) that allocated 2,482,752 square leagues between 1823 and 1840 in exchange for a small annual fee.<sup>75</sup> During the debate on the emphyteusis law in the General Constituent Congress, the deputies openly stated that the goal of the reform was to increase fiscal revenues and “to make those lands bear fruits”.<sup>76</sup> Carlos Tejedor, governor of Buenos Aires between 1878 and 1880, stated retrospectively that “all the conquests we have made in the desert we have made through emphyteusis. [...] The cattle multiplied and where the cattle go the men go”.<sup>77</sup> Cattle remained prominent until the second half of the nineteenth century, when the province experienced a “wool fever”, as sheep herds increased at the record pace of 23.36% per year in the period 1860-1864.<sup>78</sup>

The extension of the commodity frontier and the order in the countryside achieved during Rosas era supported the expansion of the industry, as is signalled by the percentage of cattle destined for public provision or the *saladeros*. Between 1833 and 1835, 58% of the cattle introduced in the stockyards was bought by *abastecedores* (meat providers), while 42% went to *saladeros*. Ten years later the proportion had inverted, as 31% was destined to urban

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<sup>73</sup> Martha Bechis, *Interethnic Relations during the Period of Nation-State Formation in Chile and Argentina*, PhD thesis, New York, New School for Social Research, 1983.

<sup>74</sup> Juan Carlos Walther, *La conquista del desierto*, Buenos Aires: Eudeba, 1970, p.223.

<sup>75</sup> María Elena Infesta, *La pampa criolla: usufructo y apropiación privada de tierras públicas en Buenos Aires, 1820-1850*, La Plata: Instituto Cultural, Dirección Provincial de Patrimonio Cultural, Archivo Histórico Dr. Ricardo Levene, 2003, p.63.

<sup>76</sup> Sesión de 10 de Mayo de 1826, in Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas de la Facultad de Filosofía y Letras Universidad de Buenos Aires, *Asambleas constituyentes argentinas*. Tomo segundo 1825-1826, Buenos Aires: Talleres S.A. Casa Jacobo Peuser Ltda, 1937, p.1199.

<sup>77</sup> Quoted in Walther (1970), p.160.

<sup>78</sup> Hilda Sabato, *Capitalismo y ganadería en Buenos Aires: la fiebre del lanar (1850-1890)*, Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1989, p.36.

provision, while 69% went to salted meat production.<sup>79</sup> Similarly, the good profit rates and the fiscal needs pushed the government to re-organize export duties on salted meat and also a tax for every cattle-head introduced in the *saladeros* (1829). A meat producer complained about it, given that the government should keep on protecting “the only industry of our merchants” that was paying for the import trade.<sup>80</sup> The next day, the journal’s editor dismissed the grievances, pointing out that the state urgently needed revenues and rhetorically asking “with what would we replace the tax, if your industry, being the only one, does not want to bear it?”.<sup>81</sup>

Actually, meat export skyrocketed in 1829, and the expansion continued in the following decades (see Appendix Table 3). This development was helped by technological innovations. In the 1830s, the French chemist Antonio Cambaceres, attracted to Buenos Aires by the state official Juan Larrea, introduced the construction of more resistant and larger buildings, the use of special winches to direct the movements of the animals, the transport of dead cattle by means of wagons running on rails, roofing of the slaughtering rooms and steam cooking to extract grease from bones and other waste.<sup>82</sup> The articulation of the meat industry meant the employment of a huge population: no less than 300 people were working in the *saladero* of Antonio Cambaceres during the 1850s, at a time when the English textile industries were employing an average of 175 workers.<sup>83</sup> Reflecting on the important nineteenth century technological improvements, Biangiardi has noted that at that time *saladeros* should not be called as such any more, because of the significant role that other commodities (hides, grease, sebum) had in their processing activities.<sup>84</sup>

