The Ties that Bind: Creole Networks and Reform in New Granada during the Age of Revolution, 1780-1811

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THE TIES THAT BIND: CREOLE NETWORKS AND REFORM IN NEW GRANADA
DURING THE AGE OF REVOLUTION, 1780-1811

A dissertation
presented in partial fulfillment of requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the Department of History
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by
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ABSTRACT

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Spanish Americans were immersed in a practical Enlightenment that aimed to improve society during the Age of Revolution (1780-1850). In the city of Santafé de Bogotá, elites comprised of Spaniards and creoles (Spaniards born in the Americas) joined in scientific expeditions, higher education, creating newspapers, and proposing economic and educational reforms that all promised to bring prosperity to the Viceroyalty of New Granada (present-day Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, and Panama). Rather than a source of major confrontation, elites’ activities aligned with the Spanish Crown’s interest in turning its American kingdoms into centers of wealth. Strong ties developed between local elites of Santafé and the crown that contributed to a slow transformation of Spanish American society. A rich political culture developed around creole participation as both the crown and local groups sought to curry favor with one another.

Napoleon Bonaparte’s invasion of the Iberian Peninsula and the abdication of the Spanish monarchs in early 1808 plunged the empire into chaos. News of the events started to reach the Americas in as early as the summer of 1808, but the response to the news was truly revolutionary. In Santafé, as well as across the empire, reactions focused on reforming the empire not only to counter French aggression, but to safeguard against the political and economic vulnerabilities exposed by the imperial crisis. The rich bonds that elites formed with each other in the late colonial period continued to play a powerful role as they navigated and experimented with how best to maintain order in the face of an unprecedented event.
DEDICATION

To John Richter, my beloved grandfather.

And to my wife Carli, whose strength inspires me.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As with so many others, I am indebted to the fantastic community that supported me throughout this dissertation. From intellectual stimulus to financial backing, I have received abundant aid that made this journey possible. While I will do my best, I am sure I will not be able to thank everyone here.

The unwavering support from my committee members throughout the different stages of my project has been overwhelming. As an advisor, Douglass Sullivan-González was everything I needed and so much more. He has been with me every step of my graduate school career, becoming my number one fan after unlocking the Latin Americanist inside of me. Throughout the dissertation, his tremendous attention to my ideas and arguments were formative to the growth and success of my project. And as a friend, Doug offered unflinching grace and compassion during the most difficult parts of my life. Marc Lerner has been crucial to my intellectual development. His genuine interest in my research goals cultivated a space for me to experiment and grow. As a mentor, Marc’s kindness combined with his exceptional enthusiasm for the questions that interested me have helped me find my voice. His generosity has touched my life in profound ways. Jesse Cromwell’s close reading of my work, from graduate papers to the dissertation, offered insight and encouragement that continue to impact my research. His desire to see me succeed extended well beyond reviewing papers. He supported the presentation of my work at conferences, introduced me to his academic circles, and provided invaluable teaching advice. Theresa Levitt has from the very beginning of this project shown incredible interest, reassuring me of the merits of my work. Her voice inspired me to widen the scope of my
Marcos Mendoza was a gracious committee member who offered me challenging questions and heartfelt support. His words have been a powerful reminder of my fascination with Latin America.

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I am grateful to the University of Mississippi for the many opportunities its assistance afforded me. The Department of History’s tremendous support of my research ambitions over the years through the Dalrymple Fund (in various forms) enabled my overseas archival trips and made travel to conferences easier to manage. Many thanks to Kelly Houston and Suneetha Chittiboyina whose help navigating these supportive networks eased the process. I am also extremely thankful for the College of Liberal Arts and the Graduate School’s financial support, which has been crucial throughout my dissertation writing. I am also indebted to the amazing staff of the Interlibrary Loan Department of the J.D. Williams Library at the University of
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My gratitude also extends to the archival staffs of the Library of Congress, Archivo Histórico Nacional (Madrid), the Biblioteca Nacional de España (Madrid), the Archivo General de Indias (Seville), the Archivo Histórico Javeriano (Bogotá), Biblioteca Nacional de Colombia (Bogotá), and the Biblioteca Luis Ángel Arango (Bogotá). At the Archivo General de la Nación
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INTRODUCTION

A REVOLUTIONARY AGE

In early 1810, Francisco José de Caldas wrote to the newly elected representative of the Viceroyalty of the New Kingdom of Granada asking that “When Your Excellency finds himself in the center of the sovereign Junta, when the fortune of three million depend on your talents, Your Excellency remember this Observatory, the only one that the New Continent possesses, and that does so much honor to Your Excellency's Patria.”¹ As an active naturalist, Caldas enjoyed over a decade of scientific pursuits in the Viceroyalty of New Granada—present-day Colombia, Panama, Ecuador, and Venezuela—thanks to receiving regular financial support from the royal government. For the past two years, however, Caldas and other naturalists in New Granada struggled with viceregal authorities to secure funding for their work. Caldas addressed his letter to Antonio de Narvaez y la Torre, a creole who won the 1809 election to serve as a representative of the viceroyalty in the newly revived Spanish Cortes (Parliament) organized by the Junta Suprema Central y Gubernativa de España e Indias (Supreme Central Governing Board of Spain and the Indies).² The election process established what would be the first attempt to create a representative government for the Spanish Empire in the Hispanic World. That

¹ Francisco José de Caldas a Antonio de Narvaez y la Torre, Santafé, March 9, 1810, in Cartas de Caldas (Bogotá: Biblioteca Nacional de Colombia, 1978): 304-05.
revolutionary moment, however, had been one of many that came out of Napoleon Bonaparte’s invasion of Iberia in 1807, the Spanish Monarchs’ abdication of the throne to the French Emperor, and the Bayonne Charter of July 1808 which established Joseph Bonaparte as King of Spain. Communities across the empire denounced the Bonapartes as usurpers and declared their loyalty to Ferdinand VII, el deseado (the desired). The subsequent imperial crisis caused by the events in the Peninsula were catalyst moments that contributed to the uneven construction of representative governments across the Iberian World. As a creole living in the capital of New Granada, Caldas experienced a series of calamitous events that shook a three-hundred-year-old Atlantic empire to its core. Despite the tumult of the crisis, Caldas searched for ways to continue his work. Caldas’ plea demonstrated a revolutionary experience and a central tension of the early years of the imperial crisis: revolution under monarchy.

Four months later, however, Santafé de Bogotá would create its own autonomous junta when news of both the dissolution of the Junta Central and the formation of its replacement, el Consejo de Regencia (Council of Regency), reached the capital. In the weeks following the creation of the Junta Suprema in Santafé, however, varying responses emerged that reveal the contestable nature of revolution. The formation of the junta marked a serious step toward self-rule in New Granada. As creoles competed with each other for power, they also engaged in a struggle for public approval. While members of the junta attempted to provide direction through the release of frequent public decrees, contributors to the city’s newspapers tried to make sense

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3 For more on the Peninsular War or as it is referred to in Spanish historiography, the Spanish War for Independence, see Charles Esdaile, The Peninsular War: A New History (New York: St. Martin’s Publishing Group, 2002); Jean-René Aymes, La Guerra de la Independencia en España (1808-1814) (Madrid: Siglo XXI de España Editores, S.A., 2008).
4 Although technically a part of the Viceroyalty of New Granada, Venezuela in the eighteenth century was in practice a separate entity headed by a Captain-General and with its own archdiocese and audiencia.
5 To avoid confusion, this dissertation will most often use Santafé to refer to the present-day city of Bogotá, Colombia. It was not until 1819 that the Republic of Colombia changed Santafé de Bogotá to just “Bogotá.”
of the revolution. Importantly, creoles’ understanding of the ongoing changes did not lead them to immediately calling for independence. In the early period of Spanish America’s revolutions, creoles confronted and responded to events that seemingly threatened the continuation of local customs. Locally controlled representative government became the best option for Spanish Americans because it would mean the preservation of local culture. The choice of representative government was a deliberate and intentional decision that involved weighing other government options, historical examples of past revolutions, and the danger posed by foreign powers in the Atlantic World.

The capital’s new government was unquestionably a transformative moment for its inhabitants but making sense of “our revolution” became a central concern for creole leaders as they responded to the uncertainties of local tensions and external events in the Atlantic World. At the time of the abdication of the monarchs, creoles in Santafé were immersed in a community that valued centers of education, the study and exchange of scientific knowledge, and the production of reformist proposals. The late colonial period in Santafé was defined by a practical Enlightenment that brought creoles and *peninsulares* (Spaniards born in Spain) together based on common interests and shared ideas about prosperity and, increasingly, notions of the public good. Through these practices, participants in this practical Enlightenment developed meaningful social, political, and intellectual ties. Those rich connections, however, did not dictate how creoles, or *peninsulares* for that matter, responded to the imperial crisis. Rather, creoles and *peninsulares* wielded their past experiences, interests, and knowledge base as they interacted and impacted an age of revolutions.

Importantly, Santafé’s *Junta Suprema* was not a national government. Nor was it the only *junta* to form in New Granada. By early 1811, over fifteen *juntas* had been erected. While
political leaders certainly enjoyed aspirations of forming a government to replace the viceroyalty, municipal divisions, competing ideas of liberty, and familial networks became serious roadblocks in the first attempt to reconstitute New Granada. In its place came a blossoming of many sovereignties that saw cities emancipate themselves from their ancient capitals. In the years following 1810, strong factions emerged that pitted the central-Andean region against the north and northwestern provinces. As the civil war unfolded, declarations of complete independence paved the way for states to emerge in unequal ways. A wide cast of groups from all parts of society participated in these conflicts, including conflicts between the ephemeral states and royalists in the Caribbean and in southwestern New Granada. Even when Ferdinand VII returned to the throne in 1814, the civil war continued until the arrival of a large Spanish army in 1816 that subjugated the divided regions, thus ending the interregnum. In the immediate period following the Reconquest, Spanish forces executed many of the creoles involved in the independence movements.

Despite, or perhaps because of, its incredible cast of characters and disappointing outcome, the first revolutionary movement has long been overshadowed by general interest in Simón Bolívar and triumphant narrative of his campaigns from Venezuela to Peru. Failure and pettiness came to define the first depictions of Colombia’s early independence movements. In his foundational narrative of Colombian independence, José Manuel Restrepo’s *Historia de la Revolución de Colombia* pejoratively labeled the period between 1810 and 1816 as *la Patria Boba* (Foolish Fatherland). In his critique of the first attempts at independence, Restrepo argued

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7 José Manuel Restrepo, *Historia de la revolución de la República de Colombia en la América meridional* (1827; Besanzon: Imprenta de José Jacquin, 1858).
federalists interrupted the establishment of a centralist state that could have defended the nascent nation from the Spanish invasion. Restrepo gave birth to a patriotic historiography that conceived federalism in general as incompatible with “the Spanish race.” Royalists and the lower classes likewise impeded the patriotic pursuits of the republican government in their fight against evil Spanish tyrants in his depiction of a wasted opportunity to realize Colombia. As a survivor of the first independence movements in New Granada, and indeed a part of the very federalist project that he so vehemently condemned, Restrepo joined Bolívar in a second, more successful campaign for independence. Like Bolívar and other victorious creoles across Spanish America, Restrepo developed and pushed a narrative of independence well into the mid-nineteenth century rooted in noble creole rejection of three hundred years of Spanish slavery. Over the next century, descendants of the creole heroes contributed to the historiography with significant biographical work as well as publishing enormous archival sources. 8

Powerful works emerged at the end of the twentieth century that demonstrated the need to take the early federalist projects of the interregnum more seriously. 9 Since then, historians have chipped away at teleological narratives of independence to explore how actors navigated the uncertain period. François-Xavier Guerra’s research, as well as that of his students, has been instrumental in unpacking a depiction of the transition to independence to emphasize a process

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8 José Manuel Groot, Historia eclesiástica y civil de Nueva Granada: escrita sobre documentos auténticos, Segunda, 5 vols. (Bogotá: Casa Editorial de M. Rivas y C., 1891). The early twentieth century saw the creation of the Historical Academy in Colombia which allowed for a tremendous amount of primary sources to be compiled and published. The bulk of the authors, however, were not only related to those involved in the interregnum but continued the centralist narrative. See Eduardo Posada, La patria bobo (Bogotá: Imprenta Nacional, 1902); Eduardo Posada, El precursor. Documentos sobre la vida pública y privada del General Antonio Nariño (Bogotá: Imprenta Nacional, 1903); Raimundo Rivas and José María Restrepo Sáenz, Genealogias de Santa Fe de Bogotá (Bogotá: Librería Colombiana, 1928); Some of these sources have been reprinted in Guillermo Hernández de Alba, ed., Archivo Nariño, 6 vols., Biblioteca de la Presidencia de la República administración Virgilio Barco (Bogotá: Fundación Francisco de Paula Santander, 1990).

9 For two excellent examples, see Alfonso Muñera, El fracaso de la nación. Región, clase y raza en el caribe colombiano: 1717-1810 (Bogotá: Banco de la República, El Ancora Editores, 1998); Armando Martínez Garnica, El legado de la “Patria Boba” (Bucaramanga: Universidad Industrial de Santander, 1998).
that included the end of empires and the creation of nation-states. Daniel Gutiérrez Ardila’s masterful work on the interregnum stresses the importance of considering revolution not as “open channel, but a meandering river, a hesitant course that could have had very different solutions to the one that we know.” Jeremy Adelman’s labyrinthine model captures how “the passages from empire to nationhood forked in ways that required actors to make choices without knowing the certainty of the outcome.” The prevalence of a teleological narrative in the historiography of the Independence Wars, however, should not be underestimated. The search for precursors of the new republics of Spanish America clouds depictions of New Granadan communities as being in a constant state of conflict against the monarchical power of Spain. As Isidro Vanegas points out, patriotic historiography “proceeds through a conjectural system of argumentation: it supposes that the Colombian nation pre-exists its independence and from that premise it seeks at all costs the antecedents of that necessary nation.”

While more recent historiography has escaped the hagiographic depictions of creole elites’ participation in the Independence Wars, historians interested in creole elites’ linkages to the Enlightenment have contended with teleological interpretations that depicted the Enlightenment in Spanish America as anticolonial. A rich body of literature has developed


14 For an example of a hagiographic approach in English, see Thomas Blossom, *Nariño: Hero of Colombian Independence* (Tuscon: University of Arizona Press, 1967); I refer to creoles linked to the colegios, Botanical
around breaking that teleology by examining themes of sociability. The work of Benedict Anderson on the formation of imagined communities proved useful for historians such as Margarita Garrido to break away from seeing creoles’ connections to the Enlightenment as precursory to independence.  

For Garrido and others, elite associations made through tertulias (salons), the Botanical Expedition, consulados (chambers of commerce), colegios, and Sociedades Patrioticas created space for a scientific patriotism to develop among the creoles involved. Less discussed are the ways in which late colonial society experienced significant transformations that not only occurred under monarchical rule but were not in the least anti-monarchical. For this, the framework of empire is crucial to understanding the late colonial experience as creoles actively engaged with and used the language of empire in pursuit of a practical Enlightenment. Indeed, as Anthony McFarlane has shown, for creoles living in Spanish American societies that were “deeply resistant to change,” enlightened government became the “indispensable patron” of those who sought progressive reform.

Conventionally, the late colonial period and the independence wars are divided to depict strong discontinuities and antagonisms between the antiguo regimen and the development of
representative government. However, even for those elites that would eventually pursue complete independence projects, most of their lived experience was not focused on breaking away from the Spanish Empire. My dissertation explores the continuities of elite social groups and political culture starting in the late 1770s (late colonial period) and following those experiences to the first years of the imperial crisis to show a slow change over time. Having inherited the throne in 1700, the Bourbon King Philip V and his ministers pursued initiatives to increase the power of the state in the Spanish Empire. Building off of those practices, Bourbon monarchs during the second half of the eighteenth century, Ferdinand VI (1746-59) and Charles III (1759-88), deployed a more robust and expansive host of reforms that, when combined with proposals made under Philip V, historians have labeled the Bourbon reforms. A fascinating political culture emerged in the empire under the Bourbon reforms, one that highlights the negotiated relationship between imperial officials and local actors. The imperial context has been especially fruitful in showing the intersection of Enlightenment science and Atlantic empires.

However, Napoleon’s betrayal of his alliance with Spain in 1808 and the abdication of the monarchs upset the balance that had been struck in the Hispanic World by dismantling the beneficial relationships that had come to constitute the interactions between creole elites and the royal government. In the absence of that imperial structure, Spaniards and Spanish Americans used existing ideas of government and their familiarity with other Atlantic revolutions to pursue autonomist projects and, in some instances, war.

In New Granada and in Santafé specifically, creole elites pursued, petitioned, and received an abundance of opportunities to explore, record, and discuss knowledge they acquired from within and outside of the kingdom. Under Bourbon rule and with the support of several viceroys, elites opened a school for girls, obtained a library, the Botanical Expedition, and the first astronomical observatory in the Western Hemisphere. They also attended colegios mayores (secondary schools) and university, met in tertulias, and read newspapers (local and external). Elites developed a strong relationship with the royal government that benefited both sides. Elites obtained the crown’s patronage and could use the subsequent experiences to petition for more state support or seek government posts. Viceroy took a keen interest in a practical Enlightenment as they could point to elite activities as a marker of prestige in the Spanish court. This is not to argue that elites’ experiences had a deterministic effect. Rather, elites' connections to the state reveal how creoles developed intimate understandings of political economy, justice, ideas of public happiness, and “public good” under monarchical rule and prior to the imperial crisis. Following the 1808 crisis of the monarchy, reformists’ activities further expose the extent

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21 Focusing on the interplay between events in the Peninsula and Spanish America has been one of the most impactful revisions in recent years. My work builds off of this change, see Guerra, Modernidad e independencias.
to which elites possessed familiarity with republicanism and liberalism, ideas that have been traditionally casted as not only “modern” but at odds with monarchy. Historical actors did not follow ideologies as acolytes, but rather freely chose ideas to mold their own vision of society. These interactions had a powerful impact on the social and political cultures of the inhabitants of Spanish America that points to the need to extend Spanish America’s “revolutionary experience” from the late eighteenth century to the early nineteenth century.  

This dissertation also benefits from a recent trend in the historiography of the Spanish American Revolutions that emphasizes the role of the Atlantic World. François-Xavier Guerra and Jaime Rodríguez’s work transformed the field by viewing the Spanish American Revolutions as fundamentally linked to the events in Spain. Since then, a tremendous amount of literature has explored the contours of revolution and independence movements in the early nineteenth century Iberian Atlantic. More recently historians have shown the porous nature of Atlantic

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22 This argument has been made by Roberto Breña, El primer liberalismo español y los procesos de emancipación de América, 1808-1824: una revisión historiográfica del liberalismo hispánico (México: Centro de Estudios Internacionales, Colegio de México, 2006); Echeverri, Indian and Slave Royalists in the Age of Revolution, 9; Cristina Soriano, Tides of Revolution: Information, Insurgencies, and the Crisis of Colonial Rule in Venezuela (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2018).

23 Guerra, Modernidad e independencias; Jaime Rodríguez O., The Independence of Spanish America; Also see Halperin Donghi, Reforma y disolución de los imperios ibéricos 1750–1850 (Madrid: Alianza, 1985); José M. Portillo, Crisis Atlántica: Autonomía e independencia en la crisis de la monarquía hispana (Madrid: Fundación Carolina, 2006).

empires and the significant ties between revolutionary movements. Cristina Soriano’s work on late colonial Venezuela has traced the emergence of a vibrant multiclass and multiethnic political culture “grounded in semiliterate forms of knowledge transmission and oral information” of the French and Caribbean revolutions. Indeed, the flow of knowledge about events in the Atlantic played a significant role in Santafereño society. High-ranking colonial officials read news and reports and became increasingly anxious about the spread of knowledge they deemed seditious. At the same time, elites read and discussed information about the North American, French, and Caribbean revolutions but did not act against the crown. Instead, elites, and here we need to include government officials who came from elite populations, possessed an intimate knowledge base of past rebellions and revolutions not only in the Spanish Empire, but the Atlantic as well. Despite not including the Spanish American Revolutions in their edited volume, Keith Michael Baker and Dan Edelstein’s Scripting Revolution provides a useful way to approach the wide scope of revolutionary movements: “Revolutionaries are extremely self-conscious of (and often highly knowledgeable) about how previous revolutions unfolded. These revolutionary scripts


26 Soriano, Tides of Revolution, 3.
offer frameworks for political action. Whether they serve as models or counterexamples, they provide the outlines on which revolutionary actors can improvise. And revolutionaries, in turn, can transform the scripts they inherit.” Conceptually, this framework is incredibly relevant to how elites in Santafé grappled with the imperial crisis specifically and existing in the Age of Revolution more broadly. Deeply engaged in discovering pragmatic knowledge to promote the “public good,” elites generated a depiction of revolution as anarchy that threatened to disrupt the pursuit of prosperity. The later years of the French Revolution and the Haitian Revolution added to that threat as they represented the dangers of uncontrolled change. Anxiety of revolution and anarchy, however, did not mean that elites disparaged change. On the contrary, revolution through reform, at the least, held the promise of stability. In the wake of 1808, creoles continued to incorporate revolutionary language but in the context of monarchy and empire. However, with the dissolution of the Junta Central in early 1810, the threat of anarchy loomed. It is in these spaces of tension between local interests and Atlantic processes that this dissertation seeks to explore how Spanish Americans conceptualized revolution.

Historians have typically separated the late colonial period from the Spanish American Independence Wars to underscore discontinuity and explore the emergence of modern political culture in the Hispanic World. My analysis, however, seeks to avoid the trap of “modernity” that places too much emphasis on the emergence of representative government as the hallmark of being modern. My approach is indebted to recent historians’ work that depicts political culture in the Age of Revolution as best understood not in binary terms of loyal and anticolonial, ancient

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28 For late colonial approaches, see Renán Silva, Los ilustrados de Nueva Granada, 1760-1808: genealogía de una comunidad de interpretación (Medellín: Banco de la República: Fondo Editorial Universidad EAFIT, 2008); On independence, see Jaime Rodríguez O., The Independence of Spanish America.
and modern, but as flexible, even confusing at times. Janet Polasky’s *Revolution Without Borders* presses this point, arguing “in a time so turbulent that anything seemed possible, no simple dichotomies divided revolutionaries from counterrevolutionaries, or even radicals from conservatives.”

In the Spanish American context, elites possessed a plurality of ideological traditions that neither compelled them nor crippled their ambitions. Rather, Spanish Americans’ familiarity with a wide breadth of ideas including, among others, rights-based principles, monarchical traditions, and Catholic virtues, defined the revolutionary experience.

Finally, while conventional approaches continue until 1816, this study intentionally stops in 1811. In no way disparaging these works, my project explores elites’ initial reactions to the imperial crisis without focusing on impeding civil war that the historical actors were unaware would unfold. This periodization is my analysis which combines an emphasis on social ties with a spatial argument to account for elites’ experiences in Santafé. I see creoles as more than politically active members, but as individuals with deep ties to the communities they constructed. Creoles’ connections were rooted in geographic space. Elite families lacked mobility, or more accurately, they deliberately etched out positions of power in fixed municipalities. Indeed, New Granada was not an easily traversable territory. As Marta Herrera Ángel has shown, New Granadan cities were divided by more than economic structures or geographic realities, but politics as well. Unlike New Spain’s Mexico City or Peru’s Lima, New Granada’s capital...

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29 Janet L. Polasky, *Revolutions Without Borders: The Call to Liberty in the Atlantic World*, 3; Marc Lerner’s work on political culture in Switzerland makes a similar point that “In practice, thought and actions are much messier than in theoretical classifications of ideological discussions…in practice, modern political culture was a blend of custom and rational principles.” See Marc H. Lerner, *A Laboratory of Liberty: The Transformation of Political Culture in Republican Switzerland, 1750–1848* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 4.


Santafé de Bogotá was not the central hub of the viceroyalty. In terms of commerce, the capital relied on trade from Cartagena to then redistribute goods to the Andean highlands. Nevertheless, for the Santafereños of this study the capital became a major point of sociability. The establishment of a royal mint and being the seat of the audiencia made Santafé significant, but not dominant. The structure of that viceregal authority helped establish a vertical relationship that engendered cooperation without necessarily competition. Elites in Cartagena, like the merchant José Ignacio de Pombo, supported creoles involved in the scientific ventures that came out of Santafé because of the practical applications that the acquired knowledge promised, even if that meant supporting an institution that was centered in the capital.\footnote{For example, the Botanical Expedition was moved from Mariquita to Santafé in October 1789. Impatient with José Celestino Mutis’ lack of progress on the *Flora de Bogotá*, the viceroy ordered the Botanical Expedition to move to the capital “so that its progress could be closely monitored and expedited.” See Bleichmar, *Visible Empire*, 102.}

Casting off that vertical support with the creation of juntas, however, exposed the real limitations in elites' ability to project power beyond the municipality. Gutiérrez Ardila’s study of diplomacy in the interregnum exposes how between 1810 and 1816, alliances, pacts, and the use of force dominated municipal interactions in the absence of the pactismo that defined colonial and metropolitan relations.\footnote{Gutiérrez Ardila, *Un nuevo reino*.} In Santafé, creoles developed factions linked to familial ties and the role of ideas. Over the course of 1810 and 1811, members of those factions remained in the former capital of the viceroyalty and engaged in a furious competition for power and public support. That dynamic, however, fundamentally changed when one of those factions—linked to the Álvarez clan—seized power and pushed their opposition out of the city. The move not only polemicized the factional disputes, but it changed the physical space in which the factions could compete for supremacy and broke the ties that bound former friends and colleagues. Moreover,
stopping in 1811 exposes a rich tension between elites’ interest in constructing a general
government and the spatial limitations of their municipal power. The question here is not about
searching for signs of a nascent Colombian nation, but rather understanding the transition out of
colonial rule.

This dissertation comes out of an interest in exploring how colonial elites understood
their experiences, constructed ties, and struggled with their decisions. I show that creoles were
immersed in a practical Enlightenment that sought to reform and improve society under
monarchical rule. To accomplish this, the first chapter uses a prosopographical approach to
establish the lay of the land during the late colonial period. The chapter explores elite ties to the
royal government, scientific expeditions, colegios, and, importantly, how elites used their
connections to maintain or expand their social status. Drawing off those links, the second chapter
examines the shared language of the late colonial period. Elites depicted their activities in New
Granada as contributing to a public good. Here I find that notions of república, patria and public
good emphasized the municipal organization of political community (común) and not a broad
affiliation (nación). More than the language of negotiation, elites’ use of notions of the public
good reveals their interest in a practical Enlightenment that could lean on the support of the
Spanish crown.

The third and fourth chapters examine moments of tension in New Granada to explore the
texture of ideas of revolution in the late colonial period. Chapter three investigates the nature of
negotiation and the space for reconciliation even for those accused of sedition. It is in these
spaces that women emerge as significant brokers in attempts to return not only honor to their
families, but also secure clemency for their male family members. The evidence presented
demonstrates women, as much as men, were active participants in the Santafé’s revolutionary
age. From there, the fourth chapter investigates the emergence of a nascent public sphere by primarily examining the language used in print media. It is here that I draw comparisons between two distinct revolutionary experiences, the arrival of the smallpox vaccine expedition and the start of the imperial crisis in 1808. In both instances, ideas of patriotism and loyalty emerged and were explicitly linked to notions of public opinion. Although the two moments utilized similar language, the terms took on significantly different meanings and expectations. At the same time, the depiction of the Spanish Crown exposes a continuity in concerns of public approval.

The final two chapters are firmly rooted in the crisis of monarchy and seeks to illuminate how creoles understood revolution. Chapter five examines the understudied Junta Central of Spain as a serious attempt to reconstitute the Spanish Empire. The Junta Central was not only a representative government that looked to form a constitution for the empire, but the experimental body permitted the American colonies to elect delegates to attend the newly formed Spanish Parliament. This chapter explores the election process in New Granada as well as the instrucciones (instructions) that the cabildos (town councils) drafted for their representative to bring to Spain. The evidence reveals creoles’ general interest in the representative experiment as well as the spectrum of reform ideas that constituted creoles’ proposals.

The final chapter places the formation of the junta of Santafé at the center of its analysis, exploring the tensions caused by the dissolution of the Junta Central and the decision to form a local junta. In it, I explore competing definitions of revolution that intersected with elites’ awareness of the vulnerability of the temporary government. The proclamation of popular sovereignty shifted creoles attention to attempt to win public support through public papers that importantly altered their format to reach a larger, illiterate audience that had become part of the political project. In these spaces of competition, creoles wrestled with internal and external
threats (some of which resemble specters) that generated a sense of urgency to defend what had been created. The call to defend the revolution against tyrants and oppressors became increasingly polemic and drove factionalism. With news from the Peninsula still reporting on the dire conditions, creoles looked to solidify their autonomist experiments to prepare for an uncertain future. Out of these divisions emerged two ephemeral states in 1811, one built on a loose alliance of provinces and the other centered in Santafé. 34

Creoles experienced incredible transformations between the late colonial period and the first years of the imperial crisis. And although even more significant changes occurred between 1811 and 1816, the dynamics of sociability and political culture had dramatically shifted in Santafé by the end of 1811. Having been immersed in a practical Enlightenment, creoles encountered the imperial crisis with an extensive (although certainly not flawless) knowledge base of ways to reform the empire. Examining creoles’ participation in revolution as well as exposing how they understood change is crucial to exploring how Spanish Americans navigated the apparent perils and promises of a revolutionary age.

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34 This does not include the other blocks that formed, including the royalist blocks in the northwestern and southwestern parts of the viceroyalty.
CHAPTER I

ELITE NETWORKS IN LATE COLONIAL NEW GRANADA

Much has been written about the symbiotic links between social groups and the state during the colonial period.¹ More recent work has emphasized the development of social networks during the colonial period and their endurance during the Age of Revolutions.² In the context of the second half of the eighteenth century in New Granada, colonial elites relied on networks that crossed kinship, community, and occupation lines, all the while coexisting and, indeed, strengthened by their connections in government. Moving the analysis from the state as the central actor to elites and the networks they constructed allows for a deeper understanding of the powerful web that, with minor exceptions, maintained a loyal and active community.

In the late colonial period, elites thrived off the networks they constructed that linked other elite families as well as the Spanish state. This chapter breaks from scholars’ previous works that have emphasized how certain occupations navigated the late colonial period.³ Instead,

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³ For examples of these important works, see Brading, Miners and Merchants in Bourbon Mexico 1763-1810; Uribe-Uran, Honorable Lives: Lawyers, Family, and Politics in Colombia, 1780-1850, 2000; Twinam, Miners, Merchants, and Farmers in Colonial Colombia.
this chapter is interested in understanding elites as part of broader social groups that crossed occupational lines. Indeed, creole and peninsular (Spanish-born immigrants) elites in Santafé de Bogotá worked in diverse fields and many individuals held positions in multiple occupations. Some of the men of this study considered themselves as lawyers, teachers, naturalists, and royal servants. In addition, the capital of New Granada was home to a vibrant, social community for elites in that it housed several tertulias (similar to French salons), a royal library, the Botanical Expedition to New Granada, newspapers, and a strong tradition of academic institutions. Elite families populated these institutions and social gatherings through an expansive but simultaneously exclusive web of social ties. More often than not, the Spanish state had a prominent role in either supporting the spaces where these social networks could form or in providing the prestige and livelihood that elite families desired.4

The royal government’s support of colonial elites and their activities extended across multiple occupations and backgrounds. Rather than focus on lawyers, merchants, or royal officials, this chapter focuses on individuals much closer to men of letters; males that rarely limited their participation to a single occupational field but many. These men attended university, participated in the academic community after their years of study, worked in government posts as lawyers, tax collectors, or accountants, and convened with each other as avid readers and budding naturalists. But neither are the subjects of this chapter only creoles, meaning people of European descent born in the Americas. Instead, this chapter investigates men of letters as a part of family units that included both creoles and peninsulares with the purpose of understanding the rich connections elite families made with each other and the Spanish Crown. The close ties that developed between the elite families and the Crown during the later Bourbon

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4 Victor Uribe-Uran discusses the ways in which the colonial state provided prestige to lawyers and their families, see Uribe-Uran, Honorable Lives: Lawyers, Family, and Politics in Colombia, 1780-1850, 2000, 9–19.
era reveals how the Spanish monarchy fostered the introduction and evolution of activities that have conventionally been depicted as anti-monarchical but were in fact interested in aligning elites’ interests with those of the Crown.

Across Spanish America, colonial elites wielded tremendous power in the political, economic, social, and cultural lives of urban centers and the surrounding countryside. In New Granada, elites built their fortunes by pursuing diverse investments in areas such as mining, agriculture, and trade. While wealth was power, elite families could not have hoped to establish themselves across economic opportunities without constructing a wide social network to solidify control of diverse holdings. Moreover, families increased their access to wealth and influence through marriages among wealthy families and royal appointees from Spain.5

This chapter explores the spaces in which elites constructed their social networks to explore the strength of those networks. Above all, elite families sought to secure their social standing and pass it on to their offspring. In the setting of the Age of Revolutions, historians have often considered these networks with an eye toward the Spanish American Independence Wars.6 In that respect, elite activities are considered for how they created tension between the colony and metropole or for how they set up the possibility of independence during the imperial crisis. This chapter, however, is interested in understanding the strength and nature of the social networks in New Granada as connected to the Spanish state by exploring key spaces where colonial elites and the Spanish government cooperated. Several fields demonstrate the strong ties between the Spanish State: education, government occupation, and the creation of new opportunities for the exchange of knowledge. Elite activities did not generate friction with the

5 This is discussed in Diana Balmori, Stuart F. Voss, and Miles Wortman, Notable Family Networks in Latin America (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).
6 Polasky, Revolutions Without Borders; Soriano, Tides of Revolution.
Peninsular government or with royal appointees. Rather, elites were immersed in a practical Enlightenment that used the resources of the colonial government to expand opportunities.

The reign of Charles III (1759-1788) brought new opportunities to elites in Spanish America. The Spanish Crown pursued policies through a series of uncoordinated reforms that have come to be known as the Bourbon reforms. Few reforms issued by the monarchs, the court, or the Crown’s ministers were applied simultaneously to the entire empire. The uneven nature of the reforms is reflected both by the reach of their policy and flexibility of their application. Nevertheless, it is still useful to discuss the Bourbon reforms as connected actions because many of the policies shared a similar motive. Bourbon reformers, ministers, and officials desired to combat their perception of Spain’s backwardness. To accomplish the rejuvenation of the Spanish Empire, Crown policy sought the curb local control in favor of centralizing power in the Spanish Monarchy. Elite families felt the increased presence of the Spanish state as royally appointed officials expanded the role of the government in institutions believed to be critical to creating a more prosperous society. However, the Crown’s weakening of local power may have been more incidental than it was deliberate. Monica Ricketts’s work on the competition between military men and men of letters for government appointments in the Viceroyalty of Peru argues against depictions of the Bourbon program as anti-American. Rather, Bourbon reformers pursued centralist and regalist policies to generate local interest in, on the one hand, a more professionalized and modern defense of the colonies, and on the other, the introduction of modern, enlightened curriculum.\(^7\) In effect, Crown policy “pursued two supposedly contradictory but actually convergent goals: the centralization of political authority and the integration of

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Peninsular and American elites.” Rather than weaken creole families that had established a power base through the loose policies of the Habsburg dynasty, Bourbon reformers sought to reorient how local elites maintained their power and influence by incorporating them into a new vision of the imperial relationship.

