

The Role of Commerce in the Growth of Towns In Central Highland Ecuador 1750–1920

[Record]

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Abstract

Commerce was a key function of urban development in the Central Highlands of Ecuador. Three towns—Latacunga, Ambato, and Riobamba—are examined in some detail in order to understand why commercial functions developed more strongly in some towns than in others. A dynamic and prosperous agricultural hinterland was the key to growth. Ambato grew faster than the other towns because its hinterland, fairly densely populated by white smallholders, participated more readily in cash-crop production than did the Indian population surrounding the other towns.

Résumé

Le commerce a constitué un facteur clef de l'expansion urbaine dans les hautes terres du centre de l'Équateur. Trois villes — Latacunga, Ambato et Riobamba — sont étudiées en détail afin de comprendre pourquoi l'activité commerciale a connu un essor plus grand dans certaines villes que dans d'autres. Le principal facteur de la

croissance a été l'existence d'un arrière-pays agricole prospère et dynamique. Ambato a grandi plus rapidement que les autres villes, parce que son arrière-pays, où les petits propriétaires blancs sont en assez grand nombre, était mieux préparé à se lancer dans la production de récoltes commerciales que les populations indiennes dans le voisinage des autres villes.

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