The *saladero* of Concepción del Uruguay, owned by Entre Ríos governor Justo José de Urquiza, is an expression of the level of mechanisation and division of labour reached by the mid-nineteenth-century meat industry. Urquiza, merchant and landowner, opened the *saladero* Santa Cándida in 1847, “aiming at the integration of the whole productive cycle with the industrialisation of the beef industry”.<sup>85</sup> It was formed of six warehouses that processed cattle, sheep and horses. The biggest one (17x143 meters) was used for salting meat and washing and salting hides, while two had steam machines used for grease extraction. The remaining three were a deposit for salt and one for grease, and finally a carpentry. The plant had additional facilities such as dwellings, kitchen and bakery.

In 1856, some improvements were applied to the productive process, such as a steam pump to provide water for the plant from the river Uruguay, bigger cooking tubs to increase the possible slaughtering rate, and a railway to connect the warehouses to the dock. In 1859, the plant was provided with a blacksmith, a soap and candle factory, and a tannery. While the main commodities processed remained hides and salted meat, the plant also produced canned meat (starting from 1851) for the British markets, grease and oil (used especially in lighting and other

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<sup>79</sup> María Elena Infesta, ‘Del campo a las tabladas: El comercio de vacunos en Buenos Aires, 1830-1840. Estructura y dinámica del sistema’, *Mundo Agrario*, 11:21 (2010).

<sup>80</sup> *El Lucero, diario político, literario y mercantil*, 15 January 1830.

<sup>81</sup> *El Lucero, diario político, literario y mercantil*, 16 January 1830.

<sup>82</sup> Giberti (1970), pp.91-2

<sup>83</sup> Montoya (1971), p.132.

<sup>84</sup> Biangiardi (2020), p.103.

<sup>85</sup> Manuel E. Macchi, *Urquiza, el saladerista*, Buenos Aires: Ediciones Macchi, 1971, p.6. The following description of Santa Candida is based on this work.

industrial activities), soap and candles for the internal markets, cured meats. Those complementary activities were usually initiated by a contract between Urquiza and other companies that would install the new production in the plant of Santa Candida.

The workforce was seasonal, reaching a peak of 219 employees in March 1861, and the complex division of labour rendered the tasks highly specialised. The most important ones were executed by the skimmers and the salters. Those workers should possess considerable skills in order not to devalue the produced commodities, and their work was highly prized by their employer. Rodolfo Leyes has provided a detailed analysis of the workforce of the *saladeros* in Entre Ríos, signalling how the first strike in Argentine history happened there in 1854, as well as various sectional strikes, an additional signal of the industrial character that the activities of this processing industry were taking in the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>86</sup> As in the province of Buenos Aires, the government of Entre Ríos sanctioned harsh vagrancy laws in an attempt to support the demand of wage labour of *estancias* and *saladeros*, as well as to control and govern the countryside.

The various governments of the province of Buenos Aires supported commercial capital in the expansion of the commodity frontiers and of the meat industry. This was enforced through a legislative effort of market framing (new commercial legislation and custom duties regulation), the colonisation of the frontier (with treaties or war against indigenous populations and the consequent land-allocation project) and the maintenance of order in the countryside. It should be also noted the state effort to attract technical expertise in the province, as is signalled by the story of Antonio Cambaceres, which was not an isolated case. Compared to the colonial period, the nineteenth-century state offered less active support and patronage, but created the right market opportunities for private investments. However, the intertwining of commercial capital to political elites seems tighter, as the cases of Rosas and Urquiza demonstrate. Commercial capital tended to vertically integrate meat production through direct control over it, rather than through the coordination of scattered small producers in the countryside.

### **Exploring the commodity chain in the Atlantic basin**

The processed commodities produced in the *saladeros* arrived in other contexts of the Atlantic world, contributing to the creation of an integrated and interconnected global capitalist market. The extension of the commodity frontiers was a nineteenth-century Pan-American process, and the livestock expansion in the Pampas bears close resemblance to similar developments occurring in North America – for instance in respect to the destruction or violent assimilation of native populations.<sup>87</sup> This final section is devoted to the analysis of how the two main outputs of the *saladeros* (cattle hides and salted meat) acted as (industrial/necessary) inputs in other economies – respectively Britain and Cuba.