In New Granada, peninsular and creole elites were hardly at odds as the Bourbon reformism tendencies enabled elites’ interest in maintaining an active role in society to manifest in new and adaptive spaces. In the colonies, *peninsulares* and creoles sought royal approval and support for the creation of libraries, periodicals, schools for girls, and scientific institutions such as botanical expeditions and astronomical observatories. Elites also pushed, again with the royal government’s blessing, for the sanctioning of spaces to learn about and discuss topics of interest. In New Granada, families hosted *tertulias* that brought together leading public officials as well as members of the royal government. One *tertulia*, which gained popularity in the first years of the 1800s, was organized by Manuela Sanz de Santamaría and included the viceroy’s wife among its many attendees. Elites also joined reform efforts to existing spaces, such as the universities of the viceroyalty, to increase the scope of education to include what were seen as critical sources of knowledge, such as the work of Copernicus, Newton, and Wolff. *Peninsulares* and creoles consistently turned to the Crown and members of the royal government to grow and expand opportunities to reform and improve society.

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8 Ibid., 10–11.
9 Notable exceptions include the Comunero Revolt of 1781 and the arrests of 1796, both of which will be discussed in a later chapter. The Quito rebellion of 1765, or the Rebellion of the Barrios, will not be discussed as it is beyond the scope of this dissertation. See Anthony McFarlane, “The ‘Rebellion of the Barrios’: Urban Insurrection in Bourbon Quito,” *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 69, no. 2 (1989): 283–330.
10 The push to teach Newton and Wolff, among others, was not new to the Iberian World. On the contrary, universities in Spain incorporated Newton into their curriculum during the mid-eighteenth century. This process was not without spirited objections, but that topic is beyond the scope of this chapter. For more, see Antoni Malet, “Newton in the Iberian Peninsula,” in *The Reception of Newton in Europe*, edited by Helmut Pulte and Scott Mandelbrote (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019).
While Bourbon reformers implemented uneven policies to rejuvenate the empire, reformers and officials celebrated merit as a trait shared by those caught in the spirit of reform. Officers of the court, those wishing to join, and reformists alike used the word merit to underscore not only their commitment to change but also ability to generate that change. This is not to say that the word merit had never been used in Spanish society. On the contrary, during the Habsburg era the use of the term implied quality of character, but also limpieza de sangre (purity of blood). Linked to the religious divisions between Christians, Muslims, and Jews in the Iberian Peninsula, limpieza de sangre proved merit in that it meant an individual could prove their family’s historical links to Christianity and thus, their good heritage. By the late eighteenth century, however, the notions of merit had radically changed. Monica Ricketts argues that at least in Spain during the Bourbon era, the meaning of merit, or rather the implications of merit, abandoned its links to heritage and transitioned to an emphasis on “knowledge, skill, and virtue.”11 Yet this distinction did not quite play out in the Americas, or least in New Granada. While the use of merit in the viceroyalty implied a turn toward an Enlightenment sense of utility, merit as a concept never escaped its linkages to purity of blood or status.

The written works of Spanish philosophers, officials, and ministers demonstrates that in the early part of the eighteenth-century, Spanish society embraced a new definition of merit. In Spanish universities, Benito Jerónimo Feijoó y Montenegro (b. 1676 – d. 1764) promoted new ideals that celebrated useful knowledge and the value of a merit-based society. Feijoó, who was a

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11 Ricketts, Who Should Rule?, 34.
strong advocate for reform, wrote extensively on men of merit’s role in improving society. Through educational reform, Feijoó argued, Spain could rescue itself from its backwardness.

While he initially struggled against scholastics, Feijoó gained an ally that transformed the accessibility of his ideas. That ally was the Crown. In 1750, Ferdinand VI decreed that works criticizing Feijoó could not be published. The support of the monarch went further still when the King of Spain named Feijoó an advisor to the Crown.

Many became familiar with Feijoó’s ideas across the Spanish Empire. Indeed, only the classic *Don Quijote* was more read than Feijoó’s works. In the Peninsula, Spanish ministers, officials, and reformists pushed for changes that would first, counter the causes of Spain’s backwardness and second, allow for the rejuvenation of the empire. Like Feijoó, ministers such as José Campillo y Cossío and Antonio de Ulloa emphasized the need to reform education. In New Granada, the push to reform the educational system came at a transformational moment: the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1767. The Jesuits controlled a massive portion of the schools and universities across the empire, but especially in New Granada. The Crown exiled the order loyal to the Pope to weaken groups outside of the State’s control, but the king’s move also created opportunity to change many universities in the wider Spanish domain. Creole and peninsular elites in New Granada called for a reform of education that concentrated on useful knowledge and celebrated talent.

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12 Feijoó laid out some of these ideas in two collections: *Teatro crítico universal* (1740) and *Cartas eruditas* (1760). *Teatro crítico universal* includes provocative essays including "Defensa de la mujer" (Defense of Women), which questioned depictions of women as inferior creatures. For a more thorough analysis of Feijoo’s thoughts on women, see Theresa Ann Smith, *The Emerging Female Citizen: Gender and Enlightenment in Spain* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2006).


14 Ibid., 39.
The new concept of merit also enabled elites to compete for occupations on the grounds of talent and ability, rather than status or heritage. Those interested in new employment were evaluated for their experience, education, and employment history. In the Spanish world, assessments of skill and talent were produced in written form by way of relaciones de meritos y servicios. Pretendientes (office seekers, literally suitors) submitted these written documents to bolster their applications for government posts. The use of relaciones was a long-standing practice in the Empire but by the mid-eighteenth century, relaciones had changed to resemble combination of modern-day curriculum vitae and transcripts. Relaciones emphasized aspects about an office seeker’s past that reveal the value that the Hispanic World placed on merit. The value of merit is apparent in that a candidate’s experience was placed at the top of the document. The relaciones detailed a candidate’s held positions, the time they served in that function, the pay they received while performing their duties, and their educational background. Take the example of José Camilo Torres Tenorio. Born in 1766 to creole parents in Popayán, a provincial capital in southwestern New Granada, Camilo Torres possessed an extensive work history. His hoja de servicio began by listing his experience in law: he served as catédrico (professor) of canonical law at the Colegio del Rosario until 1794, became the vicerrector for a year, and then taught civil law in 1795. That same year Torres accepted his first colonial post as abogado de los pobres for the Audiencia de Santa Fé, which he held until he took a new post as

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15 Also referred to as hojas de servicios.
16 Documents called títulos de letras y actos positivos were used before relaciones de los méritos y servicios but they served a similar purpose to relaciones. Relaciones went by other names, including hoja de servicio or the shortened relación de méritos. The main difference between títulos and relaciones is that the information within títulos was limited to educational background and did not include experiential history. My approach borrows from Mark Burkholder’s suggestion to use relaciones to investigate shared traits among groups. For more on the use of relaciones as a source, see Mark Burkholder, “Relaciones de Méritos y Servicios: A Source for Spanish-American Group Biography in the Eighteenth-Century,” Manuscripta 21, no. 2 (1977): 97-104.
17 “Hoja de servicio de José Camilo de Torres Tenorio, Abogado de la Real Audiencia y de los Reales Consejos de Santafé,” 1809, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Madrid (AHN hereafter), Ministerios de Hacienda, 3495, f. 158-178.
an *asesor* for local judges and later, the Real Casa de Moneda.\(^{18}\) After the section on experience, Torres’s *relación* listed his educational background and at the end, the applicant was given a ranking of their abilities by the local *asesor*.\(^{19}\) The abilities ranked included: capacity, integrity, aptitude for the desired career, zeal to serve, and moral conduct; all of which Torres’s had received a “buena.”\(^{20}\) Like Torres’s document, *relaciones* highlighted an applicants’ experience as justification for their right to work in the field of their choosing. Merit emphasized knowledge and ability over familial ties and lineage.

Office seekers required *relaciones* to verify their experience, but when it came time to submit the paperwork for a position, the documents were rarely alone. *Testimonios*, or letters of validation, that accompanied the *relaciones* show the importance of social networks in verifying a candidate’s merit. The letters were produced from interviews overseen by local officials. The letters served as an affirmation of an applicant’s eligibility for a position, and importantly, was an old practice in the Spanish world. *Testimonios* were a traditional part of confirming an individual’s background and were used in settings beyond employment.\(^{21}\) The letters are useful to understand both social ties as close contacts, colleagues, and relatives wrote the letters in support of office seekers, as well as the ideas valued by the interviewed. *Testimonios* underscored the applicants’ experience but offered the interviewee a chance to embellish a bit by depicting the applicants’ characteristics. Among the *testimonios* that supported Felipe Groot Alea, a creole born in 1747 in Bogotá, in his application for a fiscal position was a letter that depicted Groot as being a dedicated servant of the Crown, carrying out his former duties with the

\(^{18}\) *Asesors* were generally university educated and charged with assisting officials in executive positions.

\(^{19}\) In this case a Lorenzo Morales.

\(^{20}\) Examples of *hojas de servicios* following this format were found in AHN, Ministerio de Hacienda, cajas 3049, 3081, 3299, and 3495; and Archivo General de Indias, Seville (AGI hereafter), Santa Fe 752.

\(^{21}\) Testimonies were often used in the courts as well, for more examples see Laura A. Lewis, *Hall of Mirrors: Power, Witchcraft, and Caste in Colonial Mexico* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).
utmost dedication, all “for the benefit of the public.”

Indeed, the language found in other testimonios reveals the frequent use of key words such as “dedicated,” “zealous,” “disinterested,” and “useful”; all words that alluded to an individual’s merit.

While the testimonies attached to relaciones attested to an office seeker’s merit, the documents reveal that questions of lineage and status remained a part of the vetting process. Merit alone was not enough for an individual to gain government posts or advance in other situations, such as obtaining a higher education. The testimonios illuminate the lingering importance of status and lineage in two ways. First, the interviewed were asked about an applicant’s lineage. This question included a direct interrogation of an individual’s casta. For government posts, be they high-ranking or local, an office seeker needed to prove their limpieza de sangre. Having an impure lineage, either by having a direct family member of a lesser casta or by being an illegitimate child, could easily end an office seeker’s hopes of obtaining a government post.

While questions of lineage asked directly about the heritage of an individual’s family, the other side of that question of lineage concerned the quality of the pretendiente’s family. Although it was not necessary for an office seeker to come from a family of renown, this did not prevent testimonios to dwell on the office seeker’s family, especially if they were a family of some record. Much of this fact has to do with who was being interviewed in the first place. The letters came from close contacts, colleagues, professors, and even relatives. José Joaquín Camacho Rodríguez de Lago’s relación and the accompanying testimonios depict the enduring

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23 In some of the testimonios, when interviewees were asked about the office seeker’s heritage they responded with “pura de toda mala raza.” The implications of the use of raza may be connected to a growing sense of taxonomical differences, but this is beyond the scope of this paper. Hojas de servicios that included this phrasing can be found in AGI, Santa Fe 629.
role that an individual’s family played in attempts to obtain better positions in colonial society.

Born to his creole parents in Tunja, New Granada in 1766, Joaquín Camacho had by 1808 acquired a great deal of positions throughout the viceroyalty. Camacho had served as a professor at the Colegio del Rosario, joined the Botanical Expedition of New Granada, and obtained government posts as a lawyer, corregidor, and teniente gobernador. Despite his own extensive experience in administration, Camacho’s testimonios highlighted his father’s and his grandfather’s experience in government. Camacho was celebrated for coming from a family with a rich history of serving in government posts, for they had proved their loyalty to the Crown through their service. Camacho used his blood relations to argue that as the offspring good vassals, he was by blood inclined to continue their good work. The references to the Camacho family’s experience in administration underscores the continued reliance on family history to strengthen an office seeker’s application.

Finally, the individuals that provided the testimonios played a key role in an applicant’s ability to secure positions. Just as a family’s history or the strength of an office seeker’s lineage could strengthen an application, so too could the authors of the testimonios. Who office seekers knew and who they could enlist to support their applications was often as important as their lineage. The most successful pretendientes, such as Joaquín Camacho, could call upon leading figures in Santafé to verify their relaciones. Among Camacho’s backers included the Director of the Botanical Expedition, the Rector of the Colegio del Rosario, and the Viceroy of New

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24 For an excellent source on biographical and primary source information of Joaquin Camacho and others, see Vázquez Varela Ainara and Marín Leoz María Juana, “Señores del muy ilustre cabildo”: Diccionario biográfico del cabildo municipal de Santa Fe (1700-1810) (Editorial Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 2017), 152-154.

25 For Camacho’s hoja de servicio, see “Dr. Don Joaquín Camacho en solicitud de alguna de las colocaciones que expresa,” AGI, Santa Fe 629, num. 120.
Granada. An office seeker’s social networks gave a candidate’s relación a greater weight and helped set the individual apart from his competitors.

Social networks impacted pretendientes’ attempts to gain government posts by affirming a candidate’s merit while also emphasizing lineage. This practice extended beyond office seekers bids for government positions, as we will see, merit and lineage were intertwined in fields such as education. Nevertheless, for as much as an individual’s lineage continued to hold weight in dividing society, merit as a qualifying attribute became a more desirable trait. More importantly, merit was emphasized by more than those who lacked strong lineage, but in fact even by those, like Joaquín Camacho, who boasted a strong background in holding government positions as well as a rich family history in colonial administration.

THE PLACE OF PRIVILEGE

By the second half of the eighteenth century, Spanish America had over twenty universities in operation, a figure that does not include the many colegios menores, or secondary schools, found throughout the provinces of the viceroyalties. The Catholic orders led the way in founding and maintaining the universities in the Americas. The robust academic system in the Americas allowed residents to avoid both the dangers of transatlantic travel and the high fees attached to sending their children to the Peninsula to receive an education. Although by no means the only active order in the Americas, the Society of Jesus had tremendous success in establishing colegios as well as universities across Iberian America. Jesuits carved out a niche in the Americas by offering high-quality education at no cost to students. Moreover, the order was

26 Mark A. Burkholder, Spaniards in the Colonial Empire: Creoles vs. Peninsulars? (Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons, 2013), 60; Additionally, Burkholder and Johnson claim that by the end of the colonial period, nearly 150,000
quick to establish schools in the New World. In Brazil, Peru, and Mexico, the Jesuits had founded their first colegios by 1574.\textsuperscript{27} In New Granada, the Jesuits founded the first colegio in the region in 1605, the Colegio Mayor de San Bartolomé, and the second university in 1623, the Universidad de San Francisco Javier.\textsuperscript{28} By 1750, two degree-granting universities and two preparatory colegios operated in the capital city of Santafé de Bogotá of the Viceroyalty of New Granada alone. The Jesuits ran a further mixture of thirteen colegios and secondary schools across the territory that makes up present-day Colombia.\textsuperscript{29}

The Spanish Crown initially played a minimal role in the establishment of academic institutions. While the Crown approved of the foundation of new schools, ecclesiastic and civic authorities, local elites petitioned for the creation of those new education opportunities in the Americas. Church officials benefited from the order’s transatlantic connections to leverage the creation or expansion of schools in the colonies. Only in the second half of the eighteenth century did the order’s control over education meet heavy resistance. Charles III’s order to expel the Jesuits from the Spanish Empire in 1767 stripped control of two education institutions from one of the orders in Bogotá. The removal of the Jesuits had two main effects on New Granada. First, by exiling the Jesuits, the act severely reduced the amount of secondary schools in

\footnotesize{university degrees had been granted by Spanish American academic institutions. See Mark A. Burkholder and Lyman L. Johnson, \textit{Colonial Latin America}, Fifth Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 268.}

\textsuperscript{27} Burkholder and Johnson, \textit{Colonial Latin America}, 267.

\textsuperscript{28} The Jesuits attempted to be the first to claim the right to open a university in New Granada in a dispute against the Dominican Order. Incidentally, the Jesuits lost because the Dominican Order claimed it had historical experience educating inhabitants of New Granada. Moreover, the Jesuits later lost control of all of their colegios after their expulsion from the Spanish Empire in 1767 but have since regained control of San Bartolomé along with their other institutions in Colombia.

\textsuperscript{29} For an accessible description of the colegios in colonial Colombia, see Bernard Moses, \textit{The Spanish Dependencies in South America: An Introduction to the History of Their Civilisation} (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1914), 94–97; for a more recent discussion of Jesuit activity in New Granada, see José del Rey Fajardo and Felipe González Mora, \textit{Los jesuitas en Antioquia, 1727-1767: aportes a la historia de la cultura y el arte} (Bogotá: Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 2008), 22–24. Finally, this count does not include the more than ten Jesuit missions along the Orinoco River and its tributaries, see Yale University, “Map of the Jesuit Missions of New Granada, by Father Joseph Gumila, S.J. Madrid, 1741,” Manuscript collection, Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, New Haven, 1978, Folio 106.}
operation across the viceroyalty. While some of the larger towns contained other centers of learning to absorb the vacuum left by the Jesuits, Santafé became the center for education and specifically, for granting professional degrees. Second, in the capital, power shifted to the Dominicans, the order that ran the oldest degree-granting university in Bogotá, the Universidad de Santo Tomás. With the Jesuit university closed, Santo Tomás became the only institution with the ability to confer degrees. However, students did not attend classes at Santo Tomás. Rather, they received their degrees from the institution after completing preparatory work at San Bartolomé or the Colegio Mayor de Nuestra Señora del Rosario, an institution that was under the patronage of the Viceroyalty but also had to contend with the Dominican’s insistence that its curriculum hold to Thomistic doctrine. Despite providing all of the instruction for students, el Rosario and San Bartolomé could not grant professional degrees. By the early 1770s, however, local reformers sought to overturn this holdover from the Habsburg era by confronting the Dominicans’ hold over education and the approved curriculum.

Elite families valued education for its utility as well as for how it conferred social status to elite families’ offspring. Entry into the local colegios or universities of New Granada could not be gained freely and, at least in the heartland of New Granada, required the prospective student to produce proof of their status and lineage. The entry process into the Colegio Mayor de Nuestra Señora del Rosario demonstrates the prevailing strength of social networks in

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30 While the Jesuits lost control of San Bartolomé, the school continued to operate under the auspices of the Spanish state. Notable attendees of the colegio include Antonio Nariño y Álvarez and Francisco de Paula Santander.
31 Frank Safford, *The Ideal of the Practical: Colombia’s Struggle to Form a Technical Elite* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1976), 85-86.
32 Despite this fact, the schools, all of which continue to operate today, lay claim to alumni from the colonial period such as Camilo Torres, Francisco José de Caldas, and Francisco de Paula Santander.
33 I discuss this point in greater detail in the following chapter.
securing a hopeful students’ place in the school.\textsuperscript{35} Student applications always included lineage records that came in the form of \textit{limpieza de sangre}, which contained testimonials from family members, prominent local officials, or other individuals connected to applicants’ family that had some social standing. The testimonials served as verifiers of a students’ identity and, importantly, their lineage.

The advantages afforded by completing a \textit{colegio}’s course load and receiving a professional degree encouraged elite families to close ranks and prevent the masses from gaining access to the university system. At the Colegio del Rosario, all students would attend at the expense of the Viceroyalty, making the entering student body limited in size and highly scrutinized. Students had to prove good lineage. Here long-standing traditions of societal division prevailed. The colonial student body was predominantly comprised of males from successful middle-class and wealthy peninsular and creole families.\textsuperscript{36} Outside of the white elite, the \textit{castas} had varying degrees of difficulty gaining access to the universities. While mestizos could feasibly gain entry into universities, it is difficult to determine with what frequency this occurred in the late colonial period. Hopeful students of mixed African descent, on the other hand, faced by far the most hurdles in trying to overcome their lineage which Spanish culture deemed as having tainted blood.

Even at the end of the century, students’ lineage remained an important element to secure entry in the education system. In 1764, Luis José Cano y García tried to obtain a grant to the Colegio del Rosario. Despite already studying philosophy at the Colegio de Cartagena, Cano y García was denied because his application “lacked proof of the baptism and matrimony of his

\textsuperscript{35} \textit{Hidalguía y limpieza de sangre} records from Rosario students dating back to the \textit{colegio}’s foundation can be found in the Archivo Histórico de la Universidad del Rosario’s (AHUR hereafter) grant applications collection.

\textsuperscript{36} I use the term “peninsular” to refer to immigrants of Spanish origin instead of the locally used term \textit{chapéton}. For more on this distinction see “Introduction,” in Burkholder, \textit{Spaniards in the Colonial Empire}. 
As for his lineage, el Rosario refused to allow the son of a “father that works in the vile profession of a silversmith and whose parents are mulattos.”³³⁸ In another case, José María Morales, a creole from the newly founded parish of Manta (located in the present-day department of Cundinamarca), submitted a typical application for a grant to the Colegio del Rosario in 1798, following in the customs of the late colonial period.³³⁹ Addressed to the rector of the colegio, Morales’s application provided his family lineage and the accompanying testimonials to substantiate his character. The testimonies reaffirmed his legitimate birth, the distinguished family he came from, and, as usual, were always explicit about the applicants’ family line having “no mala raza, no mulattos nor Indians nor any other being that is considered unworthy.”³⁴⁰ But he was rejected. During the application process, it was discovered that Morales had some indigenous lineage. The university system was not an open system and lineage provided elites a method to restrict access.

The limited access to the university system based on pure lineage is not surprising in the Spanish colonial setting. Renán Silva finds that families “reconstructed their ‘historic past’” to gain access to the academic community in New Granada.³⁴¹ Elite families relied on lineage, both in terms of origin and occupation, to demonstrate their offspring’s potential value to the classroom. Ties with recent Spanish immigrants became especially useful for prospective

³³⁷ “Solicitud de beca en el Colegio Mayor del Rosario por Luis José Cano y García,” July 18, 1764, AHUR, vol. 96, fols. 578-585.
³³⁸ Ibid.
³³⁹ Viceroy Manuel Guirior authorized the creation of a new parish in Manta in July 1772. For Morales’s application, see “Solicitud de beca en el Colegio Mayor del Rosario por José María Morales,” October 24, 1798, AHUR, vol. 106, fols. 93-103.
³⁴¹ Renán Silva, Los ilustrados de Nueva Granada, 1760-1808: genealogía de una comunidad de interpretación (Medellín: Banco de la República : Fondo Editorial Universidad EAFIT, 2008), 40. Also see, Renán Silva, Universidad y sociedad en el nuevo reino de Granada. Contribución a un análisis histórico de la formación intelectual de la sociedad colombiana (Bogotá: Banco de la República, 1992).
students, as was clear in Francisco José de Caldas’s grant application to el Rosario in 1788.\textsuperscript{42} Caldas, who would become a leading member of the Botanical Expedition and a founder of the Astronomical Observatory in Bogotá, had the most ideal support. The letter emphasized his parent’s lineage: his father, José Caldas y Rodríguez, was a “hijo dalgo español” that traveled to Popayán, New Granada in the first half of the eighteenth century where he became an alcalde (magistrate) and lieutenant of the dragoons. Soon after, his father married Vicenta Tenorio y Arboleda, the creole daughter of the Arboleda clan in Popayán.\textsuperscript{43} Moreover, his entire family could claim to be of pure lineage, with legitimate unions between Christianos viejos, a term that simultaneously identified a family as originally from the Spanish Kingdoms and their line clean of non-Christian blood.\textsuperscript{44} In addition to his parents, Caldas had the support of a relative who was also the vice-rector of el Rosario, Tomás Tenorio y Carvajal. Notably, Tenorio did not write a testimonial for Caldas, perhaps because of his position in the colegio. Nevertheless, the success of Caldas’s application relied on the noble depiction of his family.

However, not all elite families had equal access to the colegios. Rather, elite families that had existing connections with the colegios could lean on their contacts, reputation, and family history to ease the process of entering the academic world. This help took various forms, but a common strategy for prospective students was to highlight their parent’s alumni status in addition to their lineage and achievements. Such was the case for Jorge Tadeo Lozano, who came from one of the wealthiest families on New Granada but perhaps not the most influential. Lozano’s father, Jorge Miguel Lozano, had a long-standing lawsuit with another family from

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\textsuperscript{42} “Solicitud de beca por Francisco José de Caldas,” Popayán, October 14, 1788, AHUR, vol. 95, fols. 179-184.
\textsuperscript{43} Two descendants of the Arboleda family, Joaquín Mosquera y Arboleda and his brother Tomás Cipriano de Mosquera y Arboleda, would become presidents of Colombia within the first fifty years of independence.
\textsuperscript{44} Line reads “sus padres y sus ascendientes son y fueron Christianos viejos y Christianos viejos, limpios de toda mala raza,” see “Solicitud de beca por Caldas,” 1788, AHUR, vol. 95, folio 183.
Bogotá. In his application, he highlighted his father’s honorable service record as *alférez real* (royal standard-bearer). But more importantly, Lozano underscored his family’s historical connection to the Colegio del Rosario. Lozano proclaimed his “intention to follow in the studies and literary career” of his father, who attended el Rosario in the 1740s. Lozano also requested the same benefits that his brother, José María, had received from the *colegio*. Other larger families used their history with the *colegios* to secure positions for their children as well. Clans like the Caicedos and Ricaurtes from the capital, or the Camachos from Tunja, built upon their family legacy within the *colegios* of Santafé as though they were extensions of the living social networks that supported them.

For as much as family and lineage guarded entry into education, there were few examples where geography could play into a hopeful students’ favor. Using funds left in the will of his close friend, Juan Eloy Valenzuela established a scholarship for his nephews, his friend’s relatives, and the descendants of both families to attend the Colegio del Rosario in 1792. Valenzuela, the creole son of Pablo Antonio Valenzuela and María Nicolasa Mantilla from San Juan de Girón (a town outside of Bucaramanga), had become quite connected to el Rosario by the early 1790s. Valenzuela studied at el Rosario during the early 1770s and graduated with a philosophy degree under José Celestino Mutis, the eventual Director of the Botanical Expedition but the-then professor of medicine and mathematics. After graduating, Valenzuela continued working at el Rosario teaching various courses including mathematics and philosophy before joining Mutis in the Botanical Expedition. Valenzuela’s familiarity with the academic system

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46 “Escritura de fundación de una beca en el Colegio Mayor del Rosario,” Girón, December 18, 1792, AHUR, vol. 91, fols. 635-647. Valenzuela’s friend, Ignacio Gutiérrez, left 1,200 pesos to establish the scholarship. Funds were to be distributed on an annual basis.
made him the ideal candidate to realize his friend’s last wishes. Interestingly, the foundation also made room for non-family members to apply for funds. After establishing how the scholarship would distribute funds and what subjects recipients should learn, Valenzuela left a final stipulation that any vecino, “from creoles to forasteros,” of his home town of Girón or of Bucaramanga, the pueblo he had become cura (priest) over in 1789, were eligible for this support. Moreover, the scholarship was to assist the “most poor, most skilled and studious” in Girón and Bucaramanga. The scholarship gave regional representation to a community not tied by family, but rather by geographic identity.

Gaining admission into the colegios of Santafé provided entry into a community that, as we will see, supported each other in career opportunities. But gaining access to the academic system was often half the battle. Elite families utilized their historic ties with colegios to secure their offspring’s entrance in el Rosario and San Bartolomé, but proper support and proof of good lineage still needed to be provided. Families leaned on each other to confirm their lineage, honor, and status. In this sense, familial ties acted as powerful mechanisms that students could call upon. Only in a few cases could prospective students rely on social networks that were not constrained by familial bonds, but these appeared as the exceptions to the general experience of students.

EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES

Elites also used their networks to create new opportunities in knowledge generation, sharing of knowledge, and social gatherings. These three practices have widely been identified as core practices of late eighteenth century European societies and have been, in general, linked to

the Enlightenment and the Age of Revolutions wherein knowledge became a high value currency. Much of the research on knowledge generation and the exchange of knowledge in Latin American literature focuses on the Spanish scientific expeditions. While these activities are linked to concepts that often, at the very least, allude to anti-monarchical language, it is important to emphasize that the pursuit of these activities did not occur in opposition of the Spanish state. On the contrary, the Spanish Crown encouraged creole participation in education, the scientific community, and government. François-Xavier Guerra argues that in New Spain the *antiguo régimen* cultivated the establishment and expansion of an education network. By the final decades of the eighteenth century, Central Mexico contained, among other institutions, a surgery school, a botanical garden, and a school for minerology (the second founded in the world, after Paris). Sophie Brockmann’s work on elite networks in the Kingdom of Guatemala underscores how “reformers’ efforts took place in a broader context of imperial governance, where enlightened ideas interacted with local social and economic priorities and routine bureaucratic practices.” Monica Ricketts depicts similar efforts made in the Viceroyalty of Peru, where “the help of new ‘Bourbon’ bishops and the secular church who…became the Crown’s allies” were instrumental “in the pursuit of useful knowledge.” Efforts made in Peru were no less active than in New Spain. In 1777, Charles III approved of the Botanical Expedition

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49 This transition was not without resistance. For conservative backlash to, for example, education reform and the introduction of the scientific methods of Descartes, Bacon, and Newton see Ricketts, *Who Should Rule?*, 37-40.


to the Viceroyalty of Peru, which continued in operation until 1788 and resulted in the collection of over 3,000 plant specimens.\textsuperscript{53} By the end of the century, Lima, the capital of the viceroyalty, contained two major newspapers and a medical school. To circumvent the resistance to reforming the curriculum at the University of San Marcos, the Crown sponsored the creation of the Seminario de San Carlos.\textsuperscript{54} The seminary “quickly became Peru’s most progressive education institution” and “emerged as a main center for the spread of reformist ideas in the viceroyalty.”\textsuperscript{55} The experience was similar in New Granada. Between 1783-1808, the hundreds of members of the Botanical Expedition, which included painters, naturalists, budding students, and other men of letters, produced well over six thousand images of New Granada’s natural world.\textsuperscript{56} Moreover, the Spanish Crown backed the creation of multiple periodicals, approved the opening of a school for girls, and supported the construction of the first astronomical observatory in the Western hemisphere in late colonial Bogotá. The successful foundation of more scientifically oriented institutions, educational resources, and social spaces to conversate (\textit{tertulias}) in the capital of the viceroyalty were all linked to an open dialogue with the Crown.

More importantly, following the creation of institutions like the Botanical Expedition to New Granada or the Royal Library in the capital reveals the strength of local networks, their connections with elite families, and the Crown’s activity in colonial Santafé. Far from rejecting scientific and reformist projects, the Spanish monarchy financed or otherwise championed the production of knowledge of the natural world.

\textsuperscript{53} The expedition was led by Hipólito Ruiz López and produced over 2,000 botanical illustrations. Much of the illustrations from the expedition to Peru as well as other Spanish botanical expeditions can be found at the Archivo del Real Jardín Botánico de Madrid.

\textsuperscript{54} One of the newspapers, \textit{Mercurio peruano}, was founded in part by José Hipólito Unanue, the same individual that founded the medical school.

\textsuperscript{55} Ricketts, \textit{Who Should Rule?}, 54.

\textsuperscript{56} Bleichmar, \textit{Visible Empire}, 20.
The emergence of a community invested in the reform of education and expansion of institutions that generated useful knowledge stemmed from the convergence of local interest and imperial policy. Both local activity and royal approval were required for any institution to have success. José Celestino Mutis, founder of the Royal Botanical Expedition to New Granada, tried and failed to gain the Crown’s support at least two times before finally receiving royal authorization to open the expedition in 1783. Born in October 6, 1732 in the Spanish port city of Cadiz, Mutis was a student of his time in that he studied subjects ranging from grammar, theology, mathematics, and surgery. Mutis continued his studies in Seville and eventually earned a doctorate in medicine in 1755. Two years later, Mutis moved to Madrid to work as a temporary professor of anatomy. While he taught in Madrid, Mutis became active in botanical excursions in the Peninsula where he met accomplished naturalists from Uppsala.\footnote{Mutis stayed in Madrid for three years until Pedro Messía de la Cerda, the newly appointed viceroy of New Granada, selected Mutis as his personal physician to accompany the Viceroy to the Americas. Selected for his “brilliant and glorious career,” Mutis arrived in Cartagena de Indias in 1760 where he immediately started to study the flora and fauna of New Granada, but without royal patronage.\footnote{Florentino Vezga, La expedición botánica (Editorial Minerva, s.a., 1936), 21.}} Mutis moved to New Granada without royal funding and support, however, did not deter Mutis from conducting much of his early experiments in New Granada. Mutis’s early work included his initial botanical expeditions near the pueblo of Honda, maintaining his Diario de observaciones, and successfully using quinine found locally in New Granada to treat an oidor’s sick son.\footnote{Whether Mutis was the first to discover quinine native to New Granada was a point of great debate between Mutis and “the other doctor” of the Viceroyalty, Sebastián José López Ruiz. See José Antonio Amaya and James Vladimir}
While he failed to obtain royal support, Mutis’s failure underlines the key role that the Spanish crown was to have in Mutis’s plans. Mutis tried on two separate occasions, first in 1763 and again in 1764, to obtain the Crown’s support of a botanical expedition, but he was ignored both times. In his letters to Charles III, the king of Spain, Mutis emphasized the utility that studying natural history in the Americas would have as a matter connected to both economics and prestige. Studying Spanish America’s nature would expand commercial opportunities, Mutis argued, and reveal that the wealth of the Americas was more than minerals. “It will be easy,” wrote Mutis, “for your vassals…with approval, to form establishments around the economy of [quina], Quina would be sent to Spain and then distributed to all nations.”60 Other plants native to Spanish America could become major trade goods, but they required naturalists’ intervention if they were going to compete with the products of foreign nations like Holland and England. Mutis continued, explaining that plants like wild cinnamon, which “grow in the mountains of America and especially in the mountains of the provinces of Macas and Quijos in Peru,” rivaled the quality of cinnamon from the Dutch colony of Ceylon.61 Despite being full of potential, the Americas needed greater support from the monarchy if that potential was to be realized. Royal support would expand his ability to discover, record, and publish his findings, all of which Mutis argued were for the “universal good of the nation.”62 Mutis’ connection of the political economy of botany to having a national benefit underscores the horizontal dynamics of a practical Enlightenment that was neither antagonist nor subservient to monarchical authority. The Spanish Monarchy, then, stood to benefit both by facilitating the expansion of knowledge of Spanish

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61 Gredilla, Biografía de José Celestino Mutis, 28.
62 Ibid., 30.
Americas’ natural history, an act that Mutis saw as good on its own, as well as invigorating the industry of the Spanish nation.

In several sections of his letters, Mutis stressed the Atlantic context within which his botanical expedition would operate. Despite its rich record of supporting natural history “gloriously begun by the munificence of Señor Don Philip II,” Spain had fallen behind. Other nations, such as the English, “who always aspire to expand their commerce,” provided “considerable awards to encourage the habitants of Guadalupe to grow their wild cinnamon” in the hopes of someday cutting into Holland’s hold on the cinnamon trade. What then, Mutis asked, should the Spanish wait for when it is clear that “our cinnamon is excessively superior to that from Guadalupe?”

Daniela Bleichmar has found that key components of eighteenth century naturalists’ arguments about the necessity of their work emphasized an Atlantic competition over knowledge of the natural world and the exploitation of that knowledge. The actions of foreign nations offered Spain examples of how to improve its approach to the study of natural history in the Americas. Mutis’s example of the potential for Spanish cinnamon to dominate the market, in fact, had been made several times before by Spanish naturalists such as the Jesuit missionary José Gumilla during his expedition of the Orinoco in 1741 and by Jorge Juan and Antonio de Ulloa in their reflections on their expedition to Ecuador where they accompanied La Condamine (1735-1745). For Mutis, the Crown stood in an advantageous position as it possessed the means to break the cycle of ignorance of America’s nature and its economic potential. Careful not to scorn the Monarchy’s past inaction, Mutis claimed that

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64 Gredilla, Biografía de José Celestino Mutis, 28.
65 Ibid.
67 For these examples and more, see ibid., 230.
Europe longed to learn about the natural history of America, an effort worthy “of a monarch like Your Majesty.”

Yet, despite Mutis’s flattery of Charles III, he did not receive a response from the king of Spain. In spite of that failure, Mutis’s unsuccessful attempt reveals the success that Mutis had in constructing a local network of backers. Chief among his local support was in fact Viceroy Messía de la Cerda. Mutis’s interactions with the viceroy demonstrate the importance of distinguishing between royal and viceregal connections. While he failed to win over the Crown, Mutis had the full support of the viceroy. The viceroy not only wrote a letter recommending Mutis’s proposal, but also advised Mutis on how he could improve the chances of Charles III approving the expedition. Messia de la Cerda counseled Mutis to consider the King’s position. In the early 1760s, much of Charles III’s attention was on the Seven Years’ War, a conflict that proved disastrous for the Spanish Empire but ultimately generated debate over the need of greater reforms of the Empire’s navy, defenses, and commerce. Rather than approach the Crown with only ideas of how the expedition would work, Mutis’s proposal was to outline the success he had had in constructing a supportive network between naturalists in the international community. Historian José Antonio Amaya argues that Mutis moved strategically in as early as 1759 to “achieve the acceptance of academics in Paris, Uppsala, and London.” Mutis reached out to naturalists including Sir John Pringle, the King of England’s doctor and future director of the Real Society of London. Mutis also used his existing Spanish contacts to connect with naturalists in Paris such as Michel Adanson, who had begun working as a botanical assistant at the Academy of Sciences in Paris in 1759. By establishing these connections, Mutis could

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69 José Antonio Amaya, *Mutis, apostol de linneo: historia de la botanica en el virreinato de la Nueva Granada (1760-1783)*, vol. 1 (Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Antropología e Historia, 2005), 221.
70 Ibid.
prove that he had experts in the field that were willing to help verify his discoveries. While reaching out to other naturalists was most likely not only done to improve to prospects of his petition to the Crown, Mutis’s efforts nevertheless demonstrate that it was not enough for him to have Messía de la Cerda’s support. Although a royally appointed official, the viceroy of New Granada could not demand royal approval for these scientific ventures. Rather, the Viceroy sought to convince the Spanish monarch that viceregal support of the expedition was sufficient and that the naturalists could indeed deliver on their promises to discover an exploitable product from Spanish Americas’ natural world.

Mutis’s proposals never received a reply, most likely because of the Spanish crown was focused on recovering from the Seven Years’ War. While it took twenty years for royal and local interests to align on the creation of a botanical expedition, Mutis enjoyed viceregal support throughout his decades in New Granada. Before a viceroy’s successor took control of the viceroyalty, the vacating viceroy would write a relación del estado, or state of affairs, to inform the incoming viceroy of the work he had accomplished, where continued efforts should be focused, and what areas were in deplorable condition. These state of affairs always depicted the need to improve the viceroyalty’s defenses and economy, but, importantly, emphasized the efforts that the viceregal state could take to foment growth. It was not uncommon for individuals in the viceroyalty to be discussed in the relaciones, specifically those that had contributed or could benefit the colony. In the case of Mutis, after he arrived in New Granada, every viceroy highlighted either Mutis or his work as critical to the prosperity of the viceroyalty to the incoming viceroys.71 Mutis spent the next twenty years growing his local network, working on

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and off at the Colegio del Rosario where he taught medicine and mathematics. Mutis also continued his studies of nature, although in a capacity limited by his resources.

In the early 1780s, however, Mutis earned the support of the Archbishop and soon-to-be viceroy of New Granada, Antonio Caballero y Góngora. Coming off his victory against the rebel movement that threatened to destabilize the viceroyalty in what was the Comunero Revolt of 1781, Caballero y Góngora had earned favor in the royal court when the Crown appointed him to viceroy.72 For Mutis, Caballero y Góngora’s promotion opened a new channel to Madrid and the possibility of finally opening a botanical expedition in the colony. Indeed, Caballero y Góngora became Mutis’s greatest champion for the creation of the Botanical Expedition. When he learned of Mutis’s underfunded efforts, the viceroy sent a letter to Charles III ridiculing the state of the study of nature in the Americas. Caballero y Góngora observed that while the Spanish Monarchy had denied a Spanish naturalist the necessary support, foreign naturalists had been permitted to enter New Granada and “snatch from the Spaniards the legitimate pride and glory of their discoveries.”73 While the viceroy critiqued the Crown’s inaction in supporting Mutis’s proposals, he also set a course of action that would improve Mutis’s ability to study nature in the viceroyalty. Acting without royal approval, Caballero y Góngora authorized the creation of the Royal Botanical Expedition to New Granada. Mutis moved quickly, establishing the students and painters of the expedition in the town of Mariquita. Caballero y Góngora’s support for Mutis did not end with his intervention. Indeed the viceroy approved several of Mutis’s petitions, including Mutis’s petition in 1786 that requested the creation of a plantation to cultivate American

72 Caballero was named the interim viceroy in 1782 after the untimely death of the newly appointed Viceroy Pimienta in June, 1782. See “Copia de Real Cedula por la cual es nombrado Virrey Interino el Arzobispo Virrey Antonio Caballero y Góngora,” 1782, BNC, Sección Colonia, Tomo 34, folios 41-52r.
73 Quoted in Perez-Mejia, A Geogaphy of Hard Times, 23.
Components of the royal government, and not necessarily the Crown, were critical to realizing projects in Spanish America.

Although the viceroy acted without royal consent, Caballero y Góngora’s interest in supporting Mutis was not radical. Rather, his actions are revealing of a growing trend among viceroy in Spanish America to support projects and reforms that could improve the condition of the viceroyalties they governed over. Scientific expeditions were no exception. By the end of the eighteenth century, dozens of scientific expeditions had either been approved or were under way across the Spanish Empire. Daniela Bleichmar has shown that the explosion of imperially backed studies of nature can be understood as part of a project of imperial renovation meant to “counter political and economic pressures through new policies of trade, agriculture, and useful industry.”

Bleichmar emphasizes that royal officials across the empire threw their support behind naturalists because of the potential benefits that naturalists’ discoveries offered on a local level. Through their study of nature, naturalists’ field work offered the chance to turn discoveries of plant species in the Americas, like cinnamon, tea, and pepper, into profitable commodities that could compete with other European powers botanical goods. Caballero y Góngora may have acted without royal authority, but his actions were well in line with steps taken by other governors and viceroys of Spanish territories.

The fact that Caballero y Góngora’s counterparts in other parts of the empire enacted, approved, and funded similar scientific expeditions does not, however, mean that the relationship between the viceregal state and elites in New Granada should be overlooked. Rather, that elites in New Granada developed strong ties with the royal government is representative of the critical role that the Bourbon state played in elites’ networks. Habsburg practices of ruling the Spanish

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74 For information on Mutis’s trials with cinnamon, see Bleichmar, Visible Empire, 135.
75 Ibid., 187.
Empire were based on the Monarchy’s practical acceptance that it lacked the force to directly rule and enforce policy over its global empire. In contrast, the Bourbon system pushed for increasing the role of the state in matters formerly left to the religious orders or local groups. The expulsion of the Jesuits remains one of the clearest examples of the Bourbon Dynasty’s attempt to replace groups that had been able to operate in the Americas outside of the state’s control. While the Spanish Crown certainly had economic incentives to centralize activities overseen by the Catholic orders, Gabriel Paquette argues that the Bourbons turned to subordinating challengers to the Crown’s preeminence in the middle of the eighteenth century as part of a regalist project. The Crown stripped power away from centuries old groups to reconfigure the symbolic place of the Monarchy in the imaginations of Spain’s imperial subjects.

Of course, the Bourbon efforts to recalibrate the centrality of the Spanish state were not only symbolic. As this chapter has discussed, interventions such as the removal of the Jesuits from New Granada ushered in a period of significant change among the educational institutions of the viceroyalty. Yet, for as much as Bourbon policy promoted the expansion of the state’s role in political, economic, and social practices, the actual reforms instituted in the Americas were never uniform. The smattering of plans and reforms that made up the Bourbon reforms has led some historians to question the usefulness of thinking of policies introduced in the eighteenth century as a part some overarching vision of reform. Allan Kuethe and Kenneth Andrien argue that the simultaneity of an emergent public sphere with clear competition between political advisors and appointed ministers over the goal of reformation in the imperial capital disrupted

the emergence of a cohesive plan for the reform of the empire. Indeed, even fundamental administrative reforms were not implemented unconditionally across the empire. The introduction of the French intendancy system, which sought to curb corruption in the colonies by placing crown-appointed officials to oversee taxation and to encourage agricultural growth, took over twenty years to reach every major colony with the exclusion of New Granada where Viceroy Caballero y Góngora deemed the intendancy system as incompatible with the viceroyalty.

Competition in the metropole was not the only cause for the often sporadic nature of the reforms. Local cooperation and local reactions were a key component to the success or failure of new policy. On the introduction of the intendancy system to New Granada, Caballero y Góngora refused to adopt the new measures because he had only just quelled the frightening Comunero Revolt of 1781, a revolt against the restructuring of the sale and taxation of tobacco and alcohol. After the failure of the tax reform, Caballero y Góngora feared that replacing the old political organization of New Granada with yet another new Bourbon system would push the viceroyalty into chaos. Caballero y Góngora’s successor, Fray Francisco Gil y Lemos, tabled the introduction of the intendancy system in 1789 and no future official took up its establishment. Local conditions limited the application of some of the most ambitious reforms.

The role that local conditions, indeed local populations, played in reforming the Empire went beyond limiting reforms. In the late-eighteenth century, reform could come from the bottom up. In New Granada, local elites made in-roads to obtaining royal, or at least viceregal, approval of social and academic practices that were common in Europe. More importantly, the relationship forged between elites and the colonial state is reflective of the malleability of

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Spanish rule. While Bourbon reformers repeatedly instituted reforms that sought to transform aspects of Spanish colonial society, Bourbon policies hardly established the limits of what type of reform was possible. In New Granada, the removal of the Jesuits displaced one of the largest providers of education. The removal of the Jesuits fulfilled a key goal of the regalist Bourbons in that their exile upended a centuries-old dominance of schools and missions, yet the Crown was at least unprepared, if not uninterested, in the vacancy left by the Jesuits removal. The Crown seized Jesuit land and tried to consolidate the order’s infrastructure, but it is clear that neither the Bourbon monarchy nor its ministers had made plans to replace the role that the Jesuits played in New Granada with a royally sanctioned alternative. Rather, local communities and the remaining religious orders carried the burden, and opportunities, left by the mass exile.

While some local elites scrambled for the Jesuits’ agricultural holdings, other elites debated how to solve the void in the education system. While his reform proposals will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter, Francisco Moreno y Escandón’s efforts to reform the education system of New Granada offers a way to explore both the contributions of a creole interested in reform as well as the importance of the colonial state in supporting local change. Born in Mariquita, a small town adjacent to one of the many tributary rivers of Colombia’s mighty Magdalena River and, incidentally, the town where the Botanical Expedition began, Moreno lived a fortunate life. Moreno’s parents had forged a strong union through their marriage with his mother, a criolla from a wealthy family in Bogotá, and his father, a peninsular that held positions such as alcalde (mayor) of Mariquita and as notary of the Holy Office of the

78 The Jesuits not only maintained the largest network of schools in New Granada, their agricultural wealth was unchallenged. The Jesuits were the largest landowners, maintained the largest livestock estates, all of which excluded the creole elite of Bogotá. Their removal allowed the Crown to confiscate and sell ex-Jesuit land to eager Creoles Anthony McFarlane, Colombia Before Independence: Economy, Society, and Politics Under Bourbon Rule (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 60-67.
Inquisition in Cartagena. His parent’s status and success made it possible for Moreno to study in Santafé at the Colegio de San Bartolomé and later, the Jesuit Universidad de San Francisco Javier. As if his heritage were not enough, Moreno’s attendance at these academies signifies his elite background. After graduating, Moreno married Teresa Isabella y Aguado, the daughter of a wealthy peninsular. Moreno’s marriage equally set himself up well for public life. By the time the Jesuits left New Granada in 1767, he had entered public administration serving as alcalde de segundo voto (roughly vice-mayor) of Santafé in 1761, and in 1765, had become fiscal protector de indios (prosecutor charged with well-being of indigenous populations). Moreover, Viceroy Pedro Messía de la Cerda (r. 1761-1772) selected Moreno to oversee the execution of the Jesuit’s exile in 1767. In the aftermath of the expulsion, Moreno, who had become a member of the Junta de Temporalidades (government body charged with overseeing the acquisition and distribution of Jesuit property), stood in an opportune position to propose a solution to the gaping vacancies in the education system produced by Charles III’s 1767 Decree.

By the late 1760s, Moreno had earned quite the reputation in the capital of New Granada. Indeed, Moreno earned the favor of the Viceroy Messía de la Cerda during his tenure as protector de los indios. In his report to his replacement, Viceroy Messía de la Cerda recommended Moreno’s service be retained. Moreno had, by the Viceroy’s orders, produced a

79 Moreno was quite active in his role as protector. He became involved in a decades old struggle between the indigenous communities in the Suratá Valley (in present-day state of Santander) and ranchers and farmers who were encroaching on the resguardos (roughly reservations). Apparently, Moreno’s outspoken behavior earned him the name of “El Indiano” during a trip to the Court of Madrid. For more on Moreno’s involvement in the disputes of Suratá Valley, see “Cárcota de Suratá: traslado pobladores a Tequia,” December 1773, Archivo General de la Nación, Colombia (AGN hereafter), Sección Colonia, Resguardos, legajo 2, fols. 5-6.

80 While an important member of the junta, Moreno did not chair the board. That duty fell to Don Ignacio Nicolás Buenaventura. Ignacio Buenaventura remained active in public office, becoming alcalde of Ibagué, a town in the province of Maiquita. His son, Nicolás María Buenaventura, attended the colegios of Bogotá and entered public service like his father only to find himself in a leadership position when the empire was thrown into crisis after Napoleon’s invasion in 1808. For more information on Ignacio Buenaventura’s activities in the junta, see AGN, Sección Colonia, Temporalidades, legajo 24, folio 11.
solution to the vacancy left by the Jesuits’ exile and resolved how to use the Jesuits’ wealth of literature, all while continuing his duties as protector de los indios. In addition, Moreno helped create the Plan geográfico, an assessment of the Viceroyalty of New Granada that included a drawn map of the territory. The Viceroy celebrated Moreno’s diligence and insisted future support of his work would be “for the good of our Majesty’s vassals.” In the late 1770s, Moreno’s success would continue as he was named to the high position of fiscal del crimen of the Audiencia de Santa Fe and finally, in 1788, Moreno was given an honor few creoles ever obtained: Moreno became regente, or the head, of the Audiencia de Santiago de Chile. Moreno’s experiences, while certainly not shared by most creoles, nevertheless reveal the success that reformists had in the late colonial period.

While Moreno’s professional fortune was linked to his upbringing and his status, it is important to remember that he found people receptive to his ideas in the highest positions of the viceregal government of New Granada. As a member of the royal government himself, Moreno joined several other royal officials in the viceroyalty to petition the Crown’s support in reforming education in New Granada. Moreno’s plan de estudios (curriculum) offered an assessment of the state of education in the viceroyalty along with two important solutions: the need to open a public university and to establish a library in Bogotá. On education, Moreno found the

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82 Moreno wrote the assessment of the viceroyalty that accompanied the map drawn by José Aparicio Morata, alcalde of Tunja, in 1772. The plan called for greater investment in roads, shoring up fortifications along the coast, and resolving tension with indigenous groups in the hinterlands of New Granada. Santiago Pérez Zapata argues that Moreno’s work and the emphasis given to a visual aid helped generate a new format for assessing the state of the viceroyalty. See Santiago Pérez Zapata, "Un vistazo a la cartografía virreinal: Descripción geográfica del Virreinato de la Nueva Granada de 1781", Anuario Colombiano de Historia Social y de la Cultura 43.1 (2016): 61-91. For the map, see “Plan Geográfico del Virreinato de Santafé de Bogotá, Nuevo Reino de Granada, que manifiesta su demarcación, ríos principales, provincias y plazas de armas,” 1772, AGN, Sección Mapas y Planos, Fondo Mapoteca smp 2, ref 1248.
83 “Relación Del Estado por Pedro Messia de La Cerda a Manuel Guirior,” 1772, BNC, rama 535, 88.
viceroyalty to be severely behind and in fact inhibited by the various religious orders’ hold on education. Moreno called for the separation of the orders from the schools in the hopes that would mean new content could be taught. Both institutions, the public university and library, would operate under the control of the state and be run by secular officials. Moreno viewed the potential of this system as one that would enable the expansion of curriculum that religious orders, the Dominicans in particular, had otherwise ignored or outright rejected. His proposed changes made Copernicus, Newton, Wolff, and others a core part of the curriculum. Ever the patron of the sciences and educational reform, the Viceroy of New Granada threw his weight behind Moreno’s proposals, writing that “the education of the youth and the encouragement of arts and sciences is one of the basic principles of good government.”

Academic elites, including José Celestino Mutis, supported Moreno’s plans as well. The viceroy approved of Moreno’s education reform, but it did not last. Moreno’s attempt to solve the removal of the Jesuits enlisted elite allies but created enemies as well.

Moreno’s plan de estudios involved changing the curriculum and erecting a public university outside of the religious community, but it did not receive universal acceptance in Bogotá. Historian Diana Soto Arango argues that his reforms failed to garner popular support, especially among the religious orders, because of the radical nature of his proposals. Soto

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84 The notion of Spanish America being behind Spain and the rest of Europe has been well documented by historians. For just a few examples, see Susan Deans-Smith, “Creating the Colonial Subject: Casta Paintings, Collectors, and Critics in Eighteenth-Century Mexico and Spain,” Colonial Latin American Review 14, no. 2 (December 2005): 169–204; Paquette, “State-Civil Society Cooperation and Conflict in the Spanish Empire”; Bleichmar, Visible Empire.

85 Moreno’s idea of public university did not imply the creation of a school open to more people in the viceroyalty. The expectation of the university was that it would be funded and controlled by the Spanish state, and therefore be beyond the control of the religious orders. Access to the university would remain a privilege of Spaniards and creoles.

Arango refers to Moreno as “the enlightened creole prototype: a monarchist par excellence.”

While the forceful nature of his plans surely contributed to the strength of his opposition, Moreno also made no attempts to negotiate with the prevailing overseers of education. That is, Moreno tried to rely on his connections with the royal government and did not engage local social networks. His plan excluded the only remaining religious order in the capital of the viceroyalty, the Dominicans. With the Jesuits in exile, the Dominicans possessed a veritable monopoly over university level education in Bogotá. While the other major educational institution in the capital, the Colegio del Rosario, operated outside the control of the Catholic orders, the school could not grant university level degrees. In fact, the Colegio del Rosario was founded on similar principles as the Colegios Mayores de Salamanca. No religious orders controlled the schools and both schools established that school faculty, and not an external power, would elect their rector. Despite existing outside of the power of religious orders, the school’s curriculum nevertheless championed religious courses. Moreno’s public university, on the other hand, provided no such space for ecclesiastical classes. For the Dominicans, the exclusion of religion from education threatened the moral character of the community. Moreno’s reforms pushed a segment of the community outside of an activity that they had been associated with for centuries and importantly, made no concessions for their inclusion. Although approved by Viceroy Manuel Guirior (r. 1773-1776), Moreno’s proposals were struck down and the public university was never created. It was not until the 1780s that Moreno’s curriculum alterations received renewed interest. By then, Moreno had moved to Lima and would later take a government post in Chile in 1789.

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87 Diana Soto Arango, La reforma del plan de estudios del fiscal Moreno y Escandón 1774-1779 (Bogotá: Centro Editorial Universidad del Rosario, 2004), 36.
88 For more on the differences between the colegios in the Peninsula and Bogotá, see ibid, 40–44.
Where he failed to solidify support for his public university, Moreno’s plan for the creation of the *biblioteca real* not only received approval but remained in operation even during the first independence movement in Bogotá. The success of the royal library reveals the strength of networks in supporting Bourbon reformers’ policies, in this case the Jesuits’ exile, while at the same time, generating local solutions to imperial actions. More important, the creation of the library was not rooted in the same principles that informed Moreno’s public university proposal. Rather, the library, although to be funded and controlled by the royal government, would not exclude the religious orders and even recommended that a priest be put in charge.\(^{89}\) Moreno, who had attended the Jesuit Universidad de Javeriana and had experience with their book collection, proposed to compile the Jesuit libraries in the capital and the surrounding areas into one singular library. Moreover, the library was to become a public space where the shareable content could be monitored as could the library users. This portion of Moreno’s education reform succeeded in spite of his other proposal on opening a public university. His plan focused the royal government’s resources into resolving a local issue created by royal action with the consent of the local community.

While it took nearly two decades for the library to receive the Crown’s endorsement, royal officials in New Granada supported its founding. Viceroy Guirior approved the creation of the library and his successor oversaw its opening in 1777. The arrival of the former governor of Cuba and new viceroy, José de Ezpeleta (r 1789-1796), ushered in a new period for the library. Viceroy Ezpeleta brought with him the creole writer Manuel del Socorro Rodríguez, a native of Cuba, and appointed him as the Director of the Royal Library. Aside from requesting a higher salary, Socorro Rodríguez introduced a catalogue system, expanded the library’s holdings, and

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\(^{89}\) Documents on the creation of the library, see AGN, Sección Colonia, Colegios, legajo 4, fols. 1-76.
with permission from the Viceroy, edited the first newspaper of Bogotá, *El Papel Periódico*. Officials viewed their support of the library as they did the Botanical Expedition, an institution funded by the Crown for the benefit of the viceroyalty. For elites, the Crown’s willingness to support local elites’ reforms generated a cooperative spirit that strengthened the bonds between the Spanish state and colonists in the late colonial period.

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has explored elites’ construction of social networks and their interaction with the Spanish state. As the Bourbon monarchy encouraged reform that promised to strengthen their regalist agenda, elites in New Granada engaged in reformism to suit their own needs. Creoles and *peninsulares* participated in reformist projects throughout the eighteenth century. While the Crown and high-ranking officials welcomed new proposals to improve society, they did not dictate what those changes should look like. To be sure, Crown approval was required in many instances, but creoles and *peninsulares* generated the ideas for change independent of the Crown and other top-ranking royal officials. In New Granada, much of the reform was generated from local interests, but this was not a source of tension. Rather, creoles and *peninsulares* brought their proposals to high-ranking officials or petitioned the Crown and thereby demonstrated the cooperative spirit of eighteenth-century reform in the Hispanic world. Eighteenth century Spanish society was deeply immersed in the idea of improving society.

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90 Socorro Rodríguez’s salary request immediately went against Moreno’s original plan. Apparently Moreno believed the librarian ought to be a young priest because they were likely not to protest and be comfortable cloistered among texts. See AGN, Sección Colonia, Virreyes, legajo 61, fols. 241-242. Moreno’s ideas can be found in Tarr, “The Organization of the Royal Public Library of Santa Fe De Bogota,” 26.
Participation in reform became more than supporting the construction of infrastructure or altering curriculum. Indeed, Spanish society came to value different traits and qualities in individuals, a change that can be viewed through the ways in which creoles and *peninsulares* competed against and cooperated with each other. Yet even as they sought personal gain, elites turned to family, close friends, colleagues, and local leaders for help. Elites used social networks to confirm their past experiences, as well as their lineage, as they bid for government posts. Networks were instrumental in elites’ attempts to expand their opportunities. More importantly, examining elites’ networks confirms the shared language of merit, utility, and useful knowledge that emerged in the eighteenth century.

Elites’ reliance on social networks was not new to the Bourbon period. Rather, elites’ activities seen as a part of a network demonstrate that elites went along with Bourbon reforms to change the expression of local power from being regionally focused to a reflection of the centrality of the Spanish Crown. Elites continued to use their networks to influence Bourbon policies and found Crown support for activities that were generated locally rather than dictated from Madrid or Seville.
CHAPTER II

SHARED INTERESTS AND COMMON GOALS

The royal government operated as a nexus point for many of the individuals and their social networks in the Viceroyalty of New Granada. Affiliation with the royal government and its officials was common and often a product of the professional and monetary opportunities that could be obtained by working closely with and within the state. Having close ties with the Spanish government, indeed becoming a part of it, proved beneficial for those that were able to obtain employment or contractual labor. Gaining a position in the government also benefited kin as well as other members of their social networks. Ties with the Spanish government, however, were built on more than financial interests. Rather, interactions with and within the viceregal government created a vibrant political culture centered around an interest in the public good.

An analysis of the exchanges made within these networks, from the naturalists in the Botanical Expedition to the members of the cabildo, reveal the goals of the individuals within the networks of Bogotá. Their conceptual framework shared ideas about the purpose of the state and the role of individuals within that state in relation to la república, patria, and other terms that emphasized the communal nature of associations. Members of the republic desired to maintain and improve the state their community. Leaders within the republic likewise sought to facilitate the growth and health of the community, both economically and intellectually.
Occupational and educational opportunities may have been the sites of contact for these networks, but members of the community of Santafé and the greater municipal area bound together for a common goal: the enrichment of New Granada. Imperial Spain’s interest in turning its far-off American possessions into centers of wealth and production had been an objective since at least the seventeenth century, but efforts to enrich the Spanish American colonies was never dictated by the monarchy. Rather, as Paula De Vos and Antonio Barrera-Osorio have pointed out, the success of the scientific expeditions in the Spanish Empire relied heavily on local interest and local participation.¹ Barrera-Osorio’s work especially highlights the wide cast of professions involved in knowledge gathering that supported the growth of an empirical culture across the Spanish Empire.² The application of the knowledge gathered through these scientific expeditions, however, rarely matched locals’ interests. Crown policy favored investment in infrastructure rather than the cultivation of new products.

By the late eighteenth century, the Spanish Monarchs’ methods had changed considerably as seen through the Crown’s financial support of over fifty-seven scientific expeditions to Spanish America, eight of which formed with the specific goal of studying botany.³ The largest of those expeditions were established in the viceroyalties of New Spain, New Granada, and Peru. As we have seen, however, the scientific expedition in New Granada relied heavily on individuals with little to no background in natural history. Colonial administrators, merchants, and educators all enjoyed a vested interest in the success of these scientific expeditions because

of the potential that the discoveries of those expeditions could yield in relation to commercial growth.

Commercial growth was not the limit of this network’s interest. Taking the language used by the historical actors seriously, we unearth a discourse about improving society entangled in terms such as republic, patria, nation (to a lesser extent), and public good. Improvement of society could occur in a variety of ways, but chief among them related to realizing the discoveries of the scientific expeditions. Oddly, naturalists’ discoveries were infrequently implemented or acted upon. Despite the paucity of action by the Spanish state, elites viewed their participation in a practical Enlightenment as beneficial to the viceroyalty. Historical actors depicted the act of discussing reforms, of teaching the youth (joventud), and turning the wilds into a knowable subject as crucial to transforming New Granada. The discovery of new sources of agricultural goods offered the potential to improve society economically, but participants in this network of knowledge production also saw benefits in the very process of learning. By the 1780s, education in Santafé in particular enjoyed various reforms and expansions. The Jesuit university, la Universidad de Santo Tomas, no longer held a monopoly on issuing degrees, causing enrollment in the Colegio de Nuestra Senora del Rosario and the Colegio de San Bartolomé to grow. And by 1783, girls could be educated at the Colegio de la Enseñanza. All of these changes in the educational opportunities of the center of the viceroyalty occurred because of the intersection of local interest and the support of local administrators. The Crown’s approval of these changes is first revealing of the Monarchs’ interests aligning with the local and second, that the local initiatives on subjects of education and bettering society could impact official

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4 The Colegio de San Bartolomé took control of the Universidad de Santo Tomas after the expulsion of the Jesuits, however today San Bartolomé’s archival sources are held at the Universidad Pontificia Javeriana.
Crown policy. Key to understanding the success of these initiatives, then, are the very networks and channels that locals utilized.

Franz D. Hensel Riveros’s work on the preoccupation of the *moral república* in the immediate post-independent years explores a historical moment where former subjects of the Spanish monarchs attempted to legitimize a new government that was at once “not concerned with obedience to the Monarch nor maintaining its symbolic potency.” Instead, the young republic grappled with anchoring the old vision of community within a new view of republicanism removed from the established tradition of monarchy. Where his work is deliberate in its focus on the post-independence period, Hensel Riveros’s depiction of the new state’s struggle to use old language in a monarchy-free state is a useful reminder of the importance of understanding the use of terms like republic, patria, and, especially in this chapter, public good, prior to independence. A wide cast of actors used these terms well before the dawn of the nineteenth century.

There is a historiographic component to understanding this terminology as well. Early twentieth century works saw the use of the terms as markers of *los próceres* (founding fathers) and their political ideologies as anti-monarchical. The historiography has long since moved past searching for precursors of independence, but there remains a teleological component in the literature and especially so in works that focus on the transition of New Granada from a viceroyalty to an independent state. *República* and *patria* were terms that the younger generation appropriated into their lexicon that came to bear a more creole definition.6 *República* and *patria*

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6 Mauricio Nieto Olarte discusses this process as particularly clear in the actions of those involved in the Botanical Expedition to New Granada starting in 1783. See Nieto Olarte, *Remedios para el imperio.*
have been key terms in discussing the transition of the colonial society to the post-independence period. Clement Thibaud’s and María Teresa Calderón’s recent work highlights the shared uses of the notion of the *república* in both the monarchical and post-independence period of New Granada, framing the invocation of terms such as *bien común* in the republican period as “falling back on old traditions” in the absence of the monarchy. Thibaud and Caldéron do not go as far to label the use of republican terminology in the independence period as uninspired, but the links they draw between the two eras underscores the borrowed nature of terms conventionally associated as antithetical to a monarchical society.

This chapter, however, is less interested in the transformation of these terms from the monarchical period to the post-independence period, but rather in understanding how late colonial society understood the notion of public good as linked to both a practical Enlightenment and monarchy. This chapter in particular will explore the state of the imaginations of political community in the decades before Napoleon’s betrayal of his alliance with the Spanish Crown to better understand the ideas that were available at the time of the invasion in 1808. Understanding how this society discussed ideas of community and ways to improve it before independence was put on the table illuminates a rich debate over who enjoyed a stake in the political community. Creole elites adopted the language of public good to engage in state-building and to reform local society.

The use of *república* in Spanish society dates back, at the least, to the sixteenth century as seen in the writings of Francisco Suárez. In eighteenth century New Granada, the use of the

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concept republic was significant because it linked the Monarchy to its vassals through the realization of the common good. Commitment to the common good indeed persisted well into the late eighteenth century and married well with the spread of Enlightenment ideas concerning the use of new knowledge to reform local, regional, and even imperial societies across the Atlantic. By the end of the eighteenth century, elites in New Granada consistently articulated their reforms, be they for personal gain or for regional improvement, by using the language of the common good and the republic.

Seeing community as a republic is one matter, it is another to discuss the idea of a “public.” On the notion of a public, historians of Latin America divide into two camps. One side views the formation of less-private spaces to debate government policies as the creation of a public sphere. Victor Uribe-Uran’s argument that “an at least incipient public sphere emerged colonial Spanish America’s civil societies” is reflective of the interest among historians to link Latin America to development of modern society, but more importantly, of seeing modernity in the past to the exclusion of contemporary modes of operating society.9 The temptation to see modernity in this late colonial society ignores the endurance of pre-existing concepts of the public.10 Furthermore, drawing links between the introduction of the printing press in colonial Spanish America with the emergence of a public sphere likewise overshadows the modes that so-called pre-moderns conceived of community. Anthony McFarlane depicts the creation of a “public” in the capital city as a product of the emergence of the Papel Periódico de Santafé in 1791, arguing that the newspaper connected “like-minded men in the capital” that “aspired to

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spread its notion of general good to creoles in the provinces.”

While newspapers contributed to a sense of public, as will be discussed in chapter four, the idea of a “public” predates the introduction of newspapers in Santafé, as does the concern of the well-being of that public. Rather, the introduction of newspapers in the capital built on an already existing discussion of the public good shared by, at the least, the elite communities of the viceroyalty.

While the concept of republic and the need to commit actions that served the public good were not new, the method by which members of the community envisioned the republic could be improved did change during the second half of the eighteenth century. Modes of understanding how to improve society decidedly shifted because of elite participation in two fields that were especially important to the networks of Bogotá: scientific expeditions and education. Creole participation in a practical Enlightenment helped broaden who could engage in discussions of the public good. Elite scientific activities emphasized the need to understand the natural world and turn that knowledge into useful information that could bring prosperity to the community, or in their parlance, benefit the public good. On education, creoles looked to broaden educational opportunities for a wider, albeit still creole-centric, populace.

In both cases, the question of educating the youth was of paramount importance. Widening the material that youth of New Granada could study offered the best chance to create a productive and useful generation that could further improve the state of the republic.

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12 The Botanical Expeditions have been the focus of many recent works, see Juan Pimentel, *La física de la monarquía: ciencia y política en el pensamiento colonial de Alejandro Malaspina (1754-1810)* (Aranjuez (Madrid): Doce Calles, 1998); Nieto Olarte, *Remedios para el imperio*; Mauricio Nieto Olarte, Carlos Alberto Rodríguez, and José Roca, *Historia natural y política: conocimientos y representaciones de la naturaleza americana* (Bogotá: Banco de la República, 2008); Vos, “Natural History and the Pursuit of Empire in Eighteenth-Century Spain”; Bleichmar, *Visible Empire*. 

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In a period where improving society was the main discourse, education was king. The push to improve the republic through education reforms emerged in as early as the 1760s. Most of those efforts took the form of new curriculum plans for the education system or proposals for new institutions centered on gathering knowledge such as the botanical expeditions. In addition, the promise, or even potential, to reform was linked to the idea of improving the republic and serving the public good. Both criollo (creole) and peninsulare elites alike participated in these reforms efforts and consistently targeted the education system as the best means of improving the republic.

At least, that was the rhetoric. Discussions of improving society were always linked to one core audience: the crown. Whether authors of reform plans wrote directly to the Spanish monarchs or to high state officials in the Americas, such as the Viceroy, all linked the notion of reform to serving the interests of the crown. Some of those that participated in this network that discussed ideas of improving society leveraged their history of working in the crown’s interest to demand higher wages or even better positions of employment. Others seemed more interested in reform proposals for the sake of reform even if social advancement was not on the table. In either case, participation in this discourse on reform and improvement provided a method for Spanish subjects to alter their social conditions.

This chapter will explore the shared language between members of the social networks discussed in the previous chapter using a mix of correspondence, records of merit and services, and reform proposals. The first sources relate to views on the uses of knowledge. For creole elites in New Granada, the Botanical Expedition was a center of knowledge that could be harnessed to improve economic conditions in the Viceroyalty. Interest in the findings and

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13 I use discourse here to refer to a larger shared discussion across Atlantic communities in the eighteenth century.
production of knowledge in the Botanical Expedition extended beyond royal officials to individuals from the private sector of New Granada, mainly merchants. The first section of the chapter will examine José Ignacio de Pombo, a merchant from Cartagena, whose interest in the production of knowledge is emblematic of how the individuals in these networks that lived outside of the capital nevertheless aligned with the prerogatives of the state. Inhabitants of New Granada were invested in the expansion of opportunities and linked that expansion to the viceroyalty’s health.

The second section of this chapter will shift to perspectives to those that participated in the centers of knowledge in the viceroyalty. Rather than focus on the naturalists of the Botanical Expedition, this section aims to analyze how other members of the expedition and professors at the local colegios depicted their participation in knowledge production. The focus on knowledge production here is less about how they understood the research they engaged in but how they framed their work in relation to its value for society. Focusing on how individuals chose to frame the value of their work also reveals opportunities that creoles tried to create for themselves by using their labor to gain social or financial advantages.