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<sup>86</sup> Rodolfo Leyes, 'Destellos de un nuevo sujeto: Los conflictos obreros en los saladeros y la formación de la clase obrera entrerriana (1854-1868)', *Mundo Agrario*, 15:30 (2014).

<sup>87</sup> John Ryan Fischer, *Cattle Colonialism. An Environmental History of the Conquest of California and Hawai'i*, University of North Carolina Press, 2015.

Before independence, the main overseas commercial partners of the Río de la Plata were mainland Spain and Spanish America. Hides entered Europe through Cadiz and were then re-exported to Spanish industrialising regions (such as Catalonia) or abroad.<sup>88</sup> However, since the creation of the Viceroyalty, trade expanded and the region was inserted into the buoyant American and Caribbean world, in which the presence of different actors (British, French, Dutch, Portuguese, Anglo-Americans, Spanish-Americans) created commercial opportunities at the interstices of imperial regulation. Indeed, trade between the Río de la Plata and Britain was sizable even in colonial times, given the increasing demand stimulated by the British Industrial Revolution – an expansion of manufactures that started in the eighteenth century.<sup>89</sup> During the eighteenth century, it could have taken many forms including the slave trade sanctioned by the *asiento*, the re-export trade from Spain or British Caribbean to the Southern Cone, or smuggling and contraband (that reached its highest peak during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars). Even when Spain and Britain were at war (1796-1808), trade maintained its vigour through special permissions, the maintenance of the free ports system in the Caribbean and neutral trade. Early connections with Spanish American markets proved crucial in sustaining commercial relations after 1810: Frederick Huth, a British merchant who established a branch of his trading enterprise in Buenos Aires in 1810, made two voyages in Buenos Aires between 1799 and 1803, exporting manufactures in exchange for cattle hides.<sup>90</sup>

The export of cattle hides to Britain boomed after independence: Britain imported almost 100,000 hundredweight from the Río de la Plata between 1824 and 1829, and the figure tripled in the 1860s.<sup>91</sup> Indeed, the Río de la Plata was Britain's main supplier of untanned hides until the 1870s, when it was surpassed by British India. These Argentine hides were highly valued by the leather industry because of their thickness and resistance. What were the causes of this boom? The restructuring of Buenos Aires' economy around the export of agricultural commodities has been already extensively described, as well as the new commercial regulations that facilitated trade between the Río de la Plata and Britain. An additional crucial factor was the increasing British demand for hides following the industrialisation of the leather industry, one of the sectors that first sustained the Industrial Revolution, together with textiles and building.<sup>92</sup>

This is not surprising if one looks at the centrality that the leather industry had in pre-industrial economies, as in the eighteenth century it was considered “more important than the metal craft”. In fact, a wide range of goods were produced with leather, including “saddlery, coaches, gloves, belts, bookbinding, upholstery, machine belts and footwear”.<sup>93</sup> The production of leather was strictly linked to the availability of cattle hides, and during the eighteenth century British demographic growth exceeded the expansion of the leather industry. The long eighteenth

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<sup>88</sup> Maximiliano Camarda, ‘El comercio ultramarino de cueros salidos por el complejo portuario rioplatense de la segunda mitad del siglo XVIII’, *Fronteras de la historia*, 21:1 (2016), pp.184-210.

<sup>89</sup> See Adrian J. Pearce, *British trade with Spanish America, 1763-1808*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2014, p.230. Regarding British early industrialization, see Maxine Berg, *The Age of Manufactures: 1700-1820. Industry, innovation and work in Britain*, London: Routledge, 2005.

<sup>90</sup> Llorca-Jaña (2014), p.18.