Finally, the chapter will conclude by exploring several reform plans offered by either inhabitants or state-contracted individuals. Most of the reforms to be examined focus on changes for the university system of Santafé, with only a few reforms proposing broader changes for the viceroyalty. This chapter will examine how reforms were framed in terms of their utility to the community. It was not enough to push for reforms for the sake of reforming. Rather, reform plans were linked to their potential to improve the conditions of the viceroyalty as well as its inhabitants. Across each of the sources to be discussed, creoles emphasized the utility of their labor and tied their efforts to improving the republic.
José Ignacio de Pombo was a staunch supporter of reform. Born on February 21, 1761 in Popayán to a Spanish father and creole mother, Pombo traveled to Santafé to study law at the Colegio Mayor de Nuestra Señora del Rosario. By 1784, Pombo had moved to Cartagena and founded a *casa comercial*.\(^{14}\) Pombo created a wide commercial network, making contacts in other parts of the Spanish Empire and the Atlantic. Much of the initiatives that Pombo backed mirrored developments in Europe, mainly French physiocrats’ interest in public works, agriculture, and trade.\(^{15}\) Pombo also became active in the local government serving as *alcalde mayor* several times and made a habit of supporting reforms that would aid in local improvement of infrastructure, knowledge production, and political or economic organization.

Among Pombo’s main projects was his petition for the creation of a *consulado* (chamber of commerce) in Cartagena, a project that included other merchants in Cartagena. By the mid-1790s, the Crown had approved of the erection of a *consulado* in Cartagena, as well as other major ports in Spanish America.\(^{16}\) The *consulado* promised to bring the Crown greater income from the port city but also allowed local merchants a role in shaping metropolitan policy. Gabriel Paquette has written about the creation of new *consulados* across the Spanish empire as one of several measures made by the Spanish Monarchs that sanctioned “the spirit of improvement and

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\(^{14}\) For one of the first biographies written on Pombo, see Rafael Gómez Hoyos, “Don José Ignacio de Pombo, promotor de la cultura y del desarrollo económico del país,” *Boletín Cultural y Bibliográfico* 5, no. 08 (1962): 970–84.


\(^{16}\) Caracas, Havana, Buenos Aires, and Veracruz all obtained their *consulados* during the mid-1790s. See Bernd Hausberger and Antonio Ibarra, *Comercio y poder en América colonial: los consulados de comerciantes, siglos XVII-XIX* (Madrid: Instituto Mora, 2003).
patriotic intellectual enquiry.”  

The Crown’s approval of the *consulado* affirmed an increase in local participation in government, taxation, and managing trade affairs, but the significant element of Pombo’s proposal concerns his linkage of the *consulado* institution to the realization of public happiness. Pombo joined other locals in petitioning the Crown for change and sought to negotiate with, rather than circumvent, imperial authority. Pombo’s other activities likewise point to the legitimating effect of turning to the Crown to permit change. And, more importantly, these petitions stressed the positive effect that implementing change would have on the public.

Pombo also worked closely with the members of the Botanical Expedition as a financial supporter of its ventures, mainly with José Celestino Mutis and Francisco José de Caldas. Pombo shared an interest in fomenting the growth of knowledge of nature because he tied the production of that knowledge to the potential to create wealth. By 1802, Pombo had cultivated strong ties with Mutis, offered tremendous financial support to Caldas in his expedition, and contributed to the construction of the Astronomical Observatory in Santafé of which Caldas would become its director. Pombo’s active role was no secret either. Caldas wrote of Pombo as “protector of this expedition” and having “facilitated many useful projects for me.”

It was agriculture, however, that interested Pombo as agricultural products could be tapped for great

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17 Paquette focuses specifically on the implementation of these institutions during the late eighteenth century, whereas I am interested in the language used by Pombo in his petitions as illustrative of the links made between useful knowledge, the public good, and monarchy. See Paquette, “State-Civil Society Cooperation and Conflict in the Spanish Empire,” 268.

18 Carta de D. Lazaro María de Herrera y D. José Ignacio de Pombo a Virrey Caballero y Góngora, March 1789, AGI, Estado 54, No. 3.

19 In 1802, Pombo encouraged for Caldas to be considered a permanent member of the expedition and be granted an endowment in case something happened to the Expedition’s director, Mutis. See AGI, Mapas y planos, Ingenios y muestras, 184.

20 Pombo invested his own funds in Caldas’s expedition to Quito in the first years of the nineteenth century. This letter comes from Guillermo Hernandez de Alba’s two volume compilation of correspondence, see *Archivo epistolar del sabio naturalista José Celestino Mutis*, vol. 2 (Bogotá: Imprenta Nacional, 1947): 189.
wealth, and yet the promise of wealth was never justification enough for the pursuit of knowledge.

From his correspondence to his reform plans, Pombo, like many others that will be explored in this chapter, sought to improve their local community by promoting education and the production of useful knowledge, fomenting agriculture based on collected knowledge, and the increase of commerce. The three fields were linked to each other as they promoted an image of prosperity that others in the viceroyalty as well as in the peninsula could latch on to as a language of reform. More importantly, encouraging agriculture and expanding education would contribute to public happiness. In continuance with his interest in reform, Pombo supported the expansion of the Sociedad Patriótica, or Patriotic Society, institution to New Granada, but here Pombo joined rather than starting the effort. José Celestino Mutis, the main advocate for the expansion of the Patriotic Society to New Granada, expressed ideas similar to Pombo about the Society, claiming that it was capable of animating greater interest in “agriculture, industry, commerce and arts.”

The clearest example of Pombo’s efforts can be found in his ideas about reform, specifically as they related to the construction of roads. Roads played a significant role in Pombo’s image of a thriving community, but roads required geographic knowledge. On the interest of roads, Pombo grew close to Caldas and frequently encouraged him to map out future roadways. Pombo also believed that the rivers of the viceroyalty needed to be improved to

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21 The Patriotic Societies could be found elsewhere in the Americas, but in the Spanish peninsula they were known as Sociedad Económica.
22 “José Celestino Mutis al Presidente de la Audiencia de Quito,” Mariquita, Dec. 26, 1786, ARJB, Archivo de la Real Expedición Botánica del Nuevo Reino de Granada, Legajo 42.
23 Many of Pombo’s ideas of reforming the viceroyalty can be found in his letters to Mutis, see Alba, Archivo epistolar, tomo 1, 237-298.
24 Road plans sent by Caldas to Pombo include the towns of Cuenca, Loja, Malbucho to Ibarra (in present-day Ecuador), a plan that did come until after “eight months of silence.” See ibid, 263.
allow for better navigation of the colony, transportation of goods between the ports and the
capital, thus increasing commerce. But like his plans to bring the consulado and Patriotic
Society, Pombo’s push for public projects did not always result. In a letter to Mutis, Pombo
wrote of one of his associate’s struggle to obtain funding and support for the construction of a
road in region of Carare. Pombo encouraged Mutis to “take this important undertaking under
your protection” because its success would bring “advantages to the Kingdom, which will honor
our Majesty” and all connected to the project.25 The success of this project required royal
intervention, but that could only be obtained by Pombo relying on his social network that was
sensitive to the language of public good. Taking specific knowledge produced locally and
turning it into public projects necessitated the approval of local and imperial authorities, but the
ideas behind those projects rested on the shared interest of public good.

While the formation of local advocacy groups sought to benefit the viceroyalty
specifically, the Patriotic Society and consulado were not meant to steer the colony away from
its association with Spain. Rather, the institutions worked with the structure of the empire
thereby continuing to recognize Spain as critical to the realization of public happiness and the
arbiter of the public good. The Monarchy needed to be convinced of the utility of a proposal and
then approve of the implementation of the project, or in this situation, the expansion of an
existing imperial institution. Pombo’s role of this process illuminates how central the concept of
public good was to not only the use of obtained knowledge, but also to the relationship between
the Monarchy and its vassals.

PERSONAL GAINS

After working in the Botanical Expedition for nearly 20 years, Salvador Rizo y Blanco wanted a raise. Born in 1760 in Santa Cruz de Mompox, a small town near the Caribbean coast, Rizo had served as the Director of Painters in the expedition since 1784. Rizo, who was 43 at the time of writing his request, claimed that he expended the “best days of my youth” in service to the Royal Expedition and was now looking for a return on his services. To justify his request, Rizo laid out three main points. First, that he was a productive member of his local community. Second, that he needed help supporting his large family. And third, that his labor was demonstrative of his loyalty and dedication to the crown. Each of Rizo’s points illuminates how members of Bogotá’s greater community could leverage their past experiences, but that personal gain needed to be framed as bettering others. Lastly, Rizo’s request is demonstrative of how important networks were in facilitating an individual’s goals. Rizo sent his letter to the Viceroy attached with a recommendation letter from his long-time supervisor, José Celestino Mutis, the Director of the Botanical Expedition. Like Rizo, Mutis linked his pupil’s request to building off of Rizo’s already considerable impact on the surrounding community. Even for someone like Rizo, it was never enough to discuss personal needs. In order to seek advancement, members of late colonial Spanish society needed to connect the reception of personal gains with their benefits on those around them.

To his first point, Rizo’s emphasis on his productivity underscored how he viewed his work as beneficial to his surrounding community. In his letter requesting a raise, Rizo was quick to outline his duties within the expedition, the first of those being his function as Director of

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26 See “da cuenta con documento de la solicitud que ha promovido D Salvador Rizo,” October 22, 1803 in “Duplicados de cartas de D. Antonio Amar, virrey de Santa Fe, a D. José Antonio Caballero, Secretario de Estado del Despacho Universal de Gracia y Justicia,” AGI, Santa Fe 628, Ramo 3, No. 3, fols. 1-4.
27 Ibid, 3.
Painters. As the director, Rizo taught, guided, and oversaw the creation of over 6,000 images during his employ (1784-1812). And while he may have been the Director of Painters, Rizo was never just that. Among his other duties, Rizo handled the logistical issues of managing a large staff, the knowledge they produced, and the transportation of that information to Royal Gardens in Spain. Rizo also oversaw the economic management of the expedition, a responsibility shared with the Director of the Botanical Expedition, José Celestino Mutis. Indeed, Rizo was keen on emphasizing his role within the expedition, boasting about his ability to “realize the good ideas” of Mutis and serving as his brazo derecho (right arm). Finally, Rizo was the head of a free drawing school that trained young boys how to paint the very botanical images produced by painters employed by the expedition. Rizo’s labor created opportunities within and around the expedition to improve the quality of his community.

Rizo’s efforts were not to go unnoticed either. On his service record of teaching boys to paint, Rizo again remarked on the utility of his labor but used the idea of a public audience to verify his merits of his contributions. Writing on the school’s effect of communicating the usefulness of art in society, Rizo claimed that even the public knew of the good effects of teaching art and valued his role in their community. Rizo also drew from his network from the expedition, mainly José Celestino Mutis. Rizo emphasized not only the close relationship between Mutis and himself, but he obtained Mutis’s written support. Attached to Rizo’s request for a raise was a recommendation letter from Mutis that supported Rizo’s claims of usefulness.

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28 For a detailed examination of the paintings produced by the Royal Botanical Expedition to the New Kingdom of Granada as well as the botanical expeditions sent to the other parts of the Spanish Empire, see Bleichmar, *Visible Empire*.
29 Rizo wrote in his letter that all travels and excursions related to the Botanical Expedition “passed through his hands with the approval of the Director.” See Salvador Rizo, October 22, 1803, AGI, Santa Fe 628, r. 3, no. 3, f. 3.
30 Salvador Rizo, October 22, 1803, AGI, Santa Fe 628, Ramo 3, no. 3, 3.
31 Ibid. This is also noted in Bleichmar, *Visible Empire*: 86-88.
32 Salvador Rizo, October 22, 1803, AGI, Santa Fe 628, Ramo 3, no. 3, 3.
33 Ibid.
Rizo sought to increase his wage but to do so, he invoked the familial network he created while as an employee of the botanical expedition.

While he linked his utility to his workplace, Rizo also emphasized the importance of his labor in supporting his family. Rizo did not work for himself and as his family grew, the more difficult it became to maintain his family’s lifestyle. As the father and head of household, Rizo claimed his responsibility to provide for his family and the manner they were accustomed. Despite his best efforts, Rizo found it increasingly difficult to sustain his family’s needs. Rizo’s family had grown under the assumption that he would be able to continually provide for them and much like he had expectations for his time spent working for the expedition, so too did his expectations extend to his employment assisting his family: “it would not be just sir, that after having served in my youth and reaching old age to now be without aid or the will to maintain a growing family hoping to rely on sustenance from my hands.”

Rizo had a duty to provide for his family, but so too did his employers. Rizo’s expectations of what his employment would provide in the way of financial support encouraged him to grow his family. Just as his labor played a supportive role in his workplace community, Rizo’s employment also maintained the livelihood of his immediate community.

Rizo’s final point circled back to the usefulness of his work by linking his labor to service to the Crown. As a painter, Rizo was aware that some might view his profession as less than necessary and that any demands for higher wages might be rejected out of hand. To counter such reactions, Rizo emphasized his role in the Expedition as a producer of “precious art so necessary to the demonstrative sciences” as indicative of his eligibility for a higher salary.

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34 Salvador Rizo, October 22, 1803, AGI, Santa Fe 628, Ramo 3, no. 3, 3.
the field. Mutis echoed Rizo’s claim to royal service, framing Rizo’s role in educating the youth as “benefitting the patria” and proof of his service to the Crown.\textsuperscript{36} Being an educator was good, but Rizo’s articulation of his accomplishments as an educator made clear attempts to highlight how he was of great value to the Crown.

Rizo’s attempt to receive higher pay is revealing of the personal gains individuals could try to obtain by working in centers of learning in the Spanish Empire. Rizo took advantage of an existing system wherein participants at the local level could present their labor, or in Rizo’s case, their years of service, for potential compensation. In this way, the Spanish Crown served as a clear patron of the sciences in colonial Spanish America. Individuals saw the opportunities that working in this field could provide for them and leveraged their labor for their own advancement. The Spanish government, in turn, received participants’ labor and used it for the state’s growing interest in increasing knowledge of the natural world under Spanish domain.

But Rizo’s efforts also illuminate an interest shared between locals and state officials that is not best understood as an example of patronage. Yes, local creole elites, and non-creole elites for that matter, in New Granada used Spanish patronage for personal and even familial advancement, but many of those elites saw themselves as a part of the state system. Others were even a part of the very royal government that acted as the patron. To divide this community between local elites and the royal government misses the relationship of creoles in Santafé to the Spanish state. Creole elites held positions in the colonial government and were themselves royal officials. Rizo was a creole from Mariquita, but he also saw himself as an agent of the Crown and as a member of his local community. This convergence of interests, of opportunities for

\textsuperscript{36} José Celestino Mutis a Virrey Antonio Amar y Borbón, November 14, 1803, in “Duplicados de cartas de D. Antonio Amar, virrey de Santa Fe, a D. José Antonio Caballero, Secretario de Estado del Despacho Universal de Gracia y Justicia,” AGI, Santa Fe 628, Ramo 3, no. 3, 7.
personal and familial gain as well as royal goals of improving economic conditions reinforced an existing idea about serving the public good. Creole elites saw themselves as part of both a republic and as part of their Monarch’s empire. Moreover, creoles wrote about serving la republic and el bien publica not in the context of a republican representative government, but as a part of a monarchical government. The republican language used by creoles, as we will see, was simultaneously linked to royal service and benefiting the local.

Increasing commerce was good, but that activity alone does not explain the wide breath of interested groups. Royal policy makers and merchants were not the only types of individuals involved in knowledge production in New Granada. Local administrators, many of them who would only reside in New Granada for half a decade, took an active role in backing local naturalists and other groups that participated in knowledge production. Several expressions found commonly among participants include two that provide insight into the overarching philosophy of members of the networks: improving society and public good.

EDUCATION AND THE YOUTH

By the mid-1780s, four universities were operating in the Viceroyalty of New Granada, along with a colegio for girls, and, of course, the Botanical Expedition to New Granada. All of these institutions offered creoles, as well as peninsulares, opportunities of social mobility. Academic degrees opened doors to coveted salaried positions in a variety of areas. Graduates

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37 These include three in Bogotá and one in Caracas: Universidad Santo Tomás, Colegio Mayor de San Bartolomé, Colegio Mayor del Nuestra Señora del Rosario, and the Universidad Real y Pontificia de Caracas. This number does not include the non-university degree granting educational institutions found across New Granada such as the Seminario Mayor de Popayán or the Colegio de la Enseñanza, a school for girls founded in 1783.
could obtain work as a practicing lawyer in the audiencia, as cátedras (professors) in the colegios, as a member of the ecclesiastical community, or gain a position in the colonial government. Education was core part of elite life in the late colonial period as gaining access to education required proof of pure lineage that hinged on the support of networks. As in the spheres of commerce and politics, elites demonstrated their social prowess in the sphere of academia by trying to limit entry as well as require the support of fellow elite families.

Participation in these centers of learning was also encouraged by the Spanish government. High-ranking government officials, including the viceroys, played a specific role in this process as both the arbiters of what knowledge was good for the viceroyalty and having the ability to confirm career advancement opportunities to hopeful applicants. The viceroys’ role was even more critical as they recommended participants for advancement, approved appointments to positions in the local colegios, and encouraged future viceroys to continue investing state resources in individuals that proved their worth to the community. State officials were aware of those in the academic sphere and were invested in their success. In New Granada, the viceroys maintained an active role in the colegios and education system.

Creoles alluded to their involvement in knowledge production, specifically in educating the youth, as demonstrative of their commitment to the public good. And serving the public good also implied serving the Crown. Interestingly, applicants seeking positions in the colegios, much like Pombo’s economic reforms or Rizo’s bid for a raise, discussed the benefits they would bring.

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38 For an excellent source on the lawyers and their experiences in late colonial Colombia, see chapters 1-2 in Uribe-Uran, Honorable Lives: Lawyers, Family, and Politics in Colombia, 1780-1850, 2000.
39 Both the Archivo Histórico de la Universidad del Rosario and the collection, “Archivo del Colegio de San Bartolomé,” at the Archivo Histórico de la Universidad Javeriana contain many applications for positions within the colegios.
40 Although not the focus of her book, Ann Twinam’s Purchasing Whiteness explores one pardo family’s attempt to gain their son entry into a university. My research on the colegios of Bogotá did not reveal cases of non-whites gaining entry, in fact the opposite. I found several cases of an applicant’s lineage revealed to be mixed that resulted in their denial of admission and their grant money to be rescinded. See Twinam, Purchasing Whiteness, 170-174.
to the community in terms of serving the public good. Rizo and Mutis give us some indication of how educators placed their actions in social and political context, but some maintained a more precise method of measuring their success as educators. In his application for the position of professor of civil law, Joaquín Camacho depicted his previous experiences as an educator in the Colegio del Rosario as “of service to this Republic.” For several years, Camacho taught philosophy and canonical law at el Rosario, and while he served in other important capacities in the viceroyalty, Camacho emphasized his teaching record the most in his application. It is no surprise that he would emphasize his teaching experience, but what he chose to highlight is telling of how he measured success. On his teaching record, Camacho wrote “it noteworthy that having taught more than 50 students, 24 of them had come to occupy honorific posts in service of the Republic.” For Camacho, his contribution to the public good involved the very process of educating individuals who then became valuable members of the viceroyalty. Camacho’s use of republic fit with the lexicon shared by creole elites and government officials.

It is important to understand the applicant’s audience as they attempted to depict their service record as a job qualification. It was the community of the colegio that elected the candidates for the positions, not government officials. Internal debates drove the competition over the job vacancies. Francisco González Manrique, for instance, met resistance from the community of the Colegio del Rosario when he sought to fill a faculty opening. Despite González Manrique’s extensive experience as a lawyer, one of his opponents thought González Manrique incapable of “illustrating the material” to the youth. Others, however, argued that

41 “Joseph Joaquín Camacho y Lago a Rector y Claustro,” AHUR, vol. 15, fols. 141-142. Camacho would use this language again in an application for either an asesoria general or fiscal in the Americas, see Joaquín Camacho al Virrey José Amar y Borbón, Pamplona, January 5, 1808. AGI, Santa Fe 629, no. 120.
42 Ibid.
43 November 1800. AHUR, vol. 14, fols. 91-98.
González Manrique would replace an ineffective professor so he could not do any more damage. Neither commentary was all that flattering. But the focus of the debate was not on González Manrique’s character, but his ability to perform the job. Occupations in centers of learning were held in high regard because of the potential impact individuals could have on the community at large.

The hiring process is also revealing of the role of the viceroys in confirming the appointment of educators. When Camacho received his first post as cátedra de filosofía at the Colegio del Rosario in 1791, it was Viceroy José Ezpeleta that confirmed Camacho’s appointment citing his intelligence and active role in the community.44 Ezpeleta’s interest in Camacho’s career was not out of place. A royal decree in 1787 charged the viceroy with maintaining a running list of “valuable persons to the kingdom.”45 While it did not include many professors, the list did follow the careers of parish priests, lawyers, and other members of the ecclesiastical community that were considered of benemérito (meritorious) to the community.

The viceroys’ interest in the education sphere of New Granada took on other forms outside of approving job hires. Following his appointment to Viceroy of New Granada, Antonio Caballero y Góngora approved of the creation of several new centers of learning, including the Botanical Expedition that was formerly founded in 1783 and, importantly, an initiative to reform the colegio degree-granting institutions of the kingdom that promised to improve the state of the public. Royal officials and local elites alike showed a consistent concern in how reforms in the education system could impact the public good. It was not enough to discuss how reforms could change the economic conditions of the viceroyalty, rather reforms were couched as a means to

44 Virrey José de Ezpeleta al Señor Rector del Colegio del Rosario, Bogotá on March 31, 1791. AHUR, vol. 14, f. 27.
45 Informes sobre méritos y servicios de eclesiásticos, AGI, Santa Fe 970, no. 119.
improve the overall health of the viceroyalty. Improvements in the educational system offered not only potential economic benefits as students could utilize their acquired knowledge, but also offered the chance to overcome what the director of the Botanical Expedition to New Granada, José Celestino Mutis, called the “pretentiousness of their fathers.” The viceruchs backed the reform plans with a similar sense of posterity.

Less discussed, however, is the way that educators situated themselves in terms of serving the public good. Educators viewed their work as crucial to the maintenance of a productive society as they had a strong influence on the youth of the viceroyalty. But such a depiction was not self-evident. As we will see, educators used the language of public good in their pursuits of promotions. Educators underscored their experience in teaching and familiarity with the subject matter in the correct form. Moreover, educators linked their services to contributing to the public good, a powerful rhetorical device that united educators and high-ranking government officials.

Proposals to reform the education system were yet another method by which educators interacted with the Spanish state. And like the applicants discussed earlier, educators claimed experiential expertise in their fields and linked their proposals to servicing the public good. Perhaps one of the strongest and earliest examples is of Francisco Moreno y Escandón’s Plan de estudios. Moreno, a native of Mariquita, had served as a professor of canonical law at the Colegio de San Bartolomé before becoming fiscal (attorney) protector de indios in 1765. Moreno was also an ambitious man. He rose to the rank of fiscal del crimen by 1776 and regente (high ranking judge) of the audiencia of Santiago de Chile by 1788. Moreno’s personal

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46 José Celestino Mutis a Virrey Antonio Amar y Borbón, Santafé, November 14, 1803, AGI, Santa Fe 652, Ramo 3, no. 3, fols. 4–8.
47 Ainara and María, Señores del muy ilustre cabildo, 414–15.
48 Ibid.
ambitions married well with commitment to reforming the educational system. Indeed, so often were interests in change tied to the opportunities they presented to the reformer. Moreno’s belief in the perfectibility of society drove his reforms but being active and productive in molding a better society had personal benefits as well.

Moreno y Escandón, like many in this period, was caught up in the spirit of rejuvenating New Granada and education played a specific role in that process. It took several years for Moreno to formulate his Plan de estudios before presenting in 1774, with the able support of José Celestino Mutis. Moreno’s main suggestion was for the creation of a public university of general studies. That is, a more open university system outside of the control of the religious orders – such as the Universidad Santo Tómas. Moreno’s proposal was not a move against the place of Catholicism in neogranadino society. Rather, he sought to emulate similar institutional practices that could already be found in Mexico City, Lima, and the Spanish peninsula. Moreno used the examples of other parts of the Spanish Empire to encourage New Granada to catch up with the rest of the Spanish world. At the same time, Moreno y Escandón’s proposal mirrored the Bourbon monarchs’ interest in curbing the power of the religious orders in institutions that affected the public, education being one of them.

Moreover, for Moreno y Escandón, the public university would be the best way “discharge the proper knowledge” needed for the juventud (youth) in “whatever career they elected.” The reform was to target education itself in the hopes of changing the youth “to be the

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49 The full title of this document is “Método provisional e interino de los estudios que han de observar los colegios de Santa Fe, por ahora y hasta tanto que erige Universidad Pública o su majestad dispone otra cosa.” See BNC, Ramo 331, folios 75-121. Moreno’s plan can also be found in several parts in AGI, Santa Fe 759, fols. 2 – 15.
50 Studying theology and the value of the Christian Doctrine were significant parts of his plan de estudios.
51 Note that he did not draw comparisons to foreign societies like Mutis did in his proposals for the creation of the Botanical Expedition.
52 Here I refer to the expulsion of the Jesuits which had already taken place by the time Moreno y Escandón drafted his proposal. The expulsion had targeted one of the oldest colegios in Bogotá, the Colegio de San Bartolomé.
most useful to the state, and the most advantageous to the public.”

Moreno wrote of the religious orders have too much control of the youthful minds attending the universities of Bogotá, that only by opening the classroom to more ideas could a stronger future be secured. Like those interested in obtaining better employment, educational reforms focused on the impact that their proposed changes would have on the public. It was not enough to be familiar with useful knowledge. Instead, one had to prove the efficiency that changes to knowledge production would offer to the public good. By focusing on the impact that education could have the future generation of the colony, Moreno sought to prove that it was only the youth that could transform “a capital naked of splendor” into a body of “subjects capable of relieving the republic and the government” of its ignorance.

While his proposal for a public university was not approved, Moreno y Escandón’s call for the introduction of professors of science and mathematics was applied to the Colegio del Rosario and de San Bartolomé. At least, temporarily. The plan was met with opposition from within the colegios, including by the rector of Rosario, Manuel Caicedo. The rector claimed the new plan would “be the ruin of the colegio,” citing its strange structure as too different from the current system. Likewise, the Universidad Santa Tomas petitioned to have Moreno’s plans blocked. It would take intervention of future viceroys and other leaders in education to reimplement some of the changes that Moreno y Escandón proposed.

CONCLUSIONS

54 Moreno y Escandón, BNC, rama 331, f. 107.
55 AGI, Santa Fe 759, f. 8.
56 Diana Soto Arango, La reforma del plan de estudios del fiscal Moreno y Escandón 1774-1779 (Bogotá: Universidad del Rosario, 2004): 65.
In the late colonial period of New Granada, many centers of knowledge production were either created or experienced major reforms. The creation of the Botanical Expedition, changes made to mining ventures, the erection of a school for girls, the reform of education curriculum, and the introduction of the *consulado* and Patriotic Society all constituted significant change to *neogranadino* society. Efforts to generate or improve centers of learning points to the rise of cooperation between the state and local elites in New Granada. Often, the creation or reformation of these centers of knowledge production emerged through local interest but these efforts always required the explicit consent, if not monetary support, of the royal government. The Spanish state facilitated the growth of centers of learning through what appears to be a period renewed interest in information gathering. In relation to the creation of the *consulados* and the Economic Societies, organizations that sought to shape state policy, Gabriel Paquette argues that the threats against the integrity of Spain’s empire compelled “compromise, bargaining, and mutual concessions” between Spanish reformers and local elites. Cooperation also extended to scientific endeavors, as works by Daniela Bleichmar and Paula Da Vos point to the “the extent of resources and coordination” that went into those scientific expeditions as “demonstrative of the Crown’s strong commitment to natural history.” Indeed, scholars agree

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57 Juan José D’Elhuyar, a Basque mineralogist who discovered tungsten in New Granada, served as the director of mines in New Granada, see Safford, *The Ideal of the Practical*, 92.

58 The idea was first proposed in 1766 by Maria Clemencia de Caicedo. She did not live to see its approval by Carlos III, but her husband and several other government officials carried on her legacy.

59 Comunero Revolt, Caballero’s attempt at appeasement, introduction of intendencies in New Granada


61 Da Vos, “Natural History and the Pursuit of Empire,” 209. Da Vos’s interest in the place of botanical expeditions in the history of science and Latin America comes out of recent literature that has argued against depictions of Spain’s connection to science in the early modern period as peripheral to Europe. See Bleichmar, Juan Pimentel, Antonio-Ossorio. In particular, Da Vos argues that late eighteenth century Spanish investment in scientific expeditions built off of an existing system of “professional scientific expeditions” by offering significant monetary support and pushing explorers to search for the “useful.” See Ibid, 210-211.
that the Spanish Crown invested in the pursuit of useful knowledge for the potential economic benefits such knowledge offered a state facing increasing pressure in the Atlantic World.

Yet, a core component of the discussions about matters of state and the condition of society revolved around the notion of the public good. The idea of public good was not static either. That in each case the author had to defend their work’s link to the public good demonstrates the malleable quality of the public cause. It was not the case that performing work in the Botanical Expedition, for example, was automatically considered as serving the community, it had to be proved. Likewise, putting gathered knowledge to use as José Ignacio de Pombo emphasized was an equally disputable public good. In both cases, however, the authors stress how their work and ideas could improve economic, social, and even cultural conditions through its application. Improving society was a core value of this community well before the turn of the nineteenth century.

Concern over knowledge production in New Granada encompassed a wide array of interests, but a core preoccupation of elites and government officials alike was the relation between knowledge production and the public good. For some, participation in centers of knowledge production was equated to opportunities for occupational advancement. The Spanish government’s interest in promoting centers of learning was matched by local interest in contributing to those same opportunities, but out of that relationship emerged an expectation of compensation. These actors expected to receive something in return for their service, but in the late colonial period, repayment could not be demanded. Instead, service to the Crown had to be proved and respected simultaneously. By drawing connections between their labor and the public good, these actors could confront the Spanish state from a position of respect.
While material interests drove participation in this society, it is not insignificant that so much of the rhetoric invoked ideas of the public good, public happiness, and the republic. Nor was this practice one-sided. The consistent connection that these actors made between their ideas and the public good reveals the mutual concern that locals and government officials shared. The shared interest in improving society underscores how central ideas of posterity were in this community in the late colonial period. So often are these ideas attributed to the Enlightenment, but it no longer seems useful to describe this community as in the process of receiving external ideas. The actors we have examined did not describe their society in that way, despite using language, reading texts, and engaging in activities the historiography associates with the Enlightenment. Rather, by the mid-eighteenth century, New Granada was immersed in processes and debates over improving society. The Spanish state and local elites in New Granada actively sought new methods to refine the conditions of their community and that of the new generation.

In this sense, the idea of public good was of central importance to understanding the cooperative relationship between colony and metropole during the late colonial period. Creoles took on active roles in state affairs, petitions and reform plans alone constituted a prime method for locals to intervene in politics. Some historians have framed this level of activity as the product of the creation of a public sphere generated with the first publication of the Papel Periódico in 1791. Discussions of the public good outside of the periodicals of the last decade of the eighteenth century, however, indicate that the newspaper built off an existing conversation about state affairs. Inhabitants of New Granada conversed privately and publicly about these reform plans, they enlisted the aid of their associates, submitted plans to high-ranking government officials, and banded together through the use of petitions. The culture of reform

was vibrant in New Granada well before the 1790s. Moreover, that spirit of reform was
couraged by the Spanish state. That so many of the final viceroy of New Granada supported
reform in education, commerce, knowledge production, and, as will be shown, the sharing of
ideas, is a strong indicator of the central role that ideas of rejuvenation had in the viceroyalty.
CHAPTER III

JOURNEYING HOME: CREOLE NETWORKS AND RECONCILIATION

For the Santafereño elite, two events reveal the tension that underlay the late eighteenth century: the Comunero Revolt in 1781 and a series of arrests against a group of mostly creoles in Santafé de Bogotá in the fall of 1794. While the origins of these two events differ, the process by which Spanish officials and the local community resolved their grievances demonstrates the power behind a Spanish system that relied on negotiation and reconciliation. In the cases of both the revolt and the arrests, creoles faced fierce retribution, charges of treason, torture, and exile. Yet, despite the treatment they received from the Spanish judicial system, creoles and others that were persecuted sought to reclaim their status using the tools available to them as subjects of the Spanish monarchs. With the exception of a few, the individuals discussed in this chapter made attempts to return to the good graces of the Spanish state by obtaining clemency and the right to return home.

Historians in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries depicted the Comunero Revolt in 1781 and the 1794 conspiracy as precursors to independence.¹ In the second half of the twentieth century, however, John Leddy Phelan and Anthony McFarlane’s contributions fundamentally shifted depictions of the Comunero Revolt away from notions of independence to

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¹ For an example of a patriotic depiction, see Manuel Briceño, Los comuneros; historia de la insurrección de 1781 (Bogotá: Imprenta de Silvestre y Compañía, 1880).
illuminating the negotiated nature of the Bourbon reforms. Phelan’s work on the 1781 popular revolt reveals that local actors, ranging from commoners to royal officials, contested the Crown’s ability to implement monopolies on tobacco (and other goods) and raise general taxes by turning to negotiation to resolve the crisis. Phelan argues that the Comuneros were neither radical nor aggressive, rather that creoles in the movement pulled from medieval Spanish concepts of community (or vecindad) to justify their calls for the suspension of Bourbon economic and administrative innovations. Anthony McFarlane’s research, on the other hand, situates the Comunero Revolt into a larger framework of popular protest during late eighteenth century Spanish America and uses the rebellion to explore subaltern perspectives of the colonial government. For McFarlane, the Comunero rebellion represented yet “another expression of a tradition of popular actions undertaken in defense of the customary arrangements and practices of local community life.” Both historians’ interest in subaltern participation contributed to an emphasis on the vertical associations constructed that made the revolt possible, thus making the Comunero revolt neither an elite led nor a lower-class dominated movement.

Much like its treatment of the Comunero rebellion, patriotic historiography depicted the 1794 conspiracy as an early attempt to declare independence. The crucial difference, however, relates to the historical actors involved: elites in Santafé. In late 1794, Spanish officials uncovered what they believed to be an insurrectionist plot organized by “those who call

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2 They joined a mid-twentieth century shift in the historiography of colonial Latin America that moved examinations away from state officials to approach late colonial experiences from the bottom-up. For a few examples, see David A. Brading, *Miners and Merchants in Bourbon Mexico, 1763-1810* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971); Mark A. Burkholder, “A Colonial Establishment: Creole Domination of the Audiencia of Lima during the Late Eighteenth Century,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 52 (1972): 1–25.


5 Ibid, 54.
themselves Republican.”⁶ Many of the elites connected to the 1794 conspiracy would, in fact, join the first independence movements between 1811-1816 only to be executed by Spanish forces in a brutal show of suppression. In his panoramic study of New Granada before independence, Anthony McFarlane not only separated the supposed insurrectionary elites from their hagiographic depictions but also concluded “that the audiencia’s vision of an impending revolution was a hallucination by a potent confection of memories of the Comunero rebellion and fears that France was using subversion as an instrument of war.”⁷ Since his intervention, the 1794 conspiracy and related events have largely been left alone by historians.

This chapter seeks to expand on Phelan and McFarlane’s depictions by focusing on the practice of reconciliation in the Spanish Empire during the Age of Revolution. The process of trying to obtain clemency in the empire exposes the lengths creoles were willing to go to avoid permanent removal from their communities. Exploring the process of reconciliation will on the one hand give greater attention to how late colonial communities could move past conflicts either through the spirit of reform or by showing deference to imperial authority. Focusing on forgiveness engages an often-overlooked aspect of the Comunero Revolt and the arrests of 1794; that both conflicts ended with peaceful resolutions and, to a certain extent, pardons for all.⁸ On the other hand, understanding the motives behind either seeking clemency (for creoles) or pardoning (for the Spanish state) allows for an analysis of the practices that grounded late colonial Spanish societies in a period where specters of revolution gnawed at royal officials.