<sup>91</sup> Llorca-Jaña (2014), p.148

<sup>92</sup> See Berg (2005), pp.28 & 44.

<sup>93</sup> Giorgio Riello, *A foot in the past: consumers, producers and footwear in the long eighteenth century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, p.76.

century increasingly witnessed a substantial lack of leather, and how to avoid the spectre of a 'Malthusian trap' was highly debated in Britain. Governments tried to intervene in the economy in order to reverse this trend (mostly through taxation and commercial regulation), following the requests of the different actors involved in the leather commodity chain (butchers, furriers, tanners, fellmongers, leather-dressers, curriers, artisans). Merchants intervened as well in the economy, foreseeing the opportunities given by the high prices for leather, and looking for new markets to meet the increasing British demand. The Río de la Plata was the most important of these markets, and it can be argued that it played a fundamental role in sustaining the industrialisation of the leather industry, providing the "ghost acres" that the United Kingdom was lacking for raw materials (cattle hide) production.<sup>94</sup> Finally, it is interesting to note how the increasing individual consumption of leather (mainly in the form of shoes) contributed to the creation of a national identity in eighteenth-century Britain, whereas "the wearing of leather shoes was identified as increasing the wealth of the nation", that was "the result of an 'industrious' nation that successfully profited from commerce and industry thanks to religious tolerance and political freedom".<sup>95</sup> Trade gave Britain wealth and freedom, and British newspaper associated the lack of leather shoes with poverty and slavery, characteristic of the other European powers.

Woodbine Parish, British Consul General at Buenos Aires between 1823 and 1832, commented that "the Río de la Plata may be fairly esteemed the most valuable of all the markets which have been opened to us by the emancipation of the Spanish colonies, considering not only the amount of our goods which people of this country consume, but the large quantities of raw produce with which they repay us, thereby furnishing our manufacturers with fresh means of reproduction and profit."<sup>96</sup> Indeed, if one output of the Platine *saladeros* was sustaining a developing industrial consumer society, another output – salted and jerked meat – was contributing to the dramatic increase of slave labour started in Cuba from the 1790s onwards.<sup>97</sup> It was part of the wider context of imperial making and unmaking of the late eighteenth century, reforming attempts predicated upon a new conception of the role of economic government in society and the relationship between metropole and peripheries.<sup>98</sup> Sugar production was encouraged by the Bourbon monarchy since the number of enslaved people imported in Cuba between 1764 and 1792 (59,000) almost equalled the total imports during the previous 250 years. The Revolution in Saint Domingue offered an incredible market opportunity to Cuban planters, and they took advantage of it: sugar mills increased from 237 in 1792 to 416 in 1806, and their output jumped from 16,731 to 45,396 metric tons of sugar in the period 1791-1815.<sup>99</sup> Growth was achieved through new commercial legislation that favoured deeper integration with

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<sup>94</sup> Kenneth Pomeranz, *The great divergence: China, Europe, and the making of the modern world economy*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.

<sup>95</sup> Riello (2006), pp.30-5.

<sup>96</sup> Parish (1852), p.368.

<sup>97</sup> Hernán Asdrúbal Silva, 'La estructuración del comercio y la navegación desde el Río de la Plata hasta Cuba', *Anuario de estudios americanos*, 51:2 (1994), pp.61-73.

<sup>98</sup> Josep M. Fradera, '1780-1880. A Century of Imperial Transformation', in Dale W. Tomich (ed.), *Atlantic Transformations. Empire, Politics, and Slavery during the Nineteenth Century*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 2020, pp.1-17.