Creoles sought clemency to return home and in doing so, chose not to openly rebel or remain in

⁶ José Manuel Pérez Sarmiento, Causas célebres a los precursores: “Derechos del hombre,” pesquisa de sublevación, pasquines sediciosos; copias fieles y exactas de los originales que se guardan en el Archivo General de Indias (Sevilla), vol. 1 (Bogotá: Imprenta Nacional, 1939), 262–63.
⁸ There were, of course, exceptions to this. They will be discussed below.
exile. The powerful draw of the homeland, or *patria*, underscores creoles’ interest in reestablishing good relations with the Spanish state. Importantly, the draw of *patria* was not linked to nascent ideas of nation, but rather connected to the existing municipal ties and communal identities. Likewise, the Spanish state benefited from these moments of reconciliation in that government officials could demonstrate the state’s benevolence to the forgiven, as well as their families, by allowing exiles to return home.

There is a significant tension, then, in elites’ reactions to accusations of treason and sedition. The most efficient method for the Spanish state to counteract its own corrupt officials came in the form of acknowledging its subjects’ grievances. Elites could utilize petitions to lodge complaints against the local government and clarify the injustice they experienced. Yet for Spanish Americans, Spanish officials were also the source of the injustices that they experienced. Examining how elites dealt with the aftermath of these disturbing events reveals a duality in elites’ experiences in the context of the Bourbon monarchy and the Age of Revolution. As Bourbon reforms sought to increase the power of the royal government and pursue enlightened governance, reformists also had to contend with local reactions. For elites in Spanish America, service done in the name of the Crown offered tremendous social and economic opportunities. For both sides, trying to control the fallout of insurrectionary movements, either real or imagined, became crucial moments in reconstructing the old order. Through the process of petitioning, elites affirmed themselves as imperial subjects and acknowledged the power of the imperial center while they pleaded for the recognition of their perceived privileges. While the royal government rarely removed royal officials accused of abuse, the Crown could correct the injustices through granting clemency. Clemency not only returned the wrong party to good standing, but completely reinforced regalists’ goals of expanding the patriarchal wings of the
royal government. The act of petitioning, much like granting clemency, encouraged cooperation between the state and local actors in the Spanish Atlantic.

Finally, elites’ networks are especially important to understand during these crises as personal experiences with the Spanish state and an individual’s connections throughout the viceroyalty impacted the strategies available to them as they sought resolution. Someone well connected in their community was more likely to catch the ear of those employed by the Spanish state. Spanish Americans utilized their social networks to leverage administrators to make more favorable decisions, even in times of judicial threat. Conversely, someone with social ties that were unwilling to come to their defense had to stand against the Spanish justice process alone.

The Comunero Revolt and the arrests of 1794 tested the strength of these self-fashioned relationships by setting loyalty to the crown against traditional customs and privileges. Creole families navigated these events by relying on their networks to support their efforts and pressure key officials while others with less emboldened ties turned inwards to face royal opposition. Creoles’ petitions were not always successful. Elites arrested in the aftermath of the Comunero Revolt experienced uneven punishments and slow resolutions. On the other hand, the elites arrested in 1794 managed to obtain forgiveness much sooner. Women in particular emerged in these spaces as strong negotiators on behalf of their families. Women organized friends and kin in their social networks to form collective requests for reconciliation. Attempts to claim clemency, let alone regain one’s former status and possessions, required the support of a wide cast of characters from diverse origins, albeit still elite. Petitions failed typically when the author lacked social support, either because they had pushed away their fellow elites or because the Crown had laid charges that might threaten the position of other elite families.
A REBELLION FOR REFORM

The Comunero Revolt did not result in the birth of a Colombian consciousness, nor did the surviving participants lay in wait for another opportunity to seize independence. Rather, the uprising stemmed from the introduction of Bourbon initiatives that included new taxes and the creation of crown-controlled monopolies on tobacco and brandy over the course of one year, 1780. Prior to 1780, Bourbon reformists introduced change slowly and piecemeal. Francisco Silvestre, a peninsular who wrote extensively about the general state of New Granada, celebrated several viceroys for their pragmatic sense of governance and willingness to adopt, or even omit, royal policy according to local interests. Initially, then, elites’ experience with the Bourbon reforms had been neutral overall. While his approval of the loose application of Bourbon policies is not surprising given his close ties to the local elite, Silvestre’s observations point to the interest that elites maintained even after the initial Bourbon reforms arrived. Moreover, the relationship that developed between creole elites and New Granada’s viceroys point to a continuation of Habsburg style of rule, that is, relying on cooperation of the region’s population. The introduction of fiscal reforms, however, represented a breach of that relationship.

The rebellion sought to return tax policy and administrative practices to the status quo. Supported and charged by King Charles III’s new Minister of Indies, José de Gálvez, to increase tax revenue in New Granada, Juan Francisco Gutiérrez de Piñeres, the visitador-general (crown

9 The revolt has been portrayed as an early social revolution as well. See Mario Aguilera Peña, Los Comuneros Guerra Social y Lucha Anticolonial (Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 1985).
10 Anthony McFarlane discusses this relationship in Colombia Before independence, 249-251. See Francisco Silvestre, Descripción del Reyno de Santa Fe de Bogotá, escriba en 1789 por D. Francisco Silvestre, Secretario que fue del Virreinato y antiguo Gobernador de la Provincia de Antioquia (Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 1968): 193-196.
11 Silvestre’s children married into the Álvarez clan and his sons attended the Colegio del Rosario. See Ainara and María, Señores del muy ilustre cabildo, 588-89.
appointed investigator), pursued an aggression reformation of tax collection that would impact nearly every major group in the kingdom. While he initially met resistance in the viceroy, Gutiérrez de Piñeres obtained the administrative power he needed in late 1779. The Crown’s declaration of war against Great Britain in 1779 brought a new sense of urgency to raise money for the war effort. Among the host of changes, Gutiérrez de Piñeres altered policy on the cultivation and sale of tobacco and cotton, the sale of aguardiente, increased the sales tax in some regions by 2%, all of which made the production and consumption of these goods significantly higher. The visitor general felt little need to explain the tax hikes, writing to his superior: “the lower classes are not capable of understanding the justification for royal taxes. All they aspire to is their own self-interest which is absolute and unlimited libertinism.”

Gutiérrez de Piñeres, an outsider from the Peninsula, cared little for local customs and sought only to realize Gálvez’s orders.

As historians have pointed out, elites did not lead reactions to the fiscal changes. Rather the actual revolt saw a multiclass and multiethnic coalition of thousands form in opposition to the tax alterations. The rebellion began in Socorro, a town to the northeast of Santafé that by the mid-eighteenth century had become a modest distributor of trade goods and had a growing agricultural economy. In a region that produced cotton and tobacco, Gutiérrez de Piñeres’ initiatives especially threatened the economic livelihood of Socorro’s inhabitants. Importantly, Socorro and the surrounding regions that joined in the conflict did not boast a powerful elite

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12 Gutiérrez de Piñeres a José de Gálvez, June 3, 1781, AGI, Santa Fe 662. Quoted in Phelan, The People and the King, 33.
13 McFarlane, “Civil Disorders and Popular Protests in Late Colonial New Granada”; Phelan, The People and the King.
class, rather the movement relied on an alliance between “patricians and plebeians” that mustered enough force that could threaten the capital of the viceroyalty.\(^{15}\)

At the same time, the revolt was not an isolated incident as it coincided with several key events in the Atlantic and Hispanic World. Spain’s alliance with the French in 1779 pushed the Atlantic empires of Britain, France, and Spain into a global conflict. While they did not deploy forces to fight alongside the North American rebels, the Spanish Crown’s military took on new burdens by disrupting British sea lines. More importantly, Spanish forces embarked on a campaign to retake Florida, a colony lost to the British after the Seven Years War. Finally, Charles III’s advisors approved of supplying the North American colonists with uniforms, weapons, and ammunitions to fight the war.\(^{16}\) To guard New Granada from a potential British invasion, the viceroy garrisoned 3,000 soldiers at the fortress in the port city of Cartagena. While war raged in the north of New Granada, the Comunero Revolt also occurred while Túpac Amaru led a terrifying uprising in southern Peru to, at first, overturn Spanish Bourbon reforms in the region and later, pursue a revolutionary autonomist project.\(^{17}\) Spanish authorities requested aid from neighboring audiencias, aid that included troops. Already in a strained position, royal authorities in New Granada had little in the way of military forces to repel the local rebellion. At its peak, the uprising numbered some 20,000 people, caused the disruption of colonial order in

\(^{15}\) Phelan, *The People and the King*, 49.


several provinces and threatened the capital itself. Royal officials turned to negotiations to end the revolt and return stability to the viceroyalty.

The end of the Comunero Revolt and its aftermath are a significant moment in understanding the nature of political power and the social considerations that accompanied displays of power in the late colonial period. Royal officials and the rebels utilized negotiation to end the conflict. Despite amassing a huge force in Zipaquirá, a town only a day north of Santafé, the rebels did not press on to the capital nor did they recklessly destroy property along their path. Instead, from their advantageous position, the rebels demanded all the recent Bourbon reforms relating to taxation and monopolies be rescinded in a thirty-four-point treaty called the Capitulations of Zipaquirá. The document is a remarkable display of late colonial ideas regarding the assumed privileges of creoles and castas. Among their list of demands, the rebels called for their legal obligations to align with local customs. On issues like taxation, rebels desired that the wealth of the taxed establish a cap on how much they could be required to pay and that taxpayers be able to determine “when a legitimate need of His Majesty either involving the defense of the faith or the defense of even the smallest part of his dominions.” The rebels’ depiction of a contractual relationship with the Crown reached back into Spain’s medieval past and Spanish scholastics like Francisco Suárez to justify the rejection of taxation that, according to the Capitulations, required the consent of the taxed. The temptation here is to put the revolt alongside contemporary events in the Atlantic and write in the similarities between the rebellion

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18 Inhabitants of Socorro area were not the only ones to partake in the upheaval. For other examples, see Jane M. Loy, “Forgotten Comuneros: The 1781 Revolt in the Llanos of Casanare,” *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 61, no. 2 (1981): 235–57; Phelan puts the number at 20,000 whereas Kuethe and Andrien put the number at 15,000. See Phelan, *The People and the King*, 74–75; Kuethe and Andrien, *The Spanish Atlantic World in the Eighteenth Century*, 2014, 298.

19 The rebels specifically targeted and destroyed royal caches of tobacco and aguardiente.

20 An analysis of the Capitulations is beyond the scope of this chapter, see “The Capitulations of Zipaquirá: Fiscal Aspects,” in Phelan, *The People and the King*, 156–71.

21 Quoted in ibid., 163.
in New Granada and the English tradition of alienable rights that contributed to the North American Revolution. However, Phelan has convincingly shown that hundreds of years of Habsburg governmental practices of compromise had engrained ideas of popular sovereignty rooted in vecindad (community) and not individual liberties. As good vassals, the rebels could resist corrupt agents of the crown and thereby establish the limits of crown authority in New Granada’s political culture.

Crown officials dealt from a weakened position in Santafé as they lacked a strong military force to repulse the rebels. Yet, at the same time, the royal officials that stepped in for Gutiérrez de Piñeres, the zealous visitor general, showed experience in negotiating with disgruntled colonists. By late spring 1781, rebels threatened to assault the capital. However, the interventions of Antonio Caballero y Góngora, the Archbishop of Bogotá, contributed to the peaceful resolution of the massive rebellion. The success of the negotiations that took place over the summer of 1781 lay in the nature of the rebellion itself and in royal officials’ approach to quelling rebellion as acutely aware of external examples of insurrection that had gone wrong. As has been discussed, the Comunero rebellion was reactionary in its objectives with its most assertive political goal being greater local autonomy. Importantly, rebel leaders did not pursue an aggressive campaign against royal authority. Rather, upon reaching Zipaquirá, the massive host opened a dialogue with the cabildo of Santafé and high-ranking officials over how to settle the rebels’ grievances. It did not take long for administrators and members of the cabildo to concede to their demands, especially as it meant the dispersion of the angry mob. But a significant tension underlay the acceptance of the rebellion’s claims: external threats. The North American Revolution and Túpac Amaru’s revolt represented two major rebellions in the Atlantic World that contributed to royal officials’ willingness to capitulate. While news of the North American
Revolution does not appear to be as widespread as the rebellion in Peru, the Archbishop Caballero y Góngora followed the event closely enough to comment that Britain could have ended the rebellion in North America had “it pursued more conciliatory tactics.” Conversely, the massive indigenous revolt appeared more menacing. Phelan’s depiction of the rebellion argues that Túpac Amaru’s revolt helped inspire the rebels to act but overlooks how it factored into officials’ eagerness to peacefully resolve the uprising. In his memorandum sent to the king, Salvador Plata recorded that news and information about the revolt in Peru spread freely across New Granada. Some of the “news” included that Amaru’s forces occupied Cuzco and would continue onto Lima. This never happened. Nevertheless, the obvious rumors contributed to royal officials’ anxieties as much as they may have encouraged popular protest against new taxes. Whether or not the rebels considered assaulting the capital, it was enough that royal officials believed they might.

Not all observers of the conflict agreed with the capitulations. Some of the onlookers viewed the rebellion as a direct challenge to the authority of the monarch, despite the rebels’ rallying cry: “¡viva el rey y muera el mal gobierno!” (long live the key and death to bad government). In his memoirs, Joaquín de Finestrad remarked on the rebels’ cause as none of their concern. Vassals ought to “venerate and blindly obey” the king’s commands, not “examine the justice and the prerogatives of the king.” Finestrad, a friar that served under Caballero y Góngora before the revolt, viewed dissent from the king as a step toward chaos. The revolt

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22 Caballero y Góngora a Gálvez, February 7, 1783, AGI, Santa Fe 663; Phelan, 218.
23 Plata’s memorandum came out of an inquest against one of the Bogotá creoles connected to the Comunero Revolt. See Manuel Lucena Salmoral, ed., El memorial de Don Salvador Plata: Los comuneros y los movimientos antireformistas (Bogotá: Editorial Bolívar, 1982), 95–96, 184.
24 Written in 1789, Finestrad’s El vasallo instruido en el estado del Nuevo Reyno de Granada and its unpublished chapters can easily be found in two locations. See BNC, Rare manuscripts, v. 198; and more recently, see Joaquín de Finestrad, El vasallo instruido en el estado del Nuevo Reino de Granada y en sus respectivas obligaciones., ed. Margarita González (Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2001).
demonstrated the danger of ideas that contested the monarch’s right to absolute rule. On the rebels’ demands for greater autonomy, Finestrad questioned the assumption of self-rule: “There are those with the belief that the King does not govern or that his Ministers rule independently of the Sovereign? Whatever beach we approached we would not find security in the port; infallibly we are shipwrecked in the narrowness of the conjuration…if the government rules independent of the Royal Person, there is no longer an obligation to respect, obey or venerate him.”

Disturbed by the notion of popular sovereignty, Finestrad depicted a future without a king as returning to a Hobbesian state of nature.

Yet, even for someone like Finestrad, the rebels could still be redeemed if only through re-education. After the revolt, Caballero assigned Finestrad to the Socorro region where he would continue to preach and service the locals. Rather than maintain a garrison or a militia, Viceroy Caballero turned to Finestrad and the order of Capuchins to keep the peace. The friars viewed keeping the peace as a struggle, if not a battle, for the minds of the populace. In his memoirs, Finestrad stressed the importance of teaching what it meant to be a good vassal, which meant maintaining an awareness of a vassal’s function. All those under the crown served the monarch and through their service, his vassals enjoyed peace. “Abundance would come through your door, happiness in towns,” Finestrad wrote, if vassals offered “their talents and their labor habitually to the monarchy.” Peace could be restored, and the rebels could return to the fold by remembering their place in society.

Eager to prevent another Tupac Amaru or American Revolution, royal officials favored a strategy that promoted reconciliation with most of the rebels. There is an interesting tension in how the royal government tried to resolve the rebellion. On the one hand, anxieties about the

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25 Ibid., 188–89.
26 Ibid., 130–33.
1781 revolt becoming as disastrous as the other uprisings encouraged royal officials to act. In fact, correspondence between the viceroy, Archbishop Caballero y Góngora, and the captain-general of Venezuela reveals how much stock royal officials put in using negotiation and forgiveness as a tool to suppress rebellion. In 1781, a similar movement protesting increased taxes emerged in western Venezuela. Having successfully negotiated with the Comuneros in New Granada and been named as the new viceroy, Caballero y Góngora wrote to Venezuela’s captain-general about the rebellions, remarking: “Very far from proposing to give you rules that may influence your correct conduct regarding events of this nature, I am firmly persuaded that, guided by the wise rulings of our Court, you will have compared the advantages that can currently be achieved through kindness and sweetness with the inconveniences that could follow from rigor and punishment.”

Even before the conclusion of the Comunero Revolt, the viceroy and the Archbishop Caballero y Góngora had agreed on the merits of pardoning nearly all participants in the revolt. Pardons and opportunities for reconciliation represented crucial aspects of confirming the king’s legitimacy and as agents of the crown, royal officials in Spanish America used pardons to develop a sense of royal benevolence.

On the other hand, there was a notable difference between the Comunero Revolt of 1781 and bloody rebellion in Peru: the involvement of creoles. While creoles joined Túpac Amaru’s revolt, officials in New Granada were far more aware of creole activity in the Comunero uprising. The participation of creoles raised serious questions about the effectiveness of a general pardon. Administrators with successful experience in the Americas generally understood that

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28 This idea is also raised by Victor Uribe-Uran in his study of spousal murder, or parricide. For a fascinating examination of the application of Spanish law in familial cases, see Victor Uribe-Uran, *Fatal Love: Spousal Killers, Law, and Punishment in the Late Colonial Spanish Atlantic* (Stanford University Press, 2015).
slow changes that played to the local tug of war politics would face less resistance. That approach also applied to the aftermath of rebellion as officials sought to move past the tension without further displacing local loyalties. However, creoles that faced the wrath of the Spanish justice system did not receive even treatment. Once most of the rebels returned home in the summer of 1781, Caballero y Góngora and the Audiencia of New Granada began to overturn some the concessions made to the rebels. A new rebel movement started but this time, Spanish authorities intercepted key figures before more support could be mobilized. Creoles from the Socorro region experienced the worst consequences. Upon learning that viceregal authorities did not intend to abide by the capitulations, creole leaders of the revolt tried to rekindle a resistance but to no avail. Instead, royal officials captured, tried, and sentenced the rebel leaders to be drawn and quartered. Following the execution of the ring leaders, Caballero y Góngora ordered that news of the traitors’ outcomes be spread across the Viceroyalty as a warning. Even though they saw the practical benefits of “kindness” and reconciliation, royal officials did not oppose using harsh punishments to deter resistance.

Limited records prevent a clear picture of how the arrested creoles tried to contest their sentences, but their harsh treatment reveals officials’ concerns over creole participation. In his confession of the organization of a second march on Santafé, the creole José Antonio Galán claimed that the community of Mogotes (a small town outside of Socorro) pressured him into leading another movement after it was clear that not all the Capitulations would be followed.29 Creoles that passed letters and shared news acted “in the name of the Community of Mogotes.”30 Much like the massive Comunero Revolt, commoners of Mogotes sought to rekindle resistance

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29 Galán’s testimony is one of the few pieces of evidence from those arrested. For the document along with many other published archival sources related to the revolt, see Briceño, *Los comuneros; historia de la insurrección de 1781*, 167–75.
30 Ibid., 170.
to the royal government’s duplicitous actions. For Spanish investigators, however, the more pressing concern related to establishing the network of creoles connected to the second attempt to rebel. Those eligible for punishment aligned with the creole focus as well as only the ringleaders were sentenced to death and their “rustic, ignorant” lieutenants were condemned to “be taken through the public streets, suffering the penalty of two hundred lashes.”

The execution of several key leaders of the revolt did not reignite the conflict. The royal government’s use of reconciliation doused support for the armed uprising. In addition, the culling of the leaders combined with the Capuchins efforts in pacifying Socorro allowed Caballero y Góngora to reinstate the royal tobacco monopoly in August 1782. At the same time, royal officials proceeded with caution. Only some of the tax increases remained, the visitor general fled New Granada, and even the viceroy resigned. The governor of Cartagena, Juan de Torrezar Díaz Pimienta, replaced the viceroy in November 1781, but died soon after he arrived in Santafé that same year. His replacement was none other than one of the key figures involved in convincing the rebels to disburse, Antonio Caballero y Góngora, the Archbishop of Bogotá. As Viceroy, Caballero y Góngora advanced military reforms to bolster the defenses of New Granada’s interior, including a disciplined militia for the capital.

For the remainder of his tenure as viceroy, Caballero y Góngora struggled with the tension of dealing with the specter of rebellion and, at the same time, trying to foster stronger relationships between elites in the capital and the royal government. The new viceroy certainly succeeded in getting more elites under the viceroyalty’s patronage. As discussed in the previous chapters, Caballero y Góngora and his successors increasingly supported elites’ scientific

31 Ibid, 179.
32 The monopoly remained unchanged until 1850.
pursuits and educational reforms. Supporting local interest in a practical Enlightenment also assisted Caballero y Gónora’s reputation at court as he could claim responsibility for the promulgation of useful activities in the viceroyalty. Supporting local elites boosted royal officials’ prestige.\(^{34}\) Whereas for creole elites, viceroys became useful allies for those interested in social advancement as through viceregal patronage, elites could obtain salaries, funding for their projects, and social advancement opportunities.

This was even true for creole elites that had criminalized parents. For example, José María Lozano had to contend with the label his father, Jorge Miguel Lozano the Marquis de Peralta, received after being arrested in 1785. In the years before the Comunero Revolt, Lozano’s father had already chafed against the colonial government when he refused to pay the taxes associated with his noble title. The Marquis was also a powerful figure in the capital and possibly the richest creole in the viceroyalty. Jorge Miguel Lozano had turned his inheritance into successful commercial activities and started his own clan when he married into a powerful creole family.\(^{35}\) Lozano also pursued administrative positions, serving as regidor (councilman), alcalde ordinario (municipal judge), and alférez real (standard-bearer). Lozano’s public activity gained recognition when Viceroy Pedro Messía de la Cerda, with the approval of Charles III, granted him the honorific title of marquis. Despite his many accomplishments, Jorge Miguel Lozano had links to the Comunero Revolt. The marquis had aided the rebels organizing the transport a leaflet that Phelan has claimed supplied useful language for the Comuneros’ demands.\(^{36}\) Importantly, royal authorities believed Lozano had been involved, which was enough

\(^{34}\) Caballero y Gónora had high hopes for the Botanical Expedition, claiming that the useful knowledge that came out of it could result in products of superior quality than spices from Asia or tea from China. See “Relación del estado del Nuevo Reino de Granada que hace el Arzobispo a su sucesor,” Ch. 6, in Eduardo Posada and Pedro María Ibáñez, Relaciones de mando. Memorias presentadas por los gobernantes del Nuevo Reino de Granada (Bogotá: Imprenta nacional, 1910), 252–55.

\(^{35}\) Ainara and María, Señores del muy ilustre cabildo, 366-382.

\(^{36}\) Phelan, The People and the King, 72–73.
for the marquis to earn their attention. Nevertheless, royal officials took no action against the marquis, the Lozanos had too many connections to elites in the capital.

However, in the aftermath of the Comunero Revolt, the political climate in the capital had changed. As part of his policy to strengthen the interior defense, Caballero y Góngora promoted *peninsulares* to new officer positions over creoles. In response, the marquis petitioned the crown to try to address examples of bad local government that had been kept from the king. In addition, he continued to have abrasive encounters with royal officials after 1781 and repeatedly brought them to court. Coupled with his connection to the rebels in 1780, Lozano had ostracized himself from key royal officials as well as his fellow elites. By 1785, royal officials had labeled Lozano as a disturber of the peace and sent him to Cartagena where he awaited judgement from the Council of the Indies. In 1793, the council pardoned Lozano but by then he had become ill and died that same year. Lozano’s example is demonstrative of the tense relationship between high-ranking royal authorities and local elites. Viceroy Caballero y Góngora sought to move the viceroyalty past the uprising while still implementing some of the fiscal reforms of Charles III. Rebel leaders and the elites that stood by them presented a threat to the stability Caballero hoped to achieve. In the case of Lozano, he had no serious links to the rebellion but the events of the early 1780s had put royal officials on high alert.

Yet there is more to Lozano’s experience. As a prisoner, Jorge Miguel Lozano had become an obstacle in his children’s professional careers. In applications for state-associated positions, applicants were required to address any examples of family members with a criminal past. For José María Lozano, however, he overcame his father’s legacy thanks to a combination of royal officials’ interest in courting creole support and in his willingness to separate himself

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from his father. José María Lozano, the marquis’ eldest son, had in fact been permitted to retain his father’s title and obtain the family estate outside of Bogotá. Despite his social standing as the second marquis de Peralta, José María Lozano had to differentiate himself from his father. In a society that valued lineage and linked merit to lineage, creole elites that wanted to advance socially had to separate themselves from family members that encountered the Spanish justice system. In his application to join the Order of Calatrava, José María Lozano relied on his own merits, emphasizing his military career and even his service during the Comunero Revolt in defense of the capital. To account for his father, Lozano quoted his patron, the viceroy, who claimed “the outstanding luster of his family, the length of service and the haughty conduct of the suitor (very different from that of his father whose brooding has reduced him to a painful arrest) make him worthy of the grace he requests.”

Lozano was granted his request. By targeting Lozano, one of the wealthiest creoles in New Granada, Caballero y Góngora demonstrated the power of the Spanish state. At the same time, those decisions had the potential to ruin families. Creoles had to adapt to these dynamic situations, even if it meant condemning a family member, if they were to keep their status. The delicate balance of asserting royal authority and keeping elites invested in the success of the colonial enterprise underscores the continual dilemma faced by the Spanish Empire in the late eighteenth century.

The Comunero Revolt exposed the fragility of Spanish control over the region as well as the willingness of the populace to show out in force. Although quelled without a major conflict, the uprising scared royal officials. The revolt forged a multi-class and multi-ethnic alliance that, while not interested in egalitarian treatment, nevertheless worked together to protest royal

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policies. Royal officials that rejected the rebels’ behavior carried that suspicion with them into the remaining decades of Spanish rule. Future threats to the security of the viceroyalty would be met with quick and decisive action.

THE FEAR OF REBELLION

In the fall of 1794, another moment of crisis emerged, but this time the perceived danger of the events encouraged royal officials to act before an actual rebellion took place. Spanish officials arrested over twenty people in the city of Santafé de Bogotá upon learning of the publication of *pasquines*, or lampoons, that criticized the Spanish government. The group, comprised mostly of creoles, were found guilty of treason and exiled from the viceroyalty. Much like the incident against Jorge Miguel Lozano, the arrests of 1794 were not based off proof of an actual rebellion, but rather a potential one. Additional rumors that the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen* had been translated into Spanish coupled with the suspects’ knowledge of French and US revolutionary ideas only verified high ranking officials’ fears of the presence of a rebel sect. French Revolutionary ideas were particularly dangerous, not to mention illegal. In December 1789, Charles IV’s prime minister, the Conde de Floridablanca, banned the publication of news relating to France. The Inquisition escalated the situation by banning revolutionary texts, such as Thomas Pain’s *Rights of Man* or work by Montesquieu. Finally, royal officials stood vigil, at least supposedly, over Spanish America and were expected to watch for “seditious propaganda and suspicious Frenchmen.”39 Yet not every creole arrested during

this process wrote a lampoon or knew of the translation. Rather, Spanish investigators linked creoles by their association with one another, constructing a network of suspects that at the very least knew each other and each other’s work.\textsuperscript{40} The group of young men, most of which attended the local colegios, represented the threats of a world that had become more connected by the flow of ideas throughout the Atlantic World.

By the end of the proceedings, over twenty creoles had been arrested and half of those had been sentenced to serve a term in prison in addition to being exiled from New Granada. But very few of those exiled turned to rebellion, let alone revolution. Rather, a vast majority of the persecuted creoles sought to return to their families and careers in New Granada using the tools available to Spanish subjects.\textsuperscript{41} The literature on this period often overlooks creoles’ attempts to return home, instead focusing on the causes of the arrests and their connection to a desire for independence. Emphasizing the links to the revolution and the eventual independence wars of the early 1800s, however, overlooks the actions taken by those arrested in what amounted to nothing more than a scare. Unlike the Comunero Revolt and the 20,000 that rose up in arms, the people arrested in 1794 never turned to violence to express their grievances, neither before nor after the arrests. Instead, the accused clung to the possibility of clemency and a desire to return home.

Understanding the pursuits of the accused reveals a key concept that speaks to the endurance of the Spanish monarchs’ dominion over its American territories at the end of the eighteenth century. While tension in New Granada reduced after the 1781 revolt in part because royal officials increased the patronage of local elites and their academic pursuits, the aftermath

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\textsuperscript{40} A thorough depiction of the academic culture prior to the events of 1794 is beyond the scope of this chapter, for more information see Renán Silva, \textit{Los ilustrados de Nueva Granada, 1760-1808: genealogía de una comunidad de interpretación} (Bogotá: Universidad Eafit: 2002): 33-45, 99-118; and Anthony McFarlane, \textit{Colombia Before Independence}, 272-296.

\textsuperscript{41} This is a bit a simplification, creoles were not the only ones arrested during this process. Several \textit{peninsulares} and one Frenchman were also arrested.
of the 1794 incident is best analyzed by the lengths that the accused went to return to the good graces of the Spanish state. More importantly, the timing of this event speaks to how far removed the question of independence was from the incident. Even for royal officials who carried the fears of 1781 as well as knowledge of the devasting effects of other Atlantic revolutions, the accused were only ever involved in plotting a rebellion. The pursuit of clemency lasted until 1803, five years before Napoleon’s invasion of Iberia would lead to the abdication of the Spanish monarchs and thrust the Iberian Atlantic into chaos. Forgiveness in the Spanish Empire, then, represented a lasting practice between vassal and crown that Spanish subjects could turn to as a viable means to address injustice.

For Spanish subjects, clemency promised a return to community as though no crime had been committed. In the case of the 1794 arrests, clemency also meant regaining lost property, from land to other forms of wealth. Additionally, many of the accused lost their place in the local colegios and governmental posts. While obtaining a pardon did not result in acquiring all that was lost, petitioners nevertheless turned to the Crown to correct the injustices committed against them or their family. The act of forgiveness encouraged creoles and their families to remain loyal to the Spanish monarchs, even when royal officials had turned on them. The knowledge that the Crown and its authorities in the Americas responded to local petitions, even in criminal cases, presented Spanish subjects with a reliable system within the confines of the colonial state.

While clemency did much to encourage creole loyalty, the process of forgiveness also strengthened the presence of the Spanish state in American societies. The very act of petitioning demanded reverence to the Crown and its right to punish. Petitions were sent to the heart of the Spanish Empire where they awaited review from the king’s advisors. Ministers could act without the king’s approval, but some cases required the monarch’s consent. Petitioners crafted their
arguments to acknowledge the legitimacy of actions taken against them while disagreeing the harshness of the punishment. Furthermore, granting petitioners their request provided the Crown with an image of benevolence that curried favor with its subjects across the ocean. Forgiving the accused not only granted petitioners their long-sought-after requests, but also reinforced the place of the Spanish Crown as the ultimate arbiter of justice. Make no mistake, the arrests made between 1794 and 1796 chafed the relationship between creole families and the Spanish government. Spanish officials involved in the arrests treated imprisoned creoles poorly, held them incommunicado, tortured them, and confiscated their property, even if it meant evicting whole families. But importantly, creole’s petitions demonstrate the maintenance of the image of Spanish monarchs as purveyors of justice and mercy. The petitions sent to Spain were addressed to the monarchs and requested that the king correct the misapplication of his justice. Only the monarch could resolve the errors of bad administrators.

Creoles willingness and readiness to turn to acceptable modes of petitioning to correct the injustices committed against them illuminates the endurance of concepts of social privileges tied to social status. Two creoles among the group arrested, José Ángel Manrique y Sanz de Santamaría and Antonio Nariño y Alvarez, depict the varying experiences Spanish subjects had with the petitioning process. While both obtained clemency by 1804, their paths to achieving it varied. Although not one of the authors of the lampoons, Manrique was arrested because of his association with them. According to one of the oidores, Manrique also had shown rebellious tendencies during his participation in an academic debate at the Colegio del Rosario because of his familiarity with French republican ideology. Nariño, on the other hand, was arrested for inciting unrest and translating the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen into

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Spanish. The two were not punished equally either: Manrique was held in Santafé while Nariño exiled to a prison in North Africa. Yet both parties sought the right to clear their name and return to their families.

Obtaining clemency and the right to return home was not an immediate process. To obtain clemency, creoles relied on social and familial networks to get them out of their sentencing. Women played a particularly active role in this process. Mothers and wives wrote letters to Spanish officials following these arrests trying to obtain clemency for their imprisoned loved ones.

THE INCIDENT

On August 19, 1794, a group of creoles posted a set of lampoons in the streets of Bogotá. Among their criticisms was a call for the lowering of taxes and removing monopolies on locally produced goods. Upon learning of these lampoons, Spanish officials launched an investigation which uncovered two other incidents, that the Declaration of the Rights of Man had been translated into Spanish and that another group of creoles desired to start an uprising. To their dismay, high ranking officials discovered a web of young conspirators that were associated with two local colegios, involved in non-university literary meetings known as tertulias, and, most importantly, were active members in the community.43

Responses from those accused were limited as Spanish officials refused contact to those arrested. Arrests were made against those associated with the authors, but to do this, Spanish investigators constructed a network of known associates of the accused authors. Using

43 Some of the arrested were part of the Botanical Expedition, most notably the Director’s nephew, Sinforoso Mutis.
informants, interrogation, and torture, Spanish officials imprisoned even more creoles.\textsuperscript{44} The authors of the lampoons were the easiest to prosecute because the lampoons could be presented as evidence. For the crimes of translating the \textit{Declaration of the Rights of Man} and planning a revolt, however, no hard evidence could be produced. Instead, the accusations against the creoles were based on their familiarity with republicanism. For the investigators, this was a trial of ideas. Those arrested were accused of treason because of their association with “Republican ideas, for their enthusiasm of a Republican Constitution in general, and notably that of Philadelphia, and for the little interest they show in…the advantages of our Court [government].”\textsuperscript{45} Moreover, fear of rebellion had been a primary concern of the viceroys of New Granada after a bloody rebellion in 1781 and the tumult in France had done nothing to alleviate Spanish officials’ concerns. Any signs of a new revolt needed to be extinguished. By February 1796, over half of the accused had been sentenced and exiled from New Granada.\textsuperscript{46}

Royal authorities acted quickly, not daring to risk a similar fallout to that of 1781. For José Ángel Manrique y Sanz de Santamaría, imprisonment was short. Arrested in October 1794, Manrique and nine others remained imprisoned in Santafé for little over a year while the rest of those arrested were exiled from New Granada. The proceedings against Manrique had stripped him of his grant to the Colegio del Rosario and, prior to obtaining clemency in December 1795, left his future within the viceroyalty uncertain. However, with his release, Manrique was provided a path to return to his community. The same cannot be said for Antonio Nariño y Álvarez. Nariño was among the first arrested in late August 1794, spent nearly a year imprisoned

\textsuperscript{44} References to torture can be found in \textit{Causas}: 1:313-315.
\textsuperscript{45} José Manuel Pérez y Sarmiento’s two volume \textit{Causas celebres a los precursores} contains over seventy-eight documents from the Archivo General de Indias pertaining to the proceedings made against the creoles of Bogotá in 1794. This quote comes from the judges’ reflections on why the creoles were arrested, see \textit{Causas}: 371.
\textsuperscript{46} “El Virrey de Santafe al Principio de la Paz,” Bogotá, February 19, 1796, AGI, Estado 56A, no. 2, f. 3. The volume also contains many petitions from the imprisoned, including letters from Luis Gómez and José María Durán.
in Cartagena, and had his property stripped from him and his wife before the Inquisition exiled him to North Africa. Although Nariño escaped upon his arrival in Cádiz, he was imprisoned once again after he found his way back to New Granada in an attempt to obtain clemency. It was not until 1804 that Nariño was released and allowed to return to his family.