<sup>99</sup> Dale W. Tomich, *Through the prism of slavery: labor, capital, and world economy*, Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004, p.81.

the expanding European consumer markets, and a rationalisation of productive activity, based upon division of labour, technological improvement and labour intensification.<sup>100</sup>

A revolution in the production process implied a transformation of the social life of the enslaved population. If enslaved people were traditionally employed in maritime, urban and domestic contexts, their share in the sugar production workforce doubled. This was accompanied by a harsher labour discipline based upon violence and coercion. What is more important for our purpose is that labour intensification implied decreasing available time for the enslaved to cultivate the garden plots (*conucos*) they were allowed on common land for their self-consumption and for market purposes – it was actually one of the few chances to accumulate money to pay for their freedom thanks to the Iberian institution of the *coartación*. However, the stricter entanglement of the Cuban economy with the Atlantic markets determined a situation where “the elimination of the *conucos* significantly affects the economy of the sugar-mills, which lose their character of self-sufficiency to become consumers of jerked beef and cod, both imported products”.<sup>101</sup> Actually, the *conucos* did not disappear entirely, but became more important as capital revenue for slaves through market commercialisation, rather than for their subsistence.

The provision of salted meat was an important problem for planters already in the late eighteenth century. In his *Discurso sobre la agricultura de Habana y medios de fomentarla* (1792), Francisco de Arango y Parreño, Apoderado General of Havana, noted that planters were obliged to buy tons of meat from Tampico and Buenos Aires, while a few years later the island could even export jerked meat.<sup>102</sup> This concern reflected the wider transition the island was experiencing: the expansion of the sugar commodity frontier implied the disappearance of other economic activities. Commercial legislation favoured this transformation, insofar as trade duties were rigged in favour of planters: low taxes on the plantation inputs (factors of production among which one should include food provisions for enslaved population), and outputs discouraged domestic productions as an alternative to sugar.

The deeper integration with external markets endangered the already precarious lives of the enslaved. The outbreak of war between Spain and Britain in 1797 resulted in salted meat and cod scarcity, and the doctor Francisco Barrera y Domingo noted that if they had not had sugar cane and *guarapo* (a sugar-based drink), slaves would have starved to death – actually many of them did.<sup>103</sup> When the end of the wars stopped trade disruptions, planters were able to carefully calculate the daily alimentary requirements of the enslaved population and look in the market for a more advantageous deal. They received two meals per day, in the form of the *funche*, a starch-based compound supplemented by a generous dose of salted meat or cod. It seems that meat imports were always preferred to cod, as the Spanish authorities first repealed external duties for meat in 1787, resulting in better prices for its introduction. During the period 1803-1807, meat share in the total imports into Havana oscillated between 21.1% and 11.9%,

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<sup>100</sup> Daniel B. Rood, *The Reinvention of Atlantic Slavery Technology, Labor, Race, and Capitalism in the Greater Caribbean*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017, pp.14-41.

<sup>101</sup> Manuel Moreno Fraginals, *El ingenio. Complejo económico social cubano del azúcar*, Vol. 3, Havana: Editorial de ciencias sociales, 1978, p.64.

<sup>102</sup> Francisco de Arango y Parreño, *Obras*, Vol. 1, Havana: Ediciones Imagen Contemporánea, 2005, p.170.

<sup>103</sup> Fraginals (1978), p.102.

while fish imports were between 3.5% and 0.4%.<sup>104</sup> Similarly, an average of 808,864 arrobas per year of jerked meat was imported between 1826 and 1860, while cod remained at 241,243 arrobas per year.<sup>105</sup>

However, the new meat-based diet was not welcomed by everyone. The Cuba's clergy complained that slaves could not comply with the Friday meat fast. Therefore, the planters started to distribute cod in Friday meals, but as its price was very high, they came up with religious and economic arguments to limit fasts to Lent Fridays, Holy Saturday and Christmas Eve.<sup>106</sup> Again, Arango y Parreño provided the economic justification for this, as Cubans "gave up Lent only to take away from the English the profit of the cod we consumed during it, our greater interests do not allow us to have less condescension".<sup>107</sup> Even when the US markets were the principal supplier of salted cod, as during the nineteenth century, meat remained a prominent staple in Cuba, and salted meat became "a fundamental element of Cuban culture".<sup>108</sup>