Manrique’s and Nariño’s different experiences with the Spanish judicial system can in part be explained by the nature of their crimes. While Nariño had confessed to his translation of the Declaration of the Rights of Man, Manrique had nothing to confess. Spanish officials arrested Manrique because of his friendship with the subversive plotters but proof of the rebellion never emerged. Their crimes, however, do not sufficiently explain the degree to which they were punished nor, for that matter, the Crown’s willingness or even reluctance to grant clemency. The role of creoles’ social networks is crucial to understanding how the accused negotiated their position. An individual’s social ties often made or broke petitions. Petitioners needed the support of their connections to serve as witnesses of their character. Individuals with greater social links could even muster the support of their vast network in times of need.

Manrique came from a wealthy family. His father, Francisco González Manrique, and uncle, Antonio, were regarded as some of the more successful lawyers in New Granada. His mother, María Manuela Santamaría Prieto, held an equally prolific status, serving as the host of a popular tertulia in Santafé as well as the organizer of a large library and curiosity cabinet. Manrique benefited immensely from his family’s connections, obtaining a grant to the same colegio his father attended in 1761, the Colegio del Rosario. Manrique gained his valuable contacts at the colegio by impressing his teachers with his commitment to learning.

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47 He was sentenced to serve his punishment at the presidio de Penon de Vélez de la Gomera, a Spanish prison off the coast of North Africa and about 85 miles from the city of Melilla.
48 Ainara and María, Señores del muy ilustre cabildo, 268-272.
Like Manrique, Nariño came from a successful family, but his success was not as closely linked to his familial network. Nariño profited from his father’s status as a *peninsulare* in addition to his ties to local government, but his father, Vicente Nariño y Vásquez, died in 1788. His mother, Catalina Álvarez del Casal, was the daughter of the founder of the Álvarez clan, a powerful family founded by the successful lawyer of the Audiencia de New Granada, Manuel Bernardo Álvarez, but she too died in 1788. Despite losing both of his parents’ active support, Nariño had become a successful merchant, served in municipal government positions, ran his own tertulia, owned a printing press, and had earned the friendship of Viceroy José Ezpeleta prior to 1794.

But where Nariño had achieved much in the way of building personal wealth, he lacked a network that could aid him in evading punishment. Nariño built a social network based on his commercial contacts, fellow alumni from the Colegio de San Bartolomé, and colleagues in government. Victor Uribe-Uran argues Nariño’s local network of friends and family did not dare risk the wrath of high-ranking officials given the pressure of the serious charges laid against him. After the arrests were made, Nariño’s brother-in-law, José Antonio Ricaurte y Rigueiro, was the first – and last – individual to willingly defend Nariño. Not merely a brother-in-law, Ricuarte had experienced success as an *agent fiscal* and practiced law for thirty years for the audiencia. Defending Nariño, however, proved to be a fatal mistake for Ricaurte as he underestimated the parties invested in the demise of the republican ideas that Nariño emulated in

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49 Vicente Nariño served as *Contador de las cajas* in Bogotá between 1751 until 1771 and as *contador mayor del Tribunal de Cuentas* until 1778. Ainara and María, *Señores del muy ilustre cabildo*, 440.
52 Ricuarte married Doña Mariana Ortega y Mesa, Magdalena Ortega’s sister.
his own defense.\textsuperscript{54} Spanish authorities arrested Ricaurte and sent him to Cartagena where he would remain until his death on May 9, 1804.\textsuperscript{55} Moreover, the actions taken against Nariño and those that aided him discouraged his network from coming to his side. Nariño wrote to eight lawyers after Ricuarte’s imprisonment, but none offered their help. Camilo Torres, a member of Nariño’s \textit{tertulia}, declined citing his “scant knowledge” and having too much work.\textsuperscript{56} Uribe-Uran depicts this moment as an indication of the value that creole elites placed on their professional careers. Torres was not willing to defend Nariño because doing so may have put his prospects in jeopardy. Indeed, lawyers could not practice in the colony without state appointment.\textsuperscript{57} What Uribe-Uran does not emphasize, however, is the social and personal experiences that informed Torres’s and so many others’ decisions during this scare. Even before Ricaurte’s imprisonment, Torres came under pressure when the \textit{peninsulare oidor}, Juan Hernandez de Alba, investigated the Colegio del Rosario for possible connections to the ideas behind the \textit{pasquines}. By 1794, Torres had obtained a position at Rosario as the professor of canonical law, in addition to practicing law. Among Torres’s personal library, Alba discovered books and papers censured by the Inquisition, including Machiavelli, Luther, and Wycliffe. Torres, however, convinced Alba of his ignorance of those works, along with the French language, arguing that he kept the texts “for their prestigious value, much like the Greek poems”

\textsuperscript{54} For the full text of Ricaurte’s defense, see Eduardo Posada and Pedro Maria Ibáñez, \textit{El precursor. Documentos sobre la vida pública y privada del General Antonio Nariño} (Bogotá: Imprenta nacional, 1903), 51-110.
\textsuperscript{55} Ricaurte may have died in prison cell, but his wife and son remained in Bogotá. Ricaurte’s son even obtained a grant to the Colegio del Rosario after his father was arrested, a point that emphasizes the power of reconciliation in Spanish society for the children of traitors. Although Ricaurte made repeated attempts to obtain clemency, all of his petitions were denied. Officially Ricaurte was granted clemency, but the decree was not issued until after his death and so may have been directed toward his family rather than Ricaurte himself. See Thomas Blossom, \textit{Nariño}, 16.
\textsuperscript{56} Quoted in Uribe-Uran, \textit{Honorable Lives: Lawyers, Family, and Politics in Colombia, 1780-1850}, 2000, 42.; For Torres’s response, also see Guillermo Hernández de Alba, \textit{El proceso de Nariño a la luz de documentos inéditos} (Bogotá: Academia de Historia, 1958).
\textsuperscript{57} Uribe-Uran underscores the relationship between the state and lawyers as a key factor in lawyers’ continued loyalty to the Spanish state, see Uribe-Uran, \textit{Honorable Lives: Lawyers, Family, and Politics in Colombia, 1780-1850}, 2000, 43.
he had in his possession.\footnote{Sarmiento, \textit{Causas célebres a los precursores}, 1:444-445.} Alba believed Torres, and proceeded to arrest ten others at the Colegio, including José Angel Manrique. Siding with Nariño would put Torres’s social advancements in jeopardy but more importantly, defending his friend against the \textit{oidores} as well as the Inquisition might have convinced the \textit{oidor} Alba of his guilt after all. Few creole families in Santafé escaped the gaze of the investigators, turning the decision to support an accused into a risky choice for even the most affluent elites.

Even without a lawyer to replace Ricaurte, Nariño might have obtained clemency if more people from his networks petitioned for his release. Others from the accused group secured their release in just under a year, but importantly, each of them had petitions written by members of their networks. Nariño did not receive such attention. Not even Nariño’s uncle, a high-ranking governmental official that had married into one of the most powerful families in New Granada, the Lozano clan, attempted to petition for his nephew’s release.\footnote{Despite his death in 1786, Jorge Miguel Lozano’s family retained a strong presence in the viceroyalty. His two sons achieved much as merchants, government officials, and members of the botanical expedition. Fortunately for Lozano, his family made ties to the other families of New Granada well before his death. Nariño’s uncle, for instance, married Josefa Lozano de Peralta in 1768. See Uribe-Uran, \textit{Honorable Lives: Lawyers, Family, and Politics in Colombia, 1780-1850}, 2000.} Without the help of his network, Nariño could not pressure royal authorities to reconsider his case.

Having his lost their money and property, Nariño and his family were at the mercy of the \textit{oidores} presiding over the case. Nariño and his wife, Magdalena Ortega y Mesa turned to petitioning the highest ranks of Spanish government. Nariño’s letters to the Prime Minister highlighted his father’s exemplary career as an administrator as well as emphasizing his own service to the crown in Bogotá.\footnote{Guillermo Hernández de Alba’s collection of documents contains a range of letters relating to Nariño’s experience, see Alba, \textit{El proceso de Nariño a la luz de documentos inéditos}, 224-275.} On the other hand, Magdalena Ortega’s petitions to the crown criticized the treatment her family had received.\footnote{For two of Magdalena Ortega’s petitions to the crown, see Sarmiento, \textit{Causas célebres a los precursores}.} The incident, she wrote, had led to “the
desolation of a distinguished family, orphaning of their children” and “a woman…deprived of her husband.” Ortega continued, writing that the trial was proof of bad local government, but through no fault of the monarch. “The passion of the judges,” Ortega wrote, who acted as “though the Sovereign himself agreed,” allowed her husband to be condemned even when the main evidence against Nariño, his translation, could not be found. Officials arrested and seized her husband’s property “by virtue of the denouncement alone.” Finally, Ortega questioned the sentence her husband received by revealing the faulty practices of the local government to the king. That her husband printed the Declaration of the Rights of Man without a license was a rather regular occurrence in Bogotá, Ortega claimed, where the local government often requested Nariño to print material without a license. Moreover, the most frequent patron of Nariño’s press was the same man that issued a warrant for his arrest: the Viceroy of New Granada. All were the markings of a “bad prosecution,” Ortega wrote, from the hasty deliberation to the “rigor of the measures” taken against her family. Their petitions, however, never received a response. Instead, the Viceroy and the oidores retained Nariño and his property.

From the moment of his arrest to the day he was released, Nariño struggled with Spanish authorities about the nature of the ideas on trial. Nariño’s defense most often contextualized his actions with his fellow creoles, quoting the work of the fiscal Manuel Blaya who blamed tyrannical monarchs for the low population growth in Europe. Nariño argued his actions were neither strange nor clandestine given that many of his peers read similar works and engaged in comparable dialogue about the nature of government.

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62 Ibid., 1:154.
63 Ibid, line reads “para manifestar la intriga de los delatores: las tachas que estos sufren justamente en sus personas, y malos procedimientos: la seducción de los testigos; la precipitación en lo actuado: el rigor de las providencias: y finalmente la pasión de los Jueces…como fuere de su Soberano Real agrado.”
64 Ibid.
65 Ibid.
66 Sarmiento, Causas célebres a los precursores, 1:79-80.
The oidores prosecuted Nariño with such ferocity, not because of him as an individual, but rather because the presiding judicial authorities viewed the ideas Nariño familiarized himself with as a threat to the kingdom. After listening to Nariño’s claim of their likeness, Blaya brushed off his accusers’ comparisons and instead focused on the danger that Nariño’s “imitation of the French” posed to the security of New Granada.\(^{67}\) According to Blaya, Nariño had shown his true character throughout the defense and done very little to demonstrate how his papers had no other aims than to sow “discord, insubordination, independence, [and] liberty.”\(^{68}\) In translating the *Declaration of the Rights of Man*, Nariño “wanted these inhabitants to become invested in this doctrine” to create an intellectual environment more “accommodating” for Nariño’s rebellious ambitions.\(^{69}\) Having already exiled the authors of the *pasquines*, whose goal had been clearly established by Spanish authorities as to “liberate the Kingdom,” the oidores proceeded with trying Nariño as an insurgent.\(^{70}\)

Unable to muster support, Nariño was exiled from New Granada in 1795. However, where his familial and colegial networks had failed to lessen his sentence, Nariño’s commercial network aided him in evading prison all together. While docked in Cádiz, Nariño escaped and made contact with an associate that provided him the money to flee the Peninsula. Assisting Nariño, a criminal on his way to prison, posed risks for his contacts, but they were removed enough from the events in New Granada to accept possible fallout. Nariño used other contacts to navigate his way through Western Europe, and even met the Spanish American revolutionary Francisco de Miranda along the way. Nariño was offered the chance to join Miranda’s expedition to liberate Venezuela as well as court British support for the invasion, but instead, Nariño chose

\(^{67}\) Oidores response to Nariño’s defense, see ibid., 1:85.
\(^{68}\) Ibid.
\(^{69}\) Ibid., 1:86.
\(^{70}\) For the interviews of two of the authors of the *pasquines*, see AHN, Consejos, 21,249, folios 26-60.
to return home in 1797. Finally in New Granada, Nariño moved cautiously through the viceroyalty, hoping to reunite with his wife and, importantly, obtain clemency from the viceroy.\footnote{Nariño laid out his travels and experiences after being arrested again in 1797. See Eduardo Posada and Pedro María Ibáñez, \textit{El precursor}, 269-275.}

In a meeting set up by Ortega, Nariño met with the archbishop. But the meeting did not go as planned. Under the orders of the new viceroy Pedro Mendinueta, the archbishop promptly arrested Nariño. Mendinueta, however, was more distant from the crimes committed by Nariño than his predecessor. The new viceroy also sought to mend relationships with the elite families of Bogotá, it was Viceroy Mendinueta that recommended the creoles imprisoned in Cádiz be released and allowed to return home. The Council of Indies agreed and in June 1799, granted the creoles in Cádiz their freedom to “continue their studies and professions…as if there was no proceeding against them; that they be debited assets that have been seized…and allowed to return to Santafe or towns of their nature.”\footnote{Sarmiento, \textit{Causas célebres a los precursors}, 1:513-516.} Nariño, however, was seen as too dangerous. He was imprisoned in Santafé where he could be of service to the government.\footnote{Nariño wrote to the viceroy in 1800 desperate for him to understand his position. Nariño claimed he only wanted to “clear his name and return to his wife and family whose suffering had been tied to his own.” See “Representación de D. Antonio Nariño, 6 de febrero, 1800” in Ibid, 1:188-89.} Even though he turned himself in, Nariño could still not be trusted.

If not for the renewed attention he received, Nariño might have died in his cell like his brother-in-law. Fortunately, Nariño’s final year in prison demonstrated the space for reconciliation in the Spanish Empire even for one labeled as a rebel, a traitor, and a danger to the peace. In the early spring of 1803, nearly nine years after his first arrest, Nariño became seriously ill. At first, it was the remarks of a Spanish lawyer that cast Nariño’s condition in a new light. In a letter addressed to Charles IV, Juan Bosmeniel y Fiesco questioned if Nariño had not...
suffered enough, especially after he “was returned to prison” in spite of the Viceroy’s and Archbishop’s promise of “safe passage.”\textsuperscript{74} Aware of Spanish officials’ efforts to stamp out dissent, Bosmeniel argued that harsh punishments had “produced precisely the contrary effect” and only “contributed to fortifying” the resolve of defectors.\textsuperscript{75} For Bosmeniel, Nariño was not exceptional but rather a product of his time. “Like every adult and youth in that period in Europe,” Bosmeniel wrote, “Nariño and his accomplices supported ideas in 1794” that “today they are very distant from.”\textsuperscript{76} Moreover, Bosmeniel questioned why Nariño had been excluded from “reconciliation” when, after all he had endured, “perhaps, deserved it more” than his friends who that king already granted clemency.\textsuperscript{77} It is unclear if Bosmeniel’s passionate letter received a response, but Nariño did not become another forgotten criminal rotting in a cell. The concern displayed by royal officials across the empire questions the narrative that captured revolutionaries had no place in colonial society.

Nariño’s release from prison, however scrutinized the process was, highlights how the ideas Nariño supported continued to haunt Spanish officials. At the same time, concern over Nariño’s welfare drove officials to consider what was in his best interests. The tension between the security of the kingdom and the condition of an individual, a disgraced one at that, underscores the importance of forgiveness and reconciliation in Spanish society even the Age of Revolutions. Continuing in his charge as the presiding judicial official, Juan Hernández de Alba oversaw the review of Nariño’s health assessment. At first, the medico Sebastian José Lopez Ruiz attended to Nariño, concluding that he had “serious damage to his lungs...caused by a

\textsuperscript{74} See “Memorial de Juan Bosmeniel y Fiesco, dirigido a S.M. solicitando, en virtud de especial, encargo y en consideración a las razones que expone, se levante a D. Antonio Nariño y demás presos la dura prisión que sufren y se les desembarguen sus bienes, 1 de junio, 1802, Madrid” in Ibid, 1: 195.

\textsuperscript{75} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{76} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{77} Ibid, 1: 196.
purulent empyema...that has led to continuous coughing, difficulty breathing, and other asthmatic conditions.”

Ruiz’s report was not sufficient, however, as Alba ordered another doctor, Miguel de Isla, to inspect Nariño. Only after consulting the esteemed José Celestino Mutis, the third doctor to examine Nariño’s condition, did Alba believe Nariño was, in fact, dying. Each doctor verified, independent of each other, Nariño’s terminal condition and all recommended that Nariño escape “his sedentary lifestyle” and “the impure air of his cell.” The rigorous process demanded to justify Nariño’s release is a testament to how dangerous royal officials viewed releasing Nariño back into the public, but officials also did not want his death on their hands. After receiving the doctors’ reports, Viceroy Mendinueta wrote to the Prime Minister Manuel Godoy about his predicament. Mendinueta saw two choices before him, keep Nariño imprisoned and uphold Carlos IV’s decree made in December 1800 to keep Nariño in jail or agree to release Nariño. The decision brought the issue of subject front and center, for even though Nariño was a traitor, he also remained a vassal of the king. For Mendinueta, permitting the death of his king’s subjects in this manner was unacceptable and he chose to “take the precautions [necessary] to increase his security.”

In a matter of days, the viceroy released Nariño, bringing an end to his near ten-year experience.

That Nariño obtained clemency was hardly a personal achievement, after all he spent nearly ten years on the run and in prisons. The fact remains, however, that someone considered as dangerous as Nariño could be granted clemency rather than left to die in his prison cell.

Although he was never free of suspicion, Nariño managed to regain much of his lost wealth after

78 Sarmiento, Causas célebres a los precursores, 1:199.
79 Two of the doctors, Ruiz and Mutis, were also intense rivals, having both petitioned the Crown about the utility of producing tea native to New Granada. Both sought to claim the discovery and Ruiz especially tried to discredit Mutis’s findings. For their joint recommendations concerning Nariño, see Ibid, 1:201-202.
80 Ibid, 1: 197. Six months later, Mendinueta received a letter from the Prime Minister approving the course of action he took with Nariño. See “Minuta de Oficio al Virrey de Santa Fe, en respuesta a su oficio, 14 de enero, 1804” AGI, Estado 56A, no. 3.
his recovery.\textsuperscript{81} Globally, the situation had changed significantly. Spain had switched sides, allying with Napoleon Bonaparte. The subversive elements of the French Revolution had been replaced with an emperor who at least used warfare to subdue his enemies. Moreover, Nariño’s familiarity with the ideas that once got him imprisoned no longer held the same significance.

José Angel Manrique, on the other hand, escaped his sentencing in little over a year’s time. Unlike Nariño, Manrique had a wide cast of individuals petition for his release in the immediate months following his arrest. The first among his petitioners was his mother, Manuela Sanz de Santamaría.\textsuperscript{82} Much like Ortega’s letters, Santamaría emphasized her son’s poor health and the suffering that he endured at the hands of “the rigor of the most abusive and violent authority.”\textsuperscript{83} Santamaría also underscored her son’s good and gentle character, writing that “he is no more capable of a project as horrible and criminal as the judges have supposed, than of disrespecting his immediate superior.”\textsuperscript{84} But where Ortega emphasized the struggles of her family, Santamaría claimed to speak for many in the community of Santafé using phrases such as “we in this city” and alluding to others being able to confirm her claims.\textsuperscript{85}

Fortunately for Manrique, his mother’s claims of a community interested in the release of those wrongly accused was true. Several more petitions were written by members of his mother’s tertulia as well as professors from the Colegio del Rosario. Among Manrique’s other petitioners were individuals that both knew and refused to help Nariño during the same period. Joaquín Camacho, a successful lawyer and the professor of public law at the Colegio del Rosario, knew Manrique from the Colegio and wrote of his “laudable conduct, genuine pacifism…and

\textsuperscript{81} In 1809, a new viceroy, Antonio Amar y Borbón, arrested Nariño and two others under suspicion of inciting a rebellion. These arrests coincided with the city of Quito’s declaration of autonomy in the summer of 1809.
\textsuperscript{82} Perez y Sarmiento’s collection of documents from the AGI is again invaluable here. For letters relating to Ángel Manrique’s arrest, see \textit{Causas célebres}, 2:183-200.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid, 185-189.
\textsuperscript{84} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{85} Ibid, 183-189.
obedience to his superiors.” Tomas Tenorio y Carvajal, a professor of canonical law at Rosario and Manrique’s advisor, vouched for his student, admitting that he had encouraged Manrique to study a wide selection of literature “so that he could keep up with all public conclusions pertaining to justice” all under his direction. Finally, the esteemed José Celestino Mutis petitioned for Manrique’s release on the basis that he suffered from epilepsy and required exercise and fresh air to recover. Apparently, the stress of the arrests and the “unhappy circumstances” brought on Manrique’s episodes. Incidentally, all three knew Nariño and none offered their help. As for Manrique, on December 19, 1795, the three oidores that had been charged with investigating the crimes issued a recommendation to the Viceroy for the release of Manrique and five other creoles being held in Bogotá’s prison. Manrique’s mother and the network of friends and family that assisted her son had succeeded in obtaining his release. However, even though the judges recommended that Manrique be freed, his clemency was contingent on his continuance of his education in Spain and not New Granada. The order stated: “For those following a literary career, they have to continue in a Spanish university, where they will be instructed in the most healthy maxims and doctrines of Jurisprudence.” Manrique obliged the order, continued his studies in Madrid, and returned to New Granada where he was appointed the priest of Tocaima.

CONCLUSIONS

86 Ibid, 194.
87 Ibid, 193.
Nariño’s and Manrique’s experiences, however different, are representative of the room for reconciliation in a period so often associated with the antecedents to insurrection and independence. Of the twenty-two arrested between 1794 and 1795, all were granted clemency. More importantly, the majority of those arrested pursued the right to return home throughout their imprisonment and accepted it upon its approval. For those exiled and jailed in Cádiz, returning to New Granada also meant reuniting with family. Others, having lost everything during the process, were granted to right to stay in the Peninsula in addition to bringing their estranged family members to their new home.

While the arrests of 1794 seemed to confirm Spanish officials’ fears of unrest spreading to the Americas, the arrest and exile of the accused traitors did not prevent them from returning to the good graces of Royal officials. Spanish authorities used swift and harsh punishments to prevent the outbreak of a full-blown rebellion, the likes of which had occurred in 1781. Retribution was swift, but it was also uneven. The judges claimed to have uncovered republicans within the viceroyalty that sought to overthrow the colonial order. Yet, after justice had been dealt, the accused were given a chance to return to the fold. While it is unclear to what extent those arrested in 1794 considered other options, the fact remains that many sought to work within the Spanish system of petitioning to receive clemency. For many, returning to New Granada would not mean returning to their old lives, but the act of regaining access to their homes and families proved a powerful motivator for the accused to prove their loyalty. The act of reconciliation enabled Spanish control to endure even while much of the rest of the Atlantic became engulfed in revolution and war.

The different experiences that Manrique and Nariño had with the Spanish judicial system illuminate the impact that creoles’ networks could have on the implementation of punishments.
The host of individuals that rallied to Manrique’s defense included not only his family but his professors from the Colegio del Rosario. Manrique’s experience more closely follows elite strategies of preserving power in colonial society, but we should not underestimate the impact that his networks had on alleviating his sentence. Others arrested during these proceedings came from powerful, well-connected families and remained imprisoned until 1799. Moreover, Manrique was neither the eldest son nor an only child. His family could have just as easily distanced themselves as Nariño’s family did.

Nariño’s familial and colegial networks’ decision to distance themselves from Nariño and his crimes also underscores elite strategies of preservation. But what is notable about the choice not to aid Nariño is that those that defended Manrique and claimed republican ideas were not a threat to the crown’s authority were not willing to do the same for Nariño. In this situation, elites recognized the hard line the state officials had drawn and rather than challenge the treatment of Nariño, they stayed silent. Only when sufficient time had passed from the incident and Nariño’s health had declined did some of the very same individuals that supported Manrique’s release, like José Celestino Mutis, support Nariño’s release. The potential to obtain reconciliation, however, represented a powerful tool to keep creole elites invested in the preservation of the Spanish state. Even for a family that was ignored by Spanish officials as the Nariños, the allure of clemency and returning home was enough to keep an outlaw from turning into a revolutionary.
CHAPTER IV

“VENGEANCE, WAR, AND DEATH”: PATRIOTISM IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE, 1800-1808

In the lead up to 1808 and Napoleon’s invasion that would plunge the Spanish Empire into chaos, there was little to no indication that the Viceroyalty of New Granada would dissolve into warring factions let alone juntas that would seek local autonomy. In fact, during the first years of the new century elite families in and connected to Santafé experienced events that seemed to generate unity. Families that had been separated by the trials against the 1794 conspirators reunited. Those that were once considered traitors returned to New Granada and worked to reestablish themselves in the community. Sinforoso Mutis, a creole from Bucaramanga who was arrested in the 1794 conspiracy, returned to Santafé de Bogotá in 1802 where he rejoined the Botanical Expedition that had remained under the leadership of his uncle, José Celestino Mutis. Within a year, Sinforoso obtained the lead position in a scientific expedition that would last five years and take him across New Granada and eventually to Cuba. If his experiences after receiving a pardon in 1799 were not proof of his ability and the community’s willingness to reintegrate him into colonial society, Sinforoso’s return to Santafé in 1808 solidified his place in respectable circles. With the death of his uncle, Sinforoso was charged with leading the Botanical Expedition until February 1809 when Viceroy Amar y Borbón officially named Sinforoso as the director of the expedition.¹ Reconciliation was an

¹ For a good biography on Sinforoso Mutis, see Jairo Gutiérrez Ramos, Sinforoso Mutis y La Expedición Botánica Del Nuevo Reino de Granada (Fondo FEN Colombia, 1995).
achievable goal even for those associated with sedition in an age where violent revolution threatened Spain’s European and American territories.

While fear of conspiracies and rebellion remained a constant issue for high-ranking Spanish officials, New Granadan elites desired information and news about the events unfolding abroad as well as in New Granada. News about a smallpox epidemic, the wars in Europe, the aftermath of the Haitian Revolution, and the imperial crisis brought by Napoleon’s invasion of the Iberian Peninsula mark some of the major events that the residents of Santafé read about, discussed, and processed. By the turn of the century, elites of the capital had already incorporated reading and discussing published news into their reading circles because of the creation of the Papel Periódico de Santafé de Bogotá, the first newspaper of New Granada which ran from 1791 to 1797 with royal support.² Newspapers from outside of the kingdom circulated in the viceroyalty as well. Major papers from the other parts of the empire, such as Mexico and Lima, found readers in New Granada. Likewise, official Spanish papers, like the Gaceta de Madrid, were sold in all major Spanish American cities. Even papers published in the British Caribbean ended up in New Granada, as did Spanish-language papers published in Britain and France.³

New Granadan newspapers did not create a new network of invested elites, rather the papers provided a new method for existing social networks to share knowledge. Discussing

² Technically, the Gazeta de Santafé preceded the Papel Periódico. Published in 1785 after the earthquake, the Gazeta only has three known issues. The final issue, published in October 1785, depicts the creation of the school for girls, La Enseñanza de Nuestra Señora del Pilar. “Gazeta de Santafé de Bogotá, Capital Del Nuevo Reyno de Granada,” August 31 to October 31, 1785, Biblioteca Luis Ángel Arango (BLAA hereafter), accessed November 3, 2021. https://babel.banrepcultural.org/digital/collection/p17054coll26/id/514.

³ Quoted in Rebecca Earle, “Information and Disinformation in Late Colonial New Granada,” The Americas 54, no. 2 (October 1997): 173-74. Earle’s depiction of the spread of information to the sizable illiterate population of New Granada is tremendously valuable, but also beyond the scope of this chapter. For more on the spread of information among illiterate populations during the colonial period, see Cristina Soriano, Tides of Revolution: Information, Insurgencies, and the Crisis of Colonial Rule in Venezuela (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2018).
news, as well as other written material, became an important part of social gatherings such as the tertulias held in the capital. Elites’ interactions with new sources of print by creating “new sociabilities and new cultural references” that diffused through existing social groups to produce modern forms of sociability. For Renán Silva, the Papel Periódico marked a transformative moment in the kingdom wherein the printing press enabled new ideas to spread that prepared men of letters to replace the Crown in the aftermath of 1808. The authors of the paper addressed reformist ideas concerning New Granada’s economy and society by building arguments based on the power of empirical evidence over a reliance on authority or social position. Importantly, the paper reflected an assumption of a public good that enlightened creoles could contribute to by offering their expertise. Silva’s argument refrains from labeling the ideas shared as contributing to some sort of proto-nationalist movement, rather his work is more interested in understanding the impact that print had in creating a public sphere. Indeed, the Prospectus of the Correo Curioso, the first newspaper to be published in the capital in the 1800s, emphasized a desire to emulate societies like ancient Athens which had relied on “frequent public discussions, in which each one made themselves heard by their cocitizen” or France where “its most brilliant advances” came from “the establishment of the Academy of sciences” and “the force of its public papers.” The editors viewed the paper as a starting point for New Granada, but not in an effort to discourage its readership. Rather, the editors highlighted the press as “one of the most

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5 Renán Silva, La Ilustración en el virreinato de Nueva Granada: estudios de historia cultural (Medellín: Carreta Editores, 2005).
6 This point is especially clear in Renán Silva, Prensa y revolución a finales del siglo XVIII: contribución a un análisis de la formación de la ideología de Independencia nacional (Bogotá: Banco de la República, 1988), 25–51.
useful inventions…in facilitating the circulation of valuable productions to the public.”

Furthermore, the editors wrote of their “desire to show our patriotismo” by “stimulating everyone to communicate with each other their knowledge, y luces (light), contributing everyone for their part to the general instruction in order to improve all in arts and sciences.” Finally, the editors called for contributions to the Correo Curioso, writing that they would “include all papers” even without the name of the author on the only condition that “they be useful and analogous” with the purpose of the journal as well as not criticize the Church, the king, or laws of the land. Editors of Bogotá’s newspapers and its readership formed a public sphere, albeit one limited by its connection to government, the clergy, and of course, the elites that made up the vibrant community invested in improving the viceroyalty.

The Correo Curioso, as with the other newspapers of the capital, reflect their contribution to an imagined community that, importantly, was not dependent on the printing press. Rather, newspapers help reveal the existence of a dynamic community interested in the public that was taking form in the eighteenth century that would then be enhanced with the creation of local

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8 Ibid.
9 Ibid, 2.
10 Authors could not criticize “la religion, al Rey, y a las leyes patrias,” Ibid, 3.
Readers of newspapers discussed not only the content of local papers, but also circulated books and pamphlets. Elite circles conversed about a wide selection of print material in social gatherings that were not limited to tertulias, social gatherings that often straddled the line between public and private in that membership to a tertulia was limited but the physical space where these groups met was not always private. Tertulias were often not secretive either. One such tertulia, the Eutropélica headed by the librarian of the Public Library of Santafé and editor of the Papel Periódico Manuel del Socorro Rodríguez, held sessions in the library with viceregal permission. But the capital also included spaces of sociability that speak to the abundance of opportunities that elites had to converse. Members of this Republic of Letters within New Granada attended or taught at the universities in the capital, conducted research in association with the Astronomical Observatory created and the Botanical Expedition, and worked in the government spaces.

Editors used newspapers to join and expand an existing discourse on improving the public. As my previous chapter has shown, creoles and Spaniards referred to an assumed concern of the public good in private correspondence but framed their right to contribute to the public by asserting their capability to improve a public happiness rooted in Enlightenment ideas of prosperity and useful knowledge. Similar evidence of an assumed concern for the public good can be found in correspondence within university circles, scientific networks, and reports on the status of the viceroyalty. Moreover, the network of interested elites extended beyond the capital. Members of the scientific expeditions came from provinces across the viceroyalty, including Tunja and Popayán. Still other elites, such as José Ignacio de Pombo and his reports to the Consulado of Cartagena on the state of the viceroyalty’s economy as well as his personal

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13 This is related to a discussion found in Renan Silva, “Practicas de lectura, ambitos privados y formacion de un espacio publico moderno” in Guerra and Lempérière, Los espacios públicos en Iberoamérica.
correspondence with members of the Botanical Expedition, demonstrate the reach of the interest in the public good extending to the coastline of the kingdom.\textsuperscript{14}

A nascent imagined community formed through elites’ assertion of their utility in aiding the monarch’s duty to the public, but those claims were largely relegated to private correspondence to royal officials. By the end of the eighteenth century, however, elites’ and intellectuals’ use of newspapers generated an audience that would have been difficult, if not impossible, to construct with private correspondence. Newspapers contributed to the transition as a new method of expressing ideas about how to improve the public that could reach a wider audience both in terms of its content and in building sociability. Readers in different parts of the viceroyalty made new connections allowing for social networks to overlap with intellectual ones. Authors also used newspapers to garner interest in new petitions as was the case in the attempts to create a \textit{Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País} (Economic Society of Friends of the Country) or as it was called in Bogotá, \textit{la Sociedad Patriótica}.\textsuperscript{15} Finally, newspapers in the capital opened the option of subscription to their readership to offset a dependency on royal patronage that for many of the periodicals did not last long. New subscribers would have their names printed at the end of the weekly issue, allowing what Dena Goodman refers to as the “reading public” able “to voice ideological commitment publicly…as an expression of public

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{14} Pombo wrote several reports between 1800 and 1810, including one that explored the causes of contraband trade and methods to end it. See Sergio Elías Ortiz, ed., \textit{Escritos de dos economistas coloniales: Don Antonio de Narváez y La Torre y Don José Ignacio de Pombo}. (Bogotá: Banco de la República, 1965).}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{15} The first mention of the Sociedad in the newspaper can be found in “Número 22, Correo Curioso de Santafé de Bogotá, Martes 14 de Julio de 1801,” BNC, Hemeroteca digital, Prensa del siglo XIX, accessed June 17, 2021, https://catalogoenlinea.bibliotecanacional.gov.co/client/es_ES/search/asset/1207645. While the author of this proposal is unknown, Mutis joined others in the capital as well as from Cartagena to petition for the creation of the Sociedad.}
Readers and subscribers engaged in a process that expanded who could participate in discussions of how to improve the public. While newspapers and other mediums allowed for greater access to a discourse on the public good, the spread of information contended with real limitations. As a whole, New Granadan society had limited access to print material. Moreover, the viceroyalty’s population was mostly illiterate. Unlike other kingdoms in the Spanish Empire, New Granada had few primary schools by the end of the colonial period and historians have found records of low attendance even into the early republican period. The readership of periodicals was furthermore limited by the low number of printing presses in the viceroyalty. However, news and information traveled by rumor and oral communication, both of which could be reflected in correspondence and newspapers.

Despite these restrictions, a vibrant community of readers and participants emerged in New Granada. Creole participation in the consumption and dissemination of knowledge linked the transference of knowledge to social gatherings. Creoles and peninsulares created and shaped groups interested in acquiring more knowledge about external events as well as matters of administration, political economy, science, climate, and education. Studying the exchange of knowledge between the years 1800 and 1808 allows us to explore the shaping of a public sphere.


17 This is most likely one of the many consequences of the Expulsion of the Jesuits in 1767. See Frank Safford, *The Ideal of the Practical: Colombia’s Struggle to Form a Technical Elite* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1976); José Manuel Restrepo, *Historia de la revolución de la República de Colombia en la América Meridional*, ed. Leticia Bernal Villegas, 2 vols. (Antioquia: Universidad de Antioquia, 2009).