## Conclusion

In 1912, only four *saladeros* were operating in the territory of the Republic of Argentina.<sup>109</sup> In the previous decades, many plants expanded their scope (producing meat extracts and canned meat, for instance), but finally the European consumers' preference for fresh meat and the introduction of steamships and refrigerators on transatlantic voyages opened up more profitable avenues for the Argentinian meat industry. Nevertheless, the meat industry remained pivotal in the overall economic development of late-nineteenth-century Argentina, witnessing a process of creative destruction in which chilled, canned or frozen meat replaced salting techniques. Indeed, there are some stories of successful industrial reconversion. In 1903, Liebig's Extract of Meat Company Ltd. bought the *saladero* Colón in the province of Entre Ríos. This company pioneered the commercialization of meat extracts, and it has produced the Fray Bentos tinned corned beef since 1873. The Liebig's converted the *saladero* into a meat-extract firm that was labelled the "largest livestock breeding company in the world".<sup>110</sup> However, a comprehensive assessment of business behaviour of the *saladeros'* owners in this transitional period is an interesting direction for further research on the topic.

The case described is an expression of the complex and contradictory character of economic modernity. The *saladeros* were a meeting point between wage labour and slavery, industrialisation and expansion of the commodity frontiers, empire and nation state. This history allows us to reflect on some general trends in Atlantic economic history of the long nineteenth century.

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<sup>104</sup> Nadia Fernández-de-Pinedo, 'Compelled to import: Cuban consumption at the dawn of the nineteenth century', *Atlantic Studies*, 18 (2021), p.12.

<sup>105</sup> Jacobo de la Pezuela, *Diccionario geográfico, estadístico, histórico de la isla de Cuba*, Tomo III, Madrid: Imprenta del establecimiento de Mellado, 1863, p.345.

<sup>106</sup> Pezuela (1863), p.120.

<sup>107</sup> Francisco de Arango y Parreño, *Obras del Excmo. Señor D. Francisco de Arango y Parreño*, Tomo 2, Havana: Imprenta de Howson y Heinen, 1888, p.209.

<sup>108</sup> Andrew Sluyter, 'The Hispanic Atlantic's Tasaño Trail', *Latin American Research Review*, 45:26 (2010), p.103.

<sup>109</sup> Juan E. Richelet, *Descripción de los frigoríficos y saladeros argentinos: nómina de los productos elaborados y los métodos empleados en cada uno*, Buenos Aires: Min. de Agricultura, Dir. de Ganadería, 1912, p.59.

<sup>110</sup> Santiago Senén González, *Carne, industria, trabajadores y Liebig. Programa 'Identidad Entrerriana'*, Buenos Aires: Corregidor 2008.

First, what were the attributes of industrialisation in that age? The Río de la Plata meat industry started as a putting-out system and an empire-sponsored activity with low capital requirements. It inserted into the economic system already in place and operated through a rationalisation of productive activities, a deeper division of labour and some small technological innovation. As the Atlantic demand expanded, governments kept on supporting the industry and entrepreneurs fostered further mechanisation of the productive process, which increased the output and (probably) reduced costs of the final product. Traditionally speaking, this is not considered as industrialisation because of the absence of an energy transition and science-based technological innovation. But traditional explanations are usually Eurocentric insofar as they took the British case as the starting point against which to compare the success or failure of other historical experiences. However, the meat industry sustained an extension of the commodity form and of a market economy, thereby signalling a qualitative change in the everyday life of the population, that became overall more entangled with a market logic. Therefore, further reflections on the meanings of industrialisation in what was once considered the periphery might be beneficial to reach a more global understanding of the transition toward a market economy in different contexts. Actually, from the standpoint of the meat industry, the Río de la Plata was one of the centres of Atlantic production, together with other localities such as Rio Grande do Sul in Brazil or Ireland. The discussion has highlighted the prominent role that commercial capital had in fostering the extension of the commodity form, coupled with direct or indirect support by different political regimes.

Second, a reconsideration of the different forms that industrialisation could take might contribute to dethroning its prominent role in the definitions of capitalism, in favour of the connecting and driving role of trade. Recently, the concept of commercial capitalism has experienced a welcome revival, insofar as it allows us to connect different and diverse historical experiences, highlighting how production might be driven or heavily shaped by international trade. What is interesting is the evaluation of how and when the imperatives of international trade changed the productive process: if its logic has mostly been the exchange of reciprocal requirements, the characteristic of modern commerce was a drive to reduce costs by expanding production through rationalisation and technological innovation. In land-abundant contexts, this process took the form of an expansion of the commodity frontiers in the countryside, accompanied by forms of industrialisation or processing of natural resources that turned them into commodities. Commercial capitalism seems a useful definition to bring together different modes of production – characterised by multiple labour and ownership regimes – under a common international economic system driven by profit maximisation, competition and the diffusion of the commodity form. Here, temporality plays a central role: the configuration of supply and demand in the global market has been constantly reshaped by technological innovation, political conflicts and other conjunctural factors. During the nineteenth century, Buenos Aires took advantage of the economic needs of the Atlantic economy in order to sustain its domestic growth. However, this model of political economy suffered from successive restructuration of the global market, and processing activities without an extensive industrialisation proved insufficient to promote economic growth during the twentieth century. Natural endowment and temporal conjuncture were necessary elements for taking advantage of the flourishing of nineteenth-century global trade, as well as political connections.

Third, the case of the Río de la Plata suggests interesting considerations on the political regimes that sponsored transitions to market economies through commodity-chain creation and organisation. Governmental efforts to promote the meat industry took different forms but were shared by both imperial and post-imperial authorities. It seems that a shared ideology of economic improvement characterised Buenos Aires political elites, the difference being that at first economic growth was needed to sustain an empire that was lagging behind its international competitors, later it was a way to create a strong and independent republic. This was achieved with support for productive economic activities that would augment the wealth of the population and the state through an increase in its fiscal revenues. During imperial times, while the initiative of individuals was pivotal, the level of state patronage seems higher, as the regulation excluding foreign merchants and the creation of a chartered company suggest. In the post-imperial age, the state had a lower capacity to govern the economic sector (for ideological as well as practical reasons), even if it was providing the necessary legal framework and was sustaining economic expansion through the military conquest of the commodity frontier. Actually, it can be argued that the increasing complexity and expansion of the economy required a more sustained state effort for market framing, with the establishment of the rules for the market economy. Finally, the history of the *saladeros* illustrates a phenomenon that would be central in the decolonisation processes of the following century: the necessity of the postcolonial state to rely on colonial activities in order to foster economic growth. In Buenos Aires, it did not result in processes of neo-colonial dependency from the old motherland, but instead generated a demand driven by the strict relationship with Britain that some scholars associated with forms of informal imperialism.

## Appendix

Table 1. See Moutoukias (1995), pp.804-5.

<b>Hides export from the port of Buenos Aires</b>					
<b>Year</b>	<b>Units</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Units</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Units</b>
1756	15,000	1770	65,000	1784	355,520
1757	96,000	1771	89,000	1785	180,496
1758	Missing	1772	73,000	1786	272,100
1759	Missing	1773	58,000	1787	248,844
1760	76,000	1774	182,000	1788	229,600
1761	86,000	1775	119,000	1789	190,000
1762	Missing	1776	79,000	1790	332,401
1763	Missing	1777	41,000	1791	280,953
1764	30,055	1778	90,000	1792	469,680
1765	79,000	1779	222,515	1793	418,770
1766	96,000	1780	49,644	1794	516,000
1767	78,000	1781	25,560	1795	238,344
1768	65,940	1782	36,292	1796	390,780
1769	77,940	1783	462,412		

Table 2. See Montoya (1956), pp.30-1.