18 The extent of the impact of the spread of news, information, and rumors on the development and expansion of a public sphere is well documented. Cristina Soriano has shown the power of rumors and oral information in producing an expansive public sphere that included semiliterate and multiple castas capable of complicating the designs of royal officials. See Soriano, *Tides of Revolution*; and Earle, “Information and Disinformation in Late Colonial New Granada.”
made more robust by state-sponsored periodicals. In addition, newspapers offer a powerful window into understanding the ideas that were possible in the period in question, as well as examining how those ideas changed over time.

It is crucial to understand how ideas changed in the early time period surrounding the reception of the news that the King of Spain was in exile. In 1808, Santafereños went from living under the centuries old Spanish imperial system to trying to make sense of the shock and horror of the king’s absence. Yet, while conflict seemed to ravage the Atlantic world in the first decade of the nineteenth century, elites in the capital of New Granada experienced the wars through the transmission of information. In Bogotá, a range of periodicals emerged between 1800 and 1810 that reported on local and foreign events. Readership of the papers grew out of an existing circulation of published material created as early as 1791 but had been discontinued by the end of the century. The new periodicals, Redactor Americano, likewise enjoyed viceregal patronage and were operated by established creoles in the city. Readership of the print material extended to local reading groups like the tertulias of the capital city (Tertulia Eutropélica, El Buen Gusto, and El Arcano de la Filosifía). While the knowledge stemming from the editorials surely spread beyond these groups, this chapter is concerned with understanding the texture of the ideas that emerged in the publication of news and information for the social circles of creoles and peninsulares in Bogotá. The topics covered in news articles highlights not only the information that contributed to a public discourse but also the content that interested readers.

This chapter explores the first years of the new century leading into the immediate period of the imperial crisis that began in 1808 to illuminate the extent to which creoles challenged the antiguo régimen. Conventional studies of this period highlight the emergence of national identities, and while those works are valuable, this chapter, as previous chapters have, will focus
on the shared experiences of those involved in the crisis to better understand the choices available to these historical actors.

PERIODICALS OF THE NEW CENTURY

Earliest publications in the new century lacked the political events focus that papers published after 1806 would adopt. First published in February 1801, the Correo Curioso engaged topics such as political economy, scientific queries, writing and language, as well as general discussions on the state of the kingdom. Despite the tempered tone of the articles published in the Correo Curioso, readers of the periodical participated in an active transmission of knowledge that highlights the degree to which working with the Crown remained a prominent sentiment. The Crown and its officials in the Americas worked as advocates for the spread of useful knowledge while, at the same time, periodicals facilitated yet another space for elites of Santafé to build a community based on an idea of improving society.

The Correo Curioso provided a new space for elites to socialize through its publication of letters and articles received from its readership. Submissions from readers that related to economic, commercial, or scholarly issues (topics outlined in the periodical’s prospectus) could be published provided they did not criticize the Church, King, or patria.19 The paper frequently printed submitted letters and articles, even allowing one author’s work to take up over a month’s

19 “Número 1, Correo Curioso de Santafé de Bogotá, Erudito, Economico, y Mercantil, Martes 17 de Febrero de 1801.”
worth of issues. All issues in the periodical emphasized their utility as it related to the practicality of its knowledge and usefulness in improving fundamental aspects of the viceroyalty.

The editors and authors of the forty-six issues wrote of the need to improve New Granada. However, calling for the improvement of the viceroyalty could not be done out of malice toward the imperial state. Rather, proposals focused on local conditions that prevented the realization of a prosperous community. For some of the authors, New Granada’s woes could be traced to the region not meeting its economic potential. Yet, this had occurred through no fault of the riches available in the kingdom, but because of a lack of action. In a series of articles published in November, 1801, an anonymous author argued that active commerce could be fomented in the viceroyalty without harming the commerce of Spain. Writing out of “a desire to occupy myself in honor of my Patria,” the author proposed neogranadinos should lean into the region’s wealth of plant species ranging from cocoa, sugar, coffee, quinine and “other medicinal products for external commerce” as well as general foodstuffs for internal commerce. Turning to these products that thrived naturally in the kingdom would be an easy solution and allow the viceroyalty to attain the similar levels of enrichment found in “the rest of America.” But the cultivation of useful crops alone could not bring prosperity to New Granada.

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21 Jorge Tadeo Lozano and his cousin, Luis Eduardo de Azuola edited the periodical.


23 Ibid, 163. The other must have been at least familiar with the Botanical Expedition in the capital, for among the products that could be incorporated into the viceroyalty’s commercial exports was “Té de Bogotá,” a plant species discovered and named by José Celestino Mutis during his own attempts to discover plants viable for exportation.

In their plan to improve the commerce of the viceroyalty, the author pointed to the success of other regions in Spanish America as examples of the possible. The principal model that interested the author resided in Caracas, the neighboring city in the Captaincy of Venezuela which was technically a part of the Viceroyalty of New Granada but mostly left to its own devices. The article claimed Caracas’s chief commercial achievements resulted from the “establishment of the Guipúzcoa Company over forty years ago.”\(^{25}\) Apparently less interested in the fact the company had by 1785 lost its charter, the author argued that the creation of an association that could advocate for local commercial needs was an “easy and accessible method to promote the establishment of our Commerce.”\(^{26}\) The company’s only fault—that it had exclusive privileges to trade—could be improved by creating a Society full of “skillful and intelligent members, motivated by *patriotismo* to join together” and form a “Membership based on merit.” Built on the association of locals who were deserving of their position in the Society and interested in “the general promotion of the Kingdom”, the author’s plan highlights the weight placed on local participation in questions about improving the viceroyalty. Participation meant more than engaging with royal officials about matters of state. As more articles in the *Correo Curioso* show, the importance of participation extended to the ability to build associations among the interested inhabitants of the kingdom.

The content published in the *Correo Curioso* highlights the strength of the scientific community in New Granada as an active readership engaged new ideas that brought authors and readers together. One of the most compelling examples is the exchange between Francisco José de Caldas and José Celestino Mutis. Prior to 1801, Caldas had no interaction with Mutis and

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\(^{26}\) “Número 42, Correo Curioso de Santafé de Bogotá, Martes 29 de Noviembre de 1801,” 166.
minimal connections to the Botanical Expedition of New Granada. Nevertheless, Caldas pursued his own scientific interests by exploring the areas surrounding his homeland of Popayán and building his own scientific circle outside of Bogotá. While he thrived in his small circle, Caldas experienced a tremendous recognition of his abilities after he published some of his research in the *Correo Curioso*. Following the publication of incorrect measurements of the peaks of Guadalupe and Monserrate, Caldas submitted two papers that provided his own height measurements of the mountains along with the method he used to obtain his calculations. Mutis must have read Caldas’s findings for he contacted Caldas within a month of the first publication and gave him new instruments to conduct research. While his research alone did not earn the attention of Mutis, indeed Caldas refers to “the passioned words of his friends,” Caldas’s publication did enough to tip Mutis into action. Caldas, who respected Mutis, was overjoyed that someone such as Mutis who was “known by Europe, praised by Linnaeus” and “had earned the confidence of our august Sovereign” would extend a helping hand to Caldas. The two continued their correspondence for the next year and, in 1802, Mutis invited Caldas to officially join the Botanical Expedition.

While scientific findings and ideas of how to improve the viceroyalty frequented the pages of the *Correo Curioso*, a notable moment arrived with the outbreak of smallpox in 1801.

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27 Francisco José de Caldas, *Cartas de Caldas* (Bogotá: Academia Colombiana de Ciencias Exactas, Físicas y Naturales, 1978), 29-30. Caldas’s visit to Bogotá in 1796 reinvigorated his interest in natural history after he gained access to new texts and purchased new equipment. On his first reading of Joseph Jérôme Lefrançois de Lalande and Étienne Bézout, Caldas later reflected that his inspiration came in defiance of what he believed to be the authors’ declaration: “it was impossible to be an astronomer in America,” 100.


29 Written in August 5, 1801, Caldas’s first letter to Mutis highlights the admiration he had for Mutis’s work and his attempt to gain Mutis’s patronage. Caldas, *Cartas de Caldas*, 98-102.

30 Posada, 98.

31 Ibid.
The editors issued a warning, using the paper to alert the public of the danger of smallpox spreading to the capital “despite the wise precautions taken by el superior Gobierno.”32 The style of the report mimicked elements of previous articles in the paper in that it focused on sharing knowledge, and in this case, that involved disclosing known methods of preventing the spread of the virus. Neogranadinos were familiar with the threat of smallpox. Contemporary residents of Santafé had faced an epidemic in 1782 that, according to Archbishop-Viceroy Caballero y Góngora, hurt the coastal populations, impacted food production to the point of causing scarcity, and killed upwards of 7,000 people in the capital.33 For Caballero y Góngora, the epidemic was God’s way of punishing the kingdom for the sins committed by the Comunero Revolt of 1781.34 The kingdom managed the epidemic, however, with the help of José Celestino Mutis who publicized a method of inoculation in addition to emphasizing the importance of isolating infected populations.35 While his initial reactions included strong overtures of the necessity of good faith, the Archbishop-Viceroy later celebrated the Mutis’s efforts as triumphs of science and public health.36

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34 Quoted in Renán Silva, “El Correo Curioso de Santafé de Bogotá: Formas de sociabilidad y producción de nuevos ideales para la vida social,” CIDSE, Centro de Investigaciones y Documentación Socio-Económica, no. 11 (February 1993): 57.
35 Eduardo Posada and Pedro María Ibáñez, Relaciones de mando, 243.
36 Caballero y Góngora’s initial reaction encouraged the community to follow health recommendations but that those measures remained “purely human, and ineffective at getting the God of wrath and vengeance so merited by the sins and public scandals to change and manifest to us as God of health and mercy” because “there is no council of men that is sufficient enough to relieve the people whom the council of God wants to afflict.” Arzobispo-virrey Antonio Caballero y Góngora, Arzobispo de Santafé: pastoral sobre la epidemia de viruela, 1782, AGN, Sección Colonia, Miscelánea, legajo 39. For the Viceroy’s later reaction, see Posada and Ibáñez, Relaciones de mando: 243-250. Mention of Mutis’s aid can also be found in the same issue of Correo Curioso where smallpox is first mentioned, see “Número 27, Correo Curioso,” 105.
The 1801 article took a similar approach, emphasizing the value of public health measures.\textsuperscript{37} The article included over sixteen recommendations and steps that had been used first in Mexico City during a smallpox outbreak in 1779 and again in Cartagena de Indias because of their good effects. Another warning followed the optimism of the piece, however, by calling attention to people’s tendency to grow complacent, especially since the epidemic had not taken a huge toll on the kingdom.\textsuperscript{38} Readers were encouraged to speak to a doctor and failing that, to review “the wise Tissot” and his text, \textit{Aviso al Pueblo}, “a superior work above all in its class, and you cannot read it without recognizing the author’s love of humanity.”\textsuperscript{39} The emphasis throughout the entire document places personal responsibility, knowledge, and willingness to act on that knowledge as the core method for either preventing or overcoming the ailment. Neither the Church nor the state could save the community, but knowledge and awareness could.

Making public health measures accessible to a wider public built a sense of community. While they emphasized the utility of the knowledge in their articles, the editors linked their act of making knowledge more accessible to servicing the public good. More than any other precaution, the editors encouraged readers to try inoculation to combat smallpox. Even though the utility of inoculation was well known by 1800, it was not widely practiced in New Granada. Moreover, inoculation required individuals trained in the process. Lacking a large population of doctors, New Granada had previously faced epidemics with the support of a wide network of priests. During the 1801 epidemic, however, the viceroyalty seemingly lacked both personnel as well as support from the religious orders to generate any major support for an inoculation

\textsuperscript{37} The article does not discuss faith or the Catholic Church even though New Granada’s low number of doctors made it so priests were relied on to share medical knowledge and aid in caring for the sick.

\textsuperscript{38} The warning reads: “y solo proporcionados a convertir las Viruelas de buenas en malas, y de malas en mortales.” See “Número 27, Correo Curioso de Santafé de Bogotá, Martes 18 de Agosto de 1801,” 108.

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid. The reference must refer to Samuel-Auguste Tissot and his \textit{Avis au peuple sur sa santé}. 
campaign. Instead, the editors used their platform to convince readers of the benefits of inoculation in terms of both public health and in relation to the patria. In an issue published in late August of 1801, the authors celebrated “the most distinguished families” in the capital that now served as “a noble example of humanity to all in the kingdom.” These families had been “animated with healthy ideas of true patriotismo” to intervene against “the sinister influences of people ill-trained in what is actually practiced in the most religious and cultured Courts and Kingdoms” and “show their love of los Pueblos.” The lack of an organized response about the usefulness of inoculation indicated a condition wherein the people were left to choose their own path with no clear sense of how the practice of inoculation had already benefited many nations.

Useful knowledge made available to more people could correct the inadequacies of local officials.

The effectiveness of the periodical in generating a sense of community beyond those interested in science or physiocrat-minded ideas about improving agriculture in New Granada is unclear. By the end of 1801, the Correo Curioso stopped printing. In as early as the October issues, the editors pleaded for their readership to help persuade the public of the paper’s utility or the periodical would be reduced to news concerning sales, jobs, losses, and major discoveries thereby losing its function to publish research and arguments. In December, the editors announced that the Correo would be closing, citing high costs of running the printing press and insufficient subscribers as the main cause. Clearly, the periodical failed to drum up support

41 Ibid, 110.
42 The authors claim the lack of a cohesive campaign to support inoculation as intentional because of apparent doubt in the process and an intent to “discredit such a healthy practice.” Ibid.
43 See “Número 37, Correo Curioso de Santafé de Bogotá, Martes 27 de Octubre de 1801,” 148.
44 Found in the section “Aviso al Público,” see “Número 46, Correo Curioso de Santafé de Bogotá, Martes 29 de Diciembre de 1801,” 183, BNC, Hemeroteca digital, Prensa del siglo XIX, accessed July 1, 2021,
among elite networks. Then again, future periodicals faced similar challenges. Even the first explicitly revolutionary newspaper, the *Diario Político de Santafé de Bogotá*, closed due to poor sales in the capital and non-existent sales in the provinces. Seeing newspapers as having “a fundamental influence in the course of the political downfall of colonial institutions and of the resulting independence from the Spanish crown” overestimates the impact of printing presses that often struggled to keep the doors open. Nevertheless, newspapers provide a valuable window into elite circles and the ideas that they circulated in the viceroyalty. The authors and editors of the newspapers wrote about issues with the objective of winning over more subscribers, so while the articles were provocative, they were also not meant to present issues to the detriment of the paper’s future.

Despite the dearth of publications that followed the closing of the *Correo Curioso*, concern about public opinion of the role of the state in handling moments of crisis prevailed. The smallpox epidemic of 1801 and the ensuing public health concerns that followed brings the notion of public sphere as conceived through private correspondence to the forefront. The oidor Juan Hernández de Alba, one of the oidores that presided over the case against Antonio Nariño in 1794, reflected on the actions taken in the capital to prevent the spread of the virus and hoped they would “allow the public to appreciate the truly paternal cares of the ilustrado government…I have always wished to show my love for the good of the state and a public

https://catalogoenlinea.bibliotecanacional.gov.co/client/es_ES/search/asset/120764/10; This is also depicted in Earle, “Information and Disinformation in Late Colonial New Granada,” 172–73.

45 It is likely that the smallpox epidemic that started in 1801 had spread so much as to threaten the major inland cities of New Granada and cause families to cut all extra expenses. By July, 1802, the epidemic was so prevalent in Bogotá that one Franciscan monk sought permission to enforce inoculation to prevent further spreading. See Medidas preventivas evitar contagio viruela, Bogotá, July, 1802, AGN, Miscelánea, legajo 58, fols. 1146-1150.

46 Sandra M. Angulo Méndez, “Colombian Newspapers of the 19th Century: Treasures and Memory,” in *Newspapers collection management: printed and digital challenges: Proceedings of the International Newspaper Conference, Santiago de Chile, April 3-5, 2007*, ed. Hartmut Walravens (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 180. While I do agree that newspapers had a significant role, their existence was not deterministic. Rather, the periodicals augmented existing discourses in the viceroyalty and are valuable sources to help explore the ideas that circulated.
cause.” The epidemic that began in 1801 and believed to be beatable through proper precautions and medical knowledge shook New Granada. While the outbreak killed fewer people in the capital between 1801 and 1803 than in the previous epidemic of 1783, officials pleaded for the King of Spain to intervene.

Following a deadly wave of smallpox that infected some of the king’s relatives, including the king’s daughter Maria Teresa, Charles IV of Spain pushed for the royal family to be variolated. Encouraged by the attempts to counter the disease, Charles IV supported the expansion of the availability of variolation. However, news of smallpox epidemics in parts of Spanish America followed shortly after Charles IV’s experience with the disease. Colonial officials, including Pedro Mendinueta the Viceroy of New Granada, urged the royal government to act. A new opportunity emerged when the Spanish Court learned of Edward Jenner’s discovery of a smallpox vaccination in England that could inoculate a population without the side effects of variolation after a version of his Inquiry appeared in a Spanish periodical, Semanario de Agricultura y Artes. The king committed to act, but who could be helped and how remained unclear.

Over the course of early 1803, a plan would be formulated with the objective of bringing Jenner’s vaccination method to the entirety of the Spanish Empire in what would amount to the

48 For more on the epidemics of 1783 and 1801-3, see Marcelo Frías Núñez, Enfermedad y sociedad en la crisis colonial del antiguo régimen: Nueva Granada en el tránsito del siglo XVIII al XIX, las epidemias de viruelas (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1992).
49 For more on government officials’ responses, see Documentos del Virrey sobre epidemia viruela, Bogotá, 1802, AGN, Miscelánea, legajo 2, fols. 817–868.
world’s first state-run vaccination campaign. Known as the Royal Philanthropic Vaccine Expedition, the ambitious undertaking organized around the idea of displaying royal paternalism to the American kingdoms. Signed in July 1803, Charles IV issued a decree to form an expedition based on the plans of two doctors, the Guatemalan creole José Flores and the peninsular Francisco Javier de Balmis. Flores’s plan depended on the use of children and the Church. Children would be used to enable the passage of vesicle fluid that contained the ability to immunize the Spanish American population. On the other hand, the expedition needed the support of the Church, both in terms of the communal reach of parish priests and the Church’s extensive familiarity with keeping records. Ultimately, the Council of the Indies selected Balmis to lead the expedition. Balmis was immersed in vaccination techniques, having promoted Jenner’s discovery and recently translated Moreau de la Sarthe’s treatise on vaccination techniques. As the Director of the Vaccine Expedition, Balmis planned for the campaign to deliver free vaccinations to the general public, offer training to local physicians on the correct methods of vaccination, and create regional boards to establish immunization records. Furthermore, the royal treasury would cover all expenses, including local efforts to encourage the population to get vaccinated. At the end of November 1803, the expedition departed La Coruña with a staff of surgeons, nurses, and twenty-two orphaned boys to transport the vaccine “arm-to-arm.”

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The Vaccine Expedition would become a major expenditure on which Bourbon policy makers would stake their efforts to increase goodwill toward the monarchy. At the same time, Balmis’s expedition insisted on bringing their knowledge of the vaccination procedure and asserted their preeminent role in its execution. When the expedition reached Puerto Rico in February 1804, Balmis encountered a vaccination effort organized by a Danish doctor from St. Thomas whose efforts Balmis claimed were ineffectual and led “to confrontations with local authorities.” From there, the expedition split up in 1804 where José Salvany took responsibility for the campaign into the southern colonies. In May 1806, Salvany reached Lima where he learned local doctors had already immunized the city using a vaccine of their own making. The ensuing conflict pitted Salvany’s royally backed program against creole doctors who “promoted an image of themselves as ambitious, expert medical professionals.” The Royal Philanthropic Vaccine Expedition was supposed to display royal benevolence and the superiority of peninsular medical reforms, not encounter subjects dabbling in immunization practices that could pass muster.

While it experienced tension in some regions of the empire, the Vaccine Expedition succeeded in others. In correspondence sent ahead of the voyage to the Archbishop of Santafé, Crown officials encouraged that the “importance of the enterprise, and of the charitable intentions of the King” be made known throughout the kingdom. More specifically, the Minister of Justice expected the archbishop to play a central role in helping the expedition

54 Balmis’s plan included the standardization of methods to keep track of those who had been vaccinated, preserving the vaccine for future generations, and importantly, educating those to be charged with the new responsibilities. To that end, 2,000 copies of Balmis’s translation of Moreau de la Sarthe’s *Traité historique et pratique de la vaccine* were produced and sent along with the expedition to be distributed throughout the empire.
55 Ibid, 69-75. When the doctor’s methods were confirmed, Balmis apparently left for Venezuela without completely setting up the vaccination program in San Juan.
57 José Antonio Caballero Ministro de Gracia y Justicia al Arzobispo de Santafé sobre la formación de la expedición vacuna, San Ildefonso, September 1803, AGN, Historia, legajo 4, fols. 277-278.
succeed, writing that the archbishop should “introduce and preserve the healthy vaccine practice in the towns of your Diocese, exhort the curas, doctrineros, and missionaries to protect the expedition and help the individuals and children…taking advantage of the influence that the Ministers of the Church regularly have on public opinion to dispel any contrary concern” about the benefits of vaccine.\textsuperscript{58} Local religious figures were to have a prominent role in helping the expedition spread the vaccine as well as shape public opinion about the entire operation. The paternal aspects of the vaccination campaign and the state’s need to get local officials involved to convince residents of the colonies of the benefits of immunization reveal the value that Spanish state officials placed on winning over the public.

And it worked. In New Granada, the expedition encountered a populace that welcomed the new medical practices. Salvany reached the viceroyalty in May 1804, where he began administering the vaccine in the coastal cities of Barranquilla. After vaccinating over two thousand people in Cartagena, Salvany wrote “all those residents displayed the greatest happiness, and together with the officials they gave repeated thanks to the Almighty for making them owners of the precious prophylactic, and for freeing them from the devastating disease in that province.”\textsuperscript{59} By December 1804, Salvany reached Santafé and had recorded over 55,000 vaccinations, not including those vaccinated by the doctors and clergy members his team had educated. Demonstrations of gratitude, songs, and sermons endorsed by the Viceroy and prominent members of the city welcomed the arrival of Salvany’s group.\textsuperscript{60} Within a month, the group administered over 2,000 vaccinations having to do very little in the way of persuasion “since the enthusiasm was great that reigned in favor of vaccination and the vaccine’s

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid, 278.
\textsuperscript{59} Quoted in Warren, Medicine and Politics in Colonial Peru, 94.
\textsuperscript{60} Gonzalo Díaz de Yraola, La vuelta al mundo de la expedición de la vacuna (1803-1810), ed. Catherine Mark (Madrid: Editorial CSIC - CSIC Press, 2003), 72-73.
In early 1805, Salvany and his companions departed the capital and continued southwest toward the Viceroyalty of Peru, stopping in the cities of Popayán, Quito, and Cuenca where they experienced more celebrations welcoming the Vaccine Expedition's arrival.

In the years that followed, responses to the Vaccine Expedition highlight the lasting impact that the venture had on New Granada. Just months after Salvany arrived in the capital, Viceroy Amar y Borbón celebrated the successes of the vaccination efforts as a sign of the king’s “tenderness and paternal caution.” Not only had the king’s intervention stopped the immediate threat of smallpox, but the expedition’s establishment of infrastructure would prevent the return of such a devastating virus. The creation of juntas de sanidad was accompanied with new expectations for government officials across the viceroyalty to ensure the continued success of the expedition. Aside from upholding the king’s wishes, the viceroy argued that all of those involved in the vaccine process “will receive a distinguished and appreciable merit” and “they will gain public esteem.” The vaccination campaign became linked to service to the public on behalf of the king.

Unfortunately, the expedition’s experience in New Granada coincided with a dearth of newspapers in the viceroyalty. Nevertheless, new periodicals that emerged in the capital between late 1806 and 1807 revisited the Vaccine Expedition, underscoring the importance the campaign continued to have among the viceroyalty’s reading community as a mark of the monarchy’s benevolence. Several months after its first issue, the Redactor Americano published an article in 1807 documenting the completion of Balmis’s expedition as he had finally returned to Madrid from his “global voyage with the unique goal to bring the Vaccine to every overseas dominion of

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61 Quoted in Warren, Medicine and Politics in Colonial Peru, 98.
62 Virrey José Amar y Borbón, Reglamento para la conservación de la vacuna, Santafé, 1805, Archivo Histórico de Medellín (AHM), Sección Colonia, tomo 70, fols. 155r-168r.
63 Ibid, fol. 167.
the Spanish Monarchy” and “informed His Majesty with the most keenest interest of the principal events of the expedition, showing himself extremely pleased that the results have exceeded the hopes that were conceived at the undertaking.”

The issue recounted the origin of the expedition and depicted Balmis’s mission as king’s way of extending “his charity and the glory of his august name.” Moreover, the article explicitly addressed the memory of the Vaccine Expedition, warning “it is necessary for us to form a very sublime idea about this philanthropic expedition, that we not forget the following reflections. We are living witnesses of the horrible monstrosity caused by smallpox.” The reminder of the virus’s devastation was also a reminder of the role the crown played in rescuing the kingdom from the return of the disease and the fealty the crown was now due. “The discovery of the Vaccine verified in our days, is worthy of eternal memory is the annals of mankind. And who also cannot confess that no other King has immortalized so gloriously their name as Carlos IV, our august Sovereign and very kind Father! All of the world knows how much care and cost the happiness of their people is owed to him in the famous and Royal expedition.”

While the Philanthropic Vaccine Expedition brought royal aid to an empire in need, the editor of the Redactor Americano also noted that the American territories left a lasting

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65 Ibid.

66 The section continues “This is without doubt. How many beautiful people degraded, how many maidens unmarriable, how many wives abandoned by their husbands, and how many people of every sex and conditions entirely rendered useless, are we not seeing the results of this terrible and devastating disease?” The author was concerned that the benefits of vaccine might become lost on those that no longer had “an exact idea of the devastating plague, its monstrous ugliness and the various ailments with which if left the majority of its patients impeded.” See “Número 11, El Redactor Americano Del Nuevo Reyno de Granada, May 4, 1807,” 48.

67 A poem is also included at the end of the issue, it reads: “Seeing the Vaccine Expedition that philanthropy guided around the world, Minerva sang: Carlos without second, your tender love crowns my fortune! Your name now immortal without a doubt with magnificent and joyful care, and despite the raging Hell it will shine as much as the Sun and Moon. Thus she said: and the joyous America, you raised a precious pyramid to the beneficial and sweet Sovereign, engraving on it by your own hand this simple and compendious inscription: To Carlos, the Honor of Being Human.” Ibid 48r.
impression on the doctors in the king’s service. Aside from publishing their medical knowledge about the development of the vaccine in diverse climates, Balmis and his group had explored the regions they passed through and acquired a “considerable collection of exotic plants: has drawn the most precious objects of natural history and collected important data” that would be brought back to the Peninsula. The potential discoveries and knowledge of the Americas excited the editor. Likewise, the editor hoped that Salvany, who was still in Peru in early 1807, “will not spend too much time getting back from Buenos Aires, after they have concluded their work in that Viceroyalty…and will bring the collections and observations that they had been able to acquire in compliance with the recommendations made by the Director, without distracting themselves from the philanthropic Commission.” The peninsular doctors could not help but amass knowledge about the natural world, but the editor’s excitement (and potentially, the readership) also reveals an avid curiosity about the region they inhabited. The Vaccine Expedition traversed a countryside that may not have belonged to the readers of the Redactor Americáno, but the opportunity to learn about what could be found in the region underscores the strong interest in improving society shared among elite circles in the capital. Knowledge of plants and their utility had the potential to translate to economic wealth, a fact that even doctors involved in a task “for the benefit of the human cause” could not ignore.

68 Ibid, 47.
69 Ibid. 47-8.
70 This is related to a rich body of literature that sees naturalist activities, such as classifying and naming natural objects, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as acts of appropriation and control of nature as well as culture. See Mauricio Nieto Olarte, Remedios para el imperio: historia natural y la apropiación del Nuevo Mundo (Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Antropología e Historia, 2000); Daniela Bleichmar, Visible Empire: Botanical Expeditions and Visual Culture in the Hispanic Enlightenment (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).
By mid-1807, the Vaccine Expedition had become a powerful sign of royal paternalism because of the diverse levels of participation that contributed to its success. Aside from the obvious medical benefits of the vaccine, the expedition underscores the functionality of information networks of generating interest and acceptance of the new medical procedure. Although to be clear, the efficacy of the vaccine was not common knowledge. The vaccine emerged in Spanish American discourse as a controversial subject that royal planners attempted to mitigate by convincing local-level officials of the utility of the new medical procedure. The question of vaccinating the Spanish Empire became linked to an emergent public sphere. Winning over the public required officials to engage the masses, the actual vaccination procedures were conducted in town squares, and finally, newspapers brought questions about the vaccine to the public through the use of the printing press.

A FLURRY OF NEWS

Between late 1806 and 1807, Manuel del Socorro Rodríguez secured permission to start El Redactor Americano and El Alternativo del Redactor Americano, two new periodicals that would stay in operation until late 1809, well after news of Napoleon’s invasion of the Iberian Peninsula and the Spanish monarchs’ abdication thrusted the empire into chaos. A third periodical emerged in early 1808, El Semanario del Nuevo Reyno de Granada edited by Francisco José de Caldas, that dedicated its issues to scientific knowledge and economic topics. Aside from the editors, all papers featured contributions from a wide network of creoles in the

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72 Like the Correo Curioso, all three papers featured published lists of subscribers. Subscribers to the papers edited by Rodríguez included the Viceroy, government officials across New Granada, members of the Botanical Expedition, professors at universities in the capital, and more.
The papers offer a valuable tool for exploring several aspects of this critical moment in the viceroyalty’s history. First, the published topics reveal a readership interested in staying current with events in the Atlantic. Compared to the Correo Curioso, Rodríguez’s periodicals dedicated significantly more space to news from neighboring regions, North America, and Europe. Major events depicted in the papers include the fragmentation of Haiti following the assassination of Jean-Jacques Dessalines, the British invasions of Buenos Aires, Miranda’s invasion of Venezuela, Napoleon’s campaign against the Fourth Coalition, and Napoleon’s invasion of the Peninsula. Periodicals in Spanish America learned about these events by receiving newspapers from across the Atlantic World, but editors frequently added their own flare to these reports. On the one hand, the depiction of events aligned with the prospectus of Rodríguez’s papers which sought to report on “those most essential and instructive matters of the military and political state of the day.” On the other hand, authors’ depictions of conflicts in the Atlantic World went beyond reporting on current events. Editors and contributors of the Santafereño newspapers framed the news in reflection of their own society.

Second, the terms used in the newspapers reflects a growing sense of an identity distinct from the Peninsula. Authors started to use the word americano more frequently in reference to white inhabitants of Spanish America. Even the names of the newspapers, The American Editor and The Alternative to the American Editor, underscores the use of the term. While americano had yet to be used as an umbrella term for anyone born in Latin America, between 1807-09 the term nevertheless offered a depiction of identity that took ownership of their continent of

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73 Contributors included Jorge Tadeo Lozano, Eloy Valenzuela, José Manuel Campos, and José Joaquín Camacho.
74 The act of copying newspapers’ reports was a well established practice in Spanish America by the early 1800s, see Soriano, Tides of Revolution, 47–60.
origin. Americano emphasized the difference between the origins of those living in the Americas and functioned as an agile term that could be used to draw attention to Spanish American issues, rather than European ones. In some cases, authors used americano to refute European claims of American degeneracy. In fact, all three papers feature numerous articles that explicitly challenged the idea of the American environment and climate having a debilitating effect on all those that resided in the continent.

For however much the term indicated some sort of crystallization of an identity, americano did not equate to innate desire for independence. Rather, the use of americano joined with terms such as patria which drew on ancient Rome and Cicero’s depictions of patriotism. On patriotism, the editor wrote “Every century and nation has had equal appreciation and esteem for this word patriotism, as it is the image that represents the tender love that individuals of the human species should profess to our patria.” These sentiments combined with existing ideas about improving el público, committing to the common good, and obtaining virtue—linked to the classical sense as well as a moral virtue made achievable by the Catholic Religion—to draw attention to the needs of the local but never to the exclusion of the metropole. These powerful

76 This argument is made in John Charles Chasteen, Americanos: Latin America’s Struggle for Independence (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).
This topic features a prolific body of literature that explores the ways in which creoles wielded their knowledge of American nature to counter arguments of American degeneracy depicted in works by Europeans such as Charles-Marie de La Condamine, Cornelius de Pauw, and the Comte de Buffon. See Antonello Gerbi, The Dispute of the New World: The History of a Polemic, 1750-1900 (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1973); Mauricio Nieto Olarte, Orden natural y orden social: ciencia y política en el Semanario del nuevo rey no de Granada (Bogotá: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2007); Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, Nature, Empire and Nation: Explorations of the History of Science in the Iberian World (Stanford University Press, 2009); Helen Cowie, Conquering Nature in Spain and its Empire, 1750-1850 (Manchester University Press, 2017).
78 Cicero is referenced in “Número 1, El Alternativo Del Redactor Americano, January 27, 1807,” BNC, Hemeroteca digital, Prensa del siglo XIX, accessed January 12, 2022, https://catalogoenlinea.bibliotecanacional.gov.co/client/es_ES/search/asset/158358. The editor continued his depiction of patriotism in proceeding issues, laying out three aspects of patriotism that ought to be considered: the apparent, the political, and the voluntary or predilection.
ideas and notions of identity built off of the real concerns that individuals in Santafé and other parts of the viceroyalty carried with them as they tried to come to terms with an Atlantic World full of threats to the old order.

Two clear dangers emerge from the first year of the periodicals’ publications: Haiti and British led or supported incursions. Earlier references to Haiti highlighted its potential to spread instability, incite race riots and slave insurrections, but by 1807 depictions of the island nation concentrated on its fragility. In an issue published in August 1807, Haiti seemed like a nation on the brink of destruction. The assassination of Dessalines had displayed the island’s “ignorance, pride, ambition, and depravity,” and now those flaws threatened “to do the same thing to Christophe as with Jacques.”79 The editor had no doubt of this outcome and was sure “this would happen in short time.”80 The disorder in Haiti and Henri Christophe’s supposed inevitable demise stemmed from the abolition of monarchy. Although he had taken power, the article depicted Christophe as “deposed of all command and honor, reduced to a state of unhappiness with his Ministers and supporters.” Having abolished the monarchy and “sanctioned the Republic,” the editor predicted that there would be “more terrible things to come.”81 There was no mention of race aside from identifying Dessalines as black. The end of slavery and the devastation of the revolution received no attention either. Instead, Haiti’s turn to republicanism marked the gravest of errors.

79 Jean-Jacques Dessalines fought in the Haitian Revolution and rose through the ranks of leadership eventually leading an independent Haiti. Likewise, Henri Christophe participated in the Haitian Revolution as a leading military figure and remained a prominent leader during the first years of independence before he became King of Haiti in the northern portion of the new nation.
81 Ibid.
The emphasis placed on Haiti’s republican leanings reveals the ways in which elite *americanos* viewed republicanism as a form of government with suspicion, a point made clear by the editor’s reversal on condemning Henri Christophe.\(^8^2\) Proceeding issues that followed Haitian news changed the depiction of Haiti from one that focused on the anarchy of the “civil wars of the Black Empire” to Christophe’s Haitian state in the north. News of the creation of a constitution for the new State of Haiti led by Henri Christophe, the self-proclaimed President and *Generalismo*, shifted its tone to underscore that it “seemed fair to announce the newly established peace of that state.”\(^8^3\) Christophe’s Haiti and the new Constitution of the State of Haiti marked a clear deviation from the republicanism that had so concerned the editors in previous publications. The new constitution established Christophe as an extremely powerful executive that would maintain control over military forces, have the right to declare his own successor, name the members of a State Council, and direct diplomacy with foreign nations. In no way did the governing body of the northern Haitian state resemble a republic other than its use of titles for its political leaders and inhabitants. The transition from a society experimenting with republican government to one that resembled a monarchy shifted depictions to highlight the stability and order that such a method of governing could provide.\(^8^4\) For a society so concerned with acting on behalf of the public good, pursuits that could lead to anarchy and disorder appeared almost criminal.