<b>Export from the ports of Buenos Aires and Montevideo in imperial times</b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>Tasajo (Kg)</b>	<b>Additional information</b>
1792-96	18,733	
1798	11,076	Buenos Aires excluded
1799	7,470	Buenos Aires excluded
1800	12,774	Buenos Aires excluded
1803 (2nd semester)	40,948	3,655 bundels and 296 barrels
1804	32,363	14,182 bundles and 611 barrels
1805	29,356	241 barrels

Table 3. See Rosal & Schmit (1999), pp.80-1.

Export from the port of Buenos Aires							
Year	Beef hides (u)	Horse hides (u)	Tasajo (q)	Year	Beef hides (u)	Horse hides (u)	Tasajo (q)
1810	1,094,892	296,379	0	1833	699,017	19,215	145,451
1811	750,147	111,481	0	1834	689,564	16,932	157,954
1812	301,934	25,300	6,800	1835	534,213	20,813	119,017
1813	397,232	29,660	4,000	1836	622,702	40,100	150,579
1814	583,492	44,865	10,715	1837	823,635	25,367	178,877
1815	850,242	214,395	3,000	1838	355,993	20,443	165,304
1816	691,321	191,705	3,140	1839	8,501	1,320	6,670
1817	798,599	223,916	16,000	1840	83,779	4,807	8,630
1818	728,539	215,862	60,130	1841	2,340,638	113,192	217,671
1819	519,991	142,733	53,656	1842	1,399,471	58,508	133,795
1820	469,138	198,992	113,110	1843	2,054,715	71,804	182,940
1821	468,846	228,399	52,490	1844	1,786,351	41,646	328,182
1822	590,372	421,566	87,663	1845	1,942,297	69,412	274,330
1823	540,637	454,927	88,632	1846	436,739	54,863	21,298
1824	563,724	360,271	134,740	1847	1,545,307	108,183	225,481
1825	655,255	339,703	130,361	1848	1,384,790	93,810	314,352
1826	112,268	11,448	26,447	1849	2,961,342	238,514	553,478
1827	62,805	20,176	23,377	1850	2,424,251	187,107	390,731
1828	512,880	65,652	28,887	1851	2,601,318	140,677	431,873
1829	854,799	64,563	164,818	1852	1,994,196	106,047	530,960
1830	965,556	48,581	261,284	1853	1,205,252	133,670	335,615
1831	813,996	31,068	102,742	1854	1,399,353	246,273	323,059
1832	923,017	38,006	101,315				

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The mutually reinforcing relationship between 'commodities' and 'empires' has long been recognised. Over the last six centuries the quest for profits has driven imperial expansion, with the global trade in commodities fuelling the ongoing industrial revolution. These 'commodities of empire', which became transnationally mobilised in ever larger quantities, included foodstuffs (wheat, rice, bananas); industrial crops (cotton, rubber, linseed and palm oils); stimulants (sugar, tea, coffee, cocoa, tobacco and opium); and ores (tin, copper, gold, diamonds). Their expanded production and global movements brought vast spatial, social, economic and cultural changes to both metropolises and colonies.

In the Commodities of Empire project we explore the networks through which such commodities circulated within, and in the spaces between, empires. We are particularly attentive to local processes – originating in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Latin America – which significantly influenced the outcome of the encounter between the world economy and regional societies, doing so through a comparative approach that explores the experiences of peoples subjected to different imperial hegemonies.

The following key research questions inform the work of project:

- 1) The networks through which commodities were produced and circulated within, between and beyond empires;
- 2) The interlinking 'systems' (political-military, agricultural labour, commercial, maritime, industrial production, social communication, technological knowledge) that were themselves evolving during the colonial period, and through which these commodity networks functioned;
- 3) The impact of agents in the periphery on the establishment and development of commodity networks: as instigators and promoters; through their social, cultural and technological resistance; or through the production of anti-commodities;
- 4) The impact of commodity circulation both on the periphery, and on the economic, social and cultural life of the metropolises;
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