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\(^8^2\) Depictions of the United States repeats similar themes as coverage of the nation appeared limited to moments of chaos and disorder. Plots associated with Aaron Burr appeared in the paper that demonstrated the weakness of republican governments. This can be contrasted with how editors depicted Napoleon Bonaparte before the Peninsular War. *El Alternativo de Redactor Americano* is replete with articles on “Napoleon the undefeated” or “the marvelous” that celebrate his style of rule. While this would be an interesting comparison, it is beyond the scope of this chapter. See “Número 21, El Redactor Americano Del Nuevo Reyno de Granada, October 4, 1807,” BNC, Hemeroteca digital, Prensa del siglo XIX, accessed January 7, 2022, https://catalogoelinea.bibliotecanacional.gov.co/client/es_ES/search/asset/88783/11.

\(^8^3\) “Número 21, El Redactor Americano Del Nuevo Reyno de Granada, October 4, 1807,” 164.

\(^8^4\) Henri Christophe would in fact declare the northern Haitian state a kingdom in 1811, crowning himself king and establishing an extensive nobility within the Kingdom of Haiti.
The bulk of the newspapers’ coverage followed the French and British acts of war, with the largest threat to the kingdom being Great Britain. Nearly every issue of the *Redactor Americano* between 1807 and early 1808 contains a section that in some way references British involvement in the Spanish Empire. Conversely, *El Alternativo* followed Napoleon’s campaigns and victories against the Fourth Coalition along with the temporary peace that followed the Fourth Coalition’s defeat. Surely, Britain’s place in the newspapers as a looming problem can in part be attributed to Spain’s alliance with Napoleon during the opening years of the Napoleonic Wars, but this does not adequately explain the way concepts of identity were expressed in these periodicals. The conflicts with Britain brought a sense that the Spanish colonies, indeed the empire, was under siege. Reactions to the British invasions elucidate the common use of terms that referenced a love of country that could formulate in opposition to the British, enough at least to produce the slogan “Long live the King, long live *la Patria*, death to the English!”

Hardly limited to reports of distant battles, newspapers covered incursions against the British as flashpoints of resistance that contrasted with the depictions of Haitian republicans. In the summer of 1806, British forces under the command of General William Beresford assaulted the port city of Buenos Aires in what would become the first of two invasions of the Viceroyalty of Río de la Plata. By the end of June, the British expeditionary force had taken the city, seized the treasury from the fleeing viceroy, and suspended the local government. However, a combined force of local veterans, militiamen, and more launched a daring assault against the occupation.

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85 *El Semanario* is excluded here because its contents rarely featured external or internal news and instead focused on scientific topics.
86 The Fourth Coalition consisted of a cooperative effort between the European states of Prussia and Russia as well as Saxony, Sweden, and Great Britain in opposition to Napoleon’s French Empire between 1806 and 1807.
Led by Santiago de Liniers, a French nobleman that had served the Spanish Crown since the 1770s, the Spanish resistance managed to retake the city and obtain Beresford’s surrender on August 14, 1806. In its first issue, the Redactor Americano recounted “the happy restoration of Buenos Aires, with the complete defeat of the English that had crushed and oppressed it.”

Liniers’s success fit into a narrative constructed around the competition of two cultures that could mean an end to a Spanish way of living should the British prevail.

In Bogotá, the city marked the victory in Buenos Aires with two public displays: a celebration as well as a reenactment directed by creole officers. Both events commemorated the triumph over the British as demonstrations of the superiority of Spanish morals and honor. The events drew in wide public support and participation. For the reenactment, attendance was so high that people “could hardly meet in another place.” The viceroy and vireina (viceroy’s wife) attended and paid for the construction of a platform to view the simulation as well as delivered a speech honoring the soldiers in the performance. The vireina went further and publicly offered the troop a large sum of money. The high-ranking officials’ generous offers served as displays of their approval of the commemoration. The result was “magnificent, the number and decency with which [the crowd] turned up to celebrate” demonstrated “this act worthy of their patriotic

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88 “Número 1, El Redactor Americano Del Nuevo Reyno de Granada, December 6, 1806,” 6.

89 This point is about more than prestige or maintaining the reputation of the Catholic King’s forces. Liniers’ published remarks refer to the unifying effect of the conflict which “come to give the most constant testimony of our loyalty and patriotism...Come invincible Cantabrians, intrepid Catalans, valiant Asturians and Galicians, fearsome Castilians, Andalucians and Aragonese; in a word, all that call themselves Spaniards are in fact worth of such a glorious name. Come, and join the hardworking, faithful, and immortal Americano, and the rest of the inhabitants of the land, we challenge this battle hardened enemy army, that are not content with the desolation of the Cities and Countryside of the ancient World, the envious threaten to invade the calm and gentle coasts of our happy America.” Santiago Liniers, September 6, 1806, quoted in “Número 4, El Redactor Americano Del Nuevo Reyno de Granada, January 19, 1807.” 28, BNC, Hemeroteca digital, Prensa del siglo XIX, accessed January 5, 2022, https://catalogoenlinea.bibliotecanacional.gov.co/client/es_ES/search/asset/88783/2
love, and of their enlightened curiosity.” Attendance served as a confirmation of agreement for the content viewed.

The triumph of Buenos Aires, as depicted by the editors, stood as a shining example of what was possible. Its frequent reference in the papers both underscores the glorification of those that fought against the British and reveals the ways in which the authors distinguished between republican governments and notions of *la patria* and patriotism that emphasized a shared identity. The newspapers released articles on the events in Buenos Aires, but they also published letters and declarations written by military commanders like Liniers. Liniers and other officers often tied their actions to displays of loyalty to the crown. In a letter published in January 1807, Liniers wrote “I hope of all my beloved companions in arms, that they give me the glory of being able to exalt at the foot of the Throne of our beloved Sovereign both features of their valor, like their moderation and unquestionable conduct.” The authors of these published letters highlighted their patriotism and imbued their struggle with powerful meaning. For the editors of New Granadan newspapers, these men displayed traits such as “valor, union, fidelity, and heroism,” all of which justified making their examples public because it was they “that would spread the bells and boasts of the Spanish Nation.”

New threats arrived, however, that brought the antagonism with the British to the forefront. Rumors spread of “the phantom Francisco de Miranda” and his attempts to court British support for another invasion of Venezuela. Miranda had tried and failed to invade the

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90 “Número 2, El Redactor Americano Del Nuevo Reyno de Granada, December 19, 1806,” 11–12.
colony in early 1806 with limited British support, mostly because the Prime Minister of Britain, William Pitt, was convinced that an invasion of Buenos Aires would be more successful. British papers reported on the failure, claiming Miranda “was defeated in Córo by the Spanish Governor, at the head of 1,500 Spanish regulars” and that “it appears that this expedition received some assistance from our Government, and if that had been the case, we do not understand how the auxiliaries did not effectively prevent this catastrophe.”

But his presence, and importantly the association of the British, nevertheless loomed in publications. Matters were made worse by the second British invasion of Río de Plata which newspapers described as “the atrocious and wicked conduct of the British Nation.” Another paper condemned the British for their involvement in Buenos Aires, likening their desire for the region to “like all of the gold that they stole in India and other nations, they desire to buy discord in order to give themselves more commerce to match their greed.”

The periodicals’ frequent portrayals of British flaws underscores that the hostility found in the newspapers was not limited by geopolitical conflict or imperial rivalries. Rather, failing to defeat the British would have real implications on the efficiency and quality of American identity and their Spanish roots. The periodical’s attention to British hostilities contributed to an expansion of the notion of patriotism from an interest in improving local conditions to defending against the British nation and what it represented.

Napoleon’s invasion of Spain and the abdication of Ferdinand VII, however, changed everything. Napoleon’s betrayal of the alliance with Spain in 1808 thrust the empire into chaos, a

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93 The editors of the Redactor Americano made only one correction to the republished snippet, writing that the claim of Spanish regulars was “fraudulent news, because those that pushed them back were all paisanos (men from the country), and not as numerous as is said.” See Ibid, 71-72.
point made evident by the ways in which newspapers shifted depictions of the British, the French, and Napoleon. The news caught Spanish American audiences by surprise. Over the course of four months, Spanish Americans learned that the Portuguese Royal Family fled to Brazil to escape the French invasion, Charles IV’s abdication of the Spanish Throne to Ferdinand VII, and finally, Ferdinand VII’s abdication to Napoleon. Relative to other parts of the empire, Santafereños learned of the events late.95 News had to travel across the Atlantic to first reach the port city of Cartagena at which point information was sent up the Magdalena River and had to be transported up 8,000 feet in elevation to reach the capital. In that regard, editors treated news of tumultuous events in the Peninsula with a degree of skepticism. The first issue that relayed the Braganza’s flight to Brazil questioned the purpose of the movement, suggesting that the British escort that accompanied the Royal Family indicated that “such a plan brings gigantic opportunity to the Cabinet of London.”96 Other news was accompanied with preambles such as “if this is true” or “plausible information” pointing to the nature of the news being unprecedented.

In the months following, newspaper authors proceeded with caution as they published pieces of news related to the crisis in the Peninsula. On one hand, newspapers had released months worth of articles that covered Napoleon’s conquests, which often included papers from Europe that emphasized the benefits Bonapartism had brought. It was not uncommon to read pieces that claimed Bonaparte to be a liberator in conqueror’s clothes. Even in September 1808, El Alternativo published a portion of paper that compared Napoleon to other conquerors. The multitude of nations that Napoleon brought under his heel “would have continued in their ancient

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95 News of Ferdinand’s abdication reached Cartagena de Indias in June 1808, but the information was not published in Bogotá until early August.
institutions,” but under his control “the noble and professional Arts, mathematical Sciences, Agriculture, Navigation, and more, none of which can be denied has taken an astonishing increase under the active protection of Bonaparte.” Finally, reports often highlighted Napoleon’s support of Catholicism. In the eyes of Spanish Americans, the Concordat of 1801 righted many of the wrongs of the French Revolution. Despite its favorable tone toward Napoleon, the editor included the piece in the paper thereby demonstrating a willingness to encourage controversy over the invasion.

On the other hand, the actions taken against the Spanish Monarchy, once confirmed, could not be overlooked. Much like the British invasions of Spanish territory, the authors of the Santafé newspapers cast Bonaparte’s actions as a betrayal and evidence of a man who had become too ambitious for it was Napoleon “who, always repeating peace with art, made the most furious war on the world.” More importantly, Napoleon had become the usurper:

The last news that has been received confirms the previous with respect to the valor and loyalty of all the kingdoms of Spain in the just cause to destroy all the enemies of the state, and to return the Throne to its beloved King. It seems that all of the authorities appointed by the usurper Bonaparte that come to govern these provinces, have been repulsed vigorously by the people: and this proves so illustriously the love of the purity of the Religion, enough to immortalize the nobility and heroism of America.

Resisting the French invasion and declaring loyalty to the absent king became a marker of patriotism. On the conflict in the Peninsula, papers reported on the Supreme Junta of Seville’s fight against the French as “the center of where the heroic call of love, loyalty, and patriotism, has been propagated rapidly.” Editors further celebrated the show of resistance by emphasizing


the city of Seville’s historic roots as a center of monarchical power that emanated from its
ancient valor.  

In the colonies, Spanish Americans likewise made declarations of loyalty for Ferdinand VII. Loyalty to the monarchy meant a condemnation of the French invaders but it was never so simple as becoming anti-French. Within the proclamations of continued faith to the monarchy is a tension that outlines a texture of identity that tried to reconcile the supposed enlightened rule of Napoleon, the cruelty of the invasion that thrust the empire into a crisis, existing debates over how to improve society, and most importantly, a desire to maintain morality by upholding the centrality of Catholicism. Among the published letters and declarations of loyalty to Ferdinand are comments that emphasize the ambiguity and anxiety of the historical moments that Spanish Americans found themselves in. Americanos called for the union of all to triumph over the enemies of Spain, “this is the only way for there to be a nation and happiness…People: keep peace, good faith and harmony, and you will not cry any misfortune. Obey your Magistrates, and the common cause will triumph; because in having preference of particular interests, we will all perish outrageously.” Poems and ballads bolstered these declarations, calling for “vengeance, war, and death” to the French who were likened to Nero, Domitian, and the Antichrist.

Yet for all the condemnations directed toward the French invasion, americanos did not offer a black and white depiction of the imperial conflict. Editorial comments play an important role in revealing the tension within political debates. In a note attached to a ballad on the invasion, an editor wrote “we only speak of the bad French…we know that France still has a

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99 A passage reads “If the ancients called it la Huerta de Hercules for its fecundity and strength, why would it not now be la Huerta where valor would bear fruit?” Ibid, 168-169.
great multitude of faithful and Catholic sons, in no way similar to those cruel materialists, a most worthy race of revolutionaries. We also say that their good Emperor cannot be that same Apollyon expressed in chapter 9 of the Apocalypse.” The power of religiosity emerges as a clear component of Spanish Americans’ value system. Moreover, religion and its ability to maintain morality remained a crucial part of how Spanish Americans interpreted the world around them. With the absence of the king, religion became all the more important.

Later articles reveal a growing disillusionment regarding Napoleon and the French army’s actions. As more news about the invasion arrived in the capital of New Granada, editors continued to comment on the implications of the information. News from Spain depicted their struggle against the French as a war for independence, one full of horrors and demanding they defend “their financial and religious lives.” Details of the sacking of Venturada were published in the New Granadan papers. The piece emphasized French atrocities, writing “but where they released all of their fury was in the Temples, they desecrated the Sacraments, tore up the tabernacle, stabbed and violated the images of Jesus Christ, Holy Mary, and other Saints.”

For editors in Bogotá, the information shook their opinion of Bonaparte, “Bonaparte tries to obscure his glories with such an infamous blur, that it will fill him with opprobrium and will make the universe see how much the English have said that is all too true, and that they alone have managed to know him as he is and has been.” Napoleon’s triumphs had once represented the fulfillment of Enlightenment ideas of prosperity that combined with strong institutional

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102 Ibid, 243.
105 “Número 46, El Redactor Americano Del Nuevo Reyno de Granada, October 19, 1808,” 266.
pillars like monarchy and Catholicism. Depictions of the British emphasized quite the opposite as their obsession with commerce led the British government to pursue ignoble actions. Yet, Napoleon’s betrayal of the Spanish alliance and the flow of news that covered French hostilities in Spain contributed to a shifting perception of what it meant to be *americano*. The fight against the French army was a “fight for Religion, for the King, for liberty, and the honor of the *patria*.”

By the end of 1808, news of the Spanish victory at the Battle of Bailén reached Bogotá, bringing a confirmation of the glory of the Spanish Nation but also more stories of the horrors committed against Spain. The stunning triumph of General Castaños over “the best French troops” in Andalucia resulted in the nation having “freed itself from the shameful slavery in which it was going to be left suffering dishonor in as many ways as possible. No one stops believing the just cause for which we fight, the Almighty protects it.” News from other parts of the empire were published alongside that revealed an outcry of support for Ferdinand the adored “visibly destined by Heaven to establish [in us] the empire of reason, of justice, of virtue, and good order.” However, as Spanish forces retook parts of the Peninsula, more information was sent to the colonies that recorded the devastation wrought by the French invaders. Editors of Santafé newspapers published these offenses, reminding its readers of the violence that had been permitted by Napoleon and committed by French aggressors. Loyalty to the cause became linked to patriotism to the Spanish State. That patriotism, at the same time, encouraged the

108 This is from a published speech made by the Marquis of Someruelos on August 8, 1808 in Havana, Cuba. Ibid, 296-300.
improvement of society based on the preservation a Spanish morality that became more defined through conflict.109

CONCLUSIONS

Residents of Santafé navigated an unprecedented moment marked by the loss of the King of Spain and the continued stream of news of French dominance in the Peninsula. As they stumbled through the challenges, creoles and peninsulares drew on existing ideas and concepts about identity, politics, goals of society, and the moral composition of that society to make sense of changes that were occurring. While the years leading up to 1808 do not indicate a movement for independence or growing discontent, the preceding period nevertheless reveals the strength of ideas of loyalty, patriotism, and patria well before the crisis of 1808. A vibrant community involving editors, authors, contributors, and readers engaged in serious questions about the future of the viceroyalty and framed those questions in the language of improving society.

At the same time, the ideas employed and expressed by the community were not static. Early concepts of patriotism were connected to ideas of improving the economic opportunities in the kingdom and managing public health issues. The increase of hostilities across the Spanish Empire, however, linked patriotism to a defense of the values of New Granadan society. But those values were also in a state of flux as neogranadinos confronted the harsh realities of Napoleon’s ambitions against fundamental pillars of Spanish American society. Napoleon’s invasion took the promises of enlightened rule into direct confrontation with monarchy and Spanish religion. Newspapers then emerged as powerful tools to stay informed, to generate

conversation, and to express opinions. Periodicals reflected the ways in which concepts like patriotism could be adapted to new settings. Spanish Americans wrote, selected, and edited pieces that were featured in the papers, making the production of that content an important part of understanding how residents of the capital struggled with the imperial crisis of 1808.

The immediacy of the tumultuous events in the Atlantic World threatened to shake everything that the residents of the capital knew. Elites in Santafé turned their efforts toward participating in increasingly public discussions over how to understand the events. The continued loyalty for the absent king and support for the war effort in the Peninsula underscore the fundamental place that monarchy and religion had within Spanish American views of their own society. Likewise, ideas of improving society, of patriotism, and the patria were essential parts of the Santafé community. Spanish Americans wielded a worldview that reconciled the antiguo régimen with Enlightenment notions of utility, useful knowledge, and prosperity. Yet, as will be explored in the next chapter, the continued absence of the king and emergence of juntas based on notions of popular sovereignty would challenge a foundational pillar of New Granadan society.
CHAPTER V

AN EMPIRE REIMAINGED: THE 1809 ELECTIONS IN NEW GRANADA

On October 15, 1809, Viceroy Antonio José Amar y Borbón informed the Real Audiencia of Santafé of a plot to overthrow the viceregal government and “to build an independent junta.”¹ After receiving additional testimony from a local cura, the Audiencia ordered the viceroy to arrest the conspirators. The gathered information identified Andrés Rosillo, the canónigo magistral of the Santa Iglesia Cathedral in Santafé, Luis Caicedo, alcalde ordinario (magistrate), Pedro Groot, royal treasurer, Sinforoso Mutis, the Director of the Botanical Expedition, and Antonio Nariño as the leaders of the group.² Yet in his accusation, the viceroy admitted that “this whole project seems somewhat complicated, remote and perhaps impossible, there being no news from those places that indicate considerable movement of people.”³ Nevertheless, by December 25, 1809, Rosillo and the others tried in the process had been transferred to various prisons across the New Granada to await transportation to the Spanish presidios of North Africa. The viceroy justified his actions citing “the great interest it involves,” which included the rumor that the movement hoped to recruit at least a thousand men from neighboring villages and to win over additional support by offering freedom to any slave that

² Others named included the oidor of Quito Baltazar Miñano, Miguel Tadeo Gomez, regidor (councilman) José Acevedo Gomez, and lawyers Ignacio Herrera and Joaquín Camacho.
joined. The government’s quick action against the conspirators underscored the tension and anxiety in colonial spaces as the Spanish War for Independence continued to rage. The viceroy’s move against the plotters occurred despite the lack of evidence. Having ordered the destruction of the junta created in Quito only two months before the October arrests, Viceroy Amar and other high-ranking officials sought to prevent chaos from spreading throughout the viceroyalty.

Yet the incident reveals as much ambiguity as it does anxiety, highlighting the uncertainty of both the judicial officials and those arrested. Of all those implicated in the conspiracy, only three were imprisoned: Baltazar Miñano, Antonio Nariño, and Andrés Rosillo. Miñano’s and Nariño’s association with sites of insurrection compelled the viceroy to take extra precautions. While he had not participated in the creation of the junta in Quito, Miñano voiced his approval of approaching Quiteños diplomatically rather than using force to suppress the movement. For Nariño, the events of 1794 came back to haunt him once again. In his testimony against Nariño, Pedro Salgar expressed that while waiting in Andrés Rosillo’s office he “began to suspect something” upon seeing Nariño with Sinforoso Mutis which he “based on the suspicion since the year 1794 that he was swayed by public events.” Rather than depict the ideas he thought were dangerous, Salgar’s statement portrayed Nariño as a radical that could get caught up in whatever fervor dominated the public sphere. In this case, Salgar most likely

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4 This information comes from some of the acquired testimony of the cura Pedro Salgar, see Andrés Rodriguez, “En cumplimiento de lo mandado por el Real Acuerdo,” Bogotá, October 27, 1809, AGN, Historia, legajo 5, fols. 327-29.
5 For more on the conflict, see Charles Esdaile, The Peninsular War: A New History (New York: St. Martin’s Publishing Group, 2002).
6 The others indicated in Viceroy Amar’s original accusation were not charged or there are few records indicating their experience. One reference claims Pedro Groot was to be put to death but got out of his sentence by saying he was sick and mentally disturbed, making any attempt to receive a speedy confession impossible. See Eduardo Ruiz Martínez, Los hombres del veinte de julio (Bogotá: Fundación Universidad Central, 1996), 361-63.
7 For Pedro Salgar’s full testimony, see Salgar, “Declaración de Pedro Salgar,” Bogotá, November 2, 1809, AGN, Historia, legajo 5, fols. 328-331.
referred to the events in Quito which had resulted in devastating responses from the viceroyalties of New Granada and Peru. Nariño’s arrest reveals less about active insurgency and more about royalists’ fears.

For Rosillo, the court obtained even more testimony that revealed Rosillo sought alternatives to the *antiguo regimen* as a reaction to the events in the Peninsula. The witness claimed Rosillo approached the vicereine and stated “Ferdinand VII will have already died by steel, by poison or by rope; It is necessary to take sides here: Your Excellency and the Viceroy are loved and loved extremely; the people or the kingdom adore them and would proclaim his excellence as king…that he had letters from many who awaited the event.” Although framed by royal officials as a pursuit of an independent *junta*, Rosillo’s plot addressed the possibility of Ferdinand VII never returning to the throne. Further testimony uncovered Rosillo’s thoughts “on the tyranny of the Spaniards in America” that overshadowed his plans’ link to the unpredictability of events in Spain.8 The court, more interested in a quick resolution than a thorough investigation, condemned Rosillo.

While the extent of the conspiracy is unclear, the evidence produced against Rosillo illuminates the existence of revolutionary plans for the viceroyalty that question depictions of revolution as leading to republican forms of government. The incident marks one of many moments of tension between the colonial government and *americanos* that exacerbated an already tense atmosphere. This chapter builds off a historiography that has challenged the teleology of seeing revolution as only linked to the creation of republics.9 This chapter’s two

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8 Real Acuerdo, Bogotá, October 20, 1809, AGN, Historia, legajo 5, fols. 335-39.
9 Adelman’s research on the role of sovereignty emphasizes the need to explore “the variety of routes, including a host of ‘might-have-beens,’” to the narrative of the age of revolutions. For more see, Jeremy Adelman, “An Age of Imperial Revolutions,” *The American Historical Review* 113, no. 2 (2008): 319–40; This is also not meant to disparage works that emphasize republicanism in Latin America’s nation building process. These works have been important in overturning a historiography focused on national narratives. See Armando Martínez Garnica and Inés Quintero Montiel, “La formación de los Estados republicanos en la Nueva Granada y Venezuela,” *Ayer* 74, no. La
main objectives are to first explore the tensions, textures, and difficulties in the year of 1809. The limited scope is intentional to examine the ways in which creoles and *peninsulares* interacted with the *Junta Central*. Conventional depictions of the *Junta Central* emphasize the failures of the provisional government or treat it as transitionary. Instead, this chapter highlights the experimentation that occurred in 1809 during which a representative government emerged in a transatlantic empire that, at least for Spanish Americans, promised incredible reform. Considering the *Junta Central* as a revolutionary body, and by extension those in Spanish America that participated in the process, furthers an understanding of revolution as removed from independence. More importantly, it emphasizes that monarchical reform projects can be revolutionary projects.

The second is to maintain that the decisions made by historical actors were rarely part of a master plan that calculated precise movements, necessary alliances, and strategic interventions to fulfill a fixed goal for the future. This chapter takes creole participation in the experimental


10 The Junta Central received little more than a page in Jay Kinsbruner, *Independence in Spanish America: Civil Wars, Revolutions, and Underdevelopment* (University of New Mexico Press, 2000); For an example of the Junta Central as transitional, see Annick Lempérière, “Revolución, guerra civil, guerra de independencia en el mundo hispánico 1808-1825,” *Ayer*, no. 55 (2004): 21–22 Lempérière argues the Junta Central "encountered many difficulties trying to get acknowledgement of its supreme authority. ; Gutiérrez Ardila’s exceptional contribution emphasizes the failure of the Junta Central in its diplomatic dealings, arguing “For the first time since the Conquest, a royal order was not enough for the sovereign to receive homage.” See “El fracaso de las negociaciones imperiales,” in Gutiérrez Ardila, *Un nuevo reino: geografía política, pactismo y diplomacia durante el interregno en la Nueva Granada* (1808-1816).


government of the *Junta Central* as serious endeavors. Under the *Junta Central*, the empire could be reimagined as it provided *americanos* with direct access to the governing body. And although the *Junta Central* dissolved itself in January 1810 due to mounting French victories, creole participation in the 1809 experiment reveals that *americanos* possessed a wide array of reformist agendas. It is far more useful to analyze historical actors in general, but those involved in revolutionary times especially, as possessing imaginations for the future but never quite knowing how to get there. Experimentation and available choices expose the obscurity, the confusion, as well as the process of generating change to allow for what Isidro Vanegas argues is an understanding of revolution in New Granada as revolutions.\(^{13}\) Vanegas’ argument is even more powerful when examining the proposals made in 1809 while *neogranadinos* had sworn loyalty to the *Junta Central*.

Spanish Americans’ interactions with the *Junta Central*, especially as the *Junta* turned toward representative government, reveal creole interest in reforming colonial society through the newfound authority of the *Junta* of Seville. Creole interest in reform rather than framing their actions explicitly as revolutions highlights the anxiety of Spanish Americans elites to commit to changes they believed could promote anarchy. *Neogranadinos* were explicit about what they viewed as the flaws of the French Revolution, felt threatened by the implications of the Haitian Revolution, and after Napoleon betrayed the Catholic Monarchs, feared the rise of despots.\(^{14}\)

\(^{13}\) Vanegas’ argument depicts revolutions to highlight the multiple parts of society that became a part of the New Granadan Revolution. Importantly, these transformations did not occur all at once. See Vanegas, “Revolución Neogranadina,” 30–31; For a fascinating depiction of revolutions as challenging vertical understandings of power (provincial, viceregal, continental, and imperial), see Gutiérrez Ardila, *Un nuevo reino: geografía política, pactismo y diplomacia durante el interregno en la Nueva Granada (1808-1816)*.

\(^{14}\) In an edited volume, Keith Michael Baker and Dan Edelstein make the case that revolutionaries were “extremely self-conscious of (and often highly knowledgeable about) how previous revolutions unfolded.” This is a useful approach to understanding historical actors’ hesitancy to engage in revolutionary acts. See “Introduction,” in Keith Michael Baker and Dan Edelstein, eds., *Scripting Revolution: A Historical Approach to the Comparative Study of Revolutions* (Stanford University Press, 2015), 1-21; One of earliest newspapers in New Granada extensively covered the French Revolution over its seventy-five issues. See *Papel Periódico de la Ciudad de Santafé de Bogotá*, 164
Creoles pursuit of reform within the framework of empire underpinned the uncertainties associated with independent government. This point becomes more apparent between 1810 and 1811 as creoles grew more concerned about the threat of foreign invasion in addition to the specters of revolution.

New Granadan elites had no clear path through the imperial crisis. As recent scholarship has shown, creoles, peninsulares, people of African descent, and indigenous communities all offered competing visions of a new relationship between Spain and the American domains during the imperial crisis. While ideas of reform varied in scope and by locality, all examples demonstrate the ways in which the imperial crisis created a contestable space that actors stepped into without necessarily having long-term plans. Yet the contestable nature of the historical moment should not be framed as a process of independence: such a political teleology overrides how revolutionaries viewed their own actions and, importantly, overlooks the uncertainty of the period. Intimidating concerns weighed heavily against historical actors. While complete independence may have been on their minds, historical actors considered a spectrum of options.


Recent works have differentiated creoles political activities during the Wars for Independence, see Gutiérrez Ardila, Un nuevo reino: geografía política, pactismo y diplomacia durante el interregno en la Nueva Granada (1808-1816); Mónica Ricketts, Who Should Rule?: Men of Arms, the Republic of Letters, and the Fall of the Spanish Empire (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017); For people of African descent, see Lasso, Myths of Harmony; Soriano, Tides of Revolution; Olga Gonzalez-Silen, “Judging Freedom and Loyalty in Venezuela during the War of Spanish Independence,” Hispanic American Historical Review 102, no. 1 (February 1, 2022): 31–59; Echeverri, Indian and Slave Royalists in the Age of Revolution Echeverri’s critical work explores the contestable nature of royalism by examining indigenous and slave royalists’ negotiations with the royal government.
that underscore the need to break away from understanding independence as the immediate alternative to failing imperial structures.

REVOLUTIONS OF AUTONOMY

From 1808 to the fall of the Junta Central in early 1810, Spaniards and Spanish Americans slowly experimented with new forms of political representation. Viewing the 1808 to 1810 period in this way allows for a closer examination of the divergences and alternate paths that americanos expressed and agrees with recent scholarship that prods at the early reactions to the imperial crisis. The innovations and experimentations that took place under the Junta Central reveals a vibrant attempt to reimagine the Spanish Empire. While historians have given the 1808 to 1810 period more attention, only recent works have examined the Junta Central and the new government that emerged under its direction as more than a transitory moment. Instead, historians have given far more attention to the convening of the Cortes de Cádiz in 1810 and the creation of the Constitution of 1812. Without disparaging those contributions, the focus placed on the Constitution of 1812 and early liberalism in the Hispanic Atlantic overshadows a clear moment in 1809 where the majority of the empire participated in an experiment that blended Hispanic tradition with representative government.

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The establishment of a representative government in Spain and then the decision to open the Spanish government to representatives from Spanish America marked a significant revolution in the Hispanic World. Francois-Xavier Guerra’s pivotal work referred to the period as “without doubt the key epoch of the Hispanic revolutions.” This point is even more apparent when Spanish American participation is taken into account. By the end of 1809, nearly every viceroyalty and captaincy general had elected a representative to join the Junta Central in Spain. Moreover, cabildos across the Spanish American dominions drafted instrucciones to accompany their representative to the new transatlantic government. The instrucciones from New Granada reveal not only the wide use of liberalism in the viceroyalty before the Cortes de Cádiz, but also the ways in which neogranadinos viewed the Junta Central as a revolutionary opportunity to bring further reform.

The imperial crisis brought forth serious questions about reform, especially when, in January 1809, the Junta Central called for representatives from the New World to join the governing body in Spain. Having dealt a significant blow to the French invasion at the Battle of Bailén, the provisional Spanish government pursued an opportunity to remake the empire in the hopes of keeping it together. The resulting action led to the formation of the Junta Suprema Central y Gubernativa de España e Indias (Supreme Central Governing Board of Spain and the

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19 Guerra, Modernidad e independencias, 115.
20 Ángel Rafael Almarza, “Las elecciones de 1809 en la provincia de Venezuela para la junta central gubernativa de España e Indias,” in Jaque a la Corona. La cuestión política en las independencias Iberoamericanas, ed. Juan Ortiz and Ivana Frasquet (Castelló de la Plana: Universitat Jaume I, 2007), 79–102.
21 Almarza and Martínez Garnica published a fantastic collection of the instrucciones of New Granada and Venezuela. See Ángel Rafael Almarza and Armando Martínez Garnica, eds., Instrucciones para los diputados del Nuevo Reino de Granada y Venezuela ante la junta central gubernativa de España y las Indias (Bucaramanga: Universidad Industrial de Santander, 2008).
22 By January 1809, the Junta Central had already obtained declarations of loyalty of the American territories. The Junta dispatched agents in mid-1808 to not only secure political support, but money for the war effort as well. See “El fracaso de las negociaciones imperiales,” in Gutiérrez Ardila, Un nuevo reino: geografía política, pactismo y diplomacia durante el interregno en la Nueva Granada (1808-1816).
Indies) south of Madrid in Aranjuez on September 25, 1808.\textsuperscript{23} Over the following months, the Junta Central debated how best to counter French attempts to court Spaniards and Spanish Americans to support Joseph Bonaparte as the King of Spain.\textsuperscript{24}

Concerned over the loss of America, the Junta Central opened the governing body to allow for the representation of the Spanish American territories. The proclamation took familiar Hispanic concepts of sovereignty but adapted them to meet the challenges brought by the French invasion. Made in the name of Ferdinand VII, the revolutionary act depicted a new relationship with the Spanish overseas territories:

> Considering that the vast and precious Dominions that Spain possesses in the Indies are not exactly Colonies or Factories like in the other Nations, rather an essential and integral part of the Spanish Monarchy; and wishing to strengthen the sacred links that unite one domain to another in an indissoluble manner; as well as to reciprocate the heroic loyalty and patriotism that they have just decisively proved to Spain in the most critical situation that any Nation has seen up to now; H.M. has chosen to declare…that the kingdoms, provinces, and isles which constitute the said domains must have immediate national representation before his royal person and form part of the Junta Central.\textsuperscript{25}

The act called for the American domains to elect nine deputies to represent the entirety of the Spanish American territories.\textsuperscript{26} The Spanish provinces, on the other hand, had thirty-six representatives. Using existing election practices, the four viceroyalties and five captaincies general selected one delegate each to send to the Cortes.\textsuperscript{27} The election procedure laid out that ayuntamientos (provincial capitals) would elect three candidates and choose one of them by lot.

\textsuperscript{23} Although created in Aranjuez, the Junta Central predominantly operated out of Seville and this was intentional. Seville’s historical role as a major center of the Spanish Empire made it a fitting city for the representative government to administer the overseas domains.

\textsuperscript{24} In New Granada, one newspaper published correspondence from the Count of Floridablanca, an elderly Spanish statesman who had become the President of the Junta Central. The letters are significant in that they depict the Junta Central using ideas of serving the public good, a foundational concept in the realm of politics in the Hispanic World. See El Alternativo del Redactor Americano, no 27, January 27, 1809, 300-305, BNC, Hermoteca digital, Prensa del siglo XIX, accessed January 16, 2022, https://catalogoenlinea.bibliotecanacional.gov.co/client/es_ES/search/asset/158360.


\textsuperscript{26} The Philippines was also granted a deputy.

\textsuperscript{27} For more, see Jaime Rodríguez O., The Independence of Spanish America (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 60-61.
The instructions established that the ayuntamientos “appoint three individuals of widely known compassion, talent, and instruction, exempt from any detail that could undermine their public opinion.”

Those chosen by lot would proceed to the next stage. From that pool of finalists, the real acuerdo elected three delegates and the final representative would be chosen by lot. The elections built off familiar practices, which helped to increase participation even in an unprecedented situation. More importantly, electing officials to serve in a representative body that claimed to govern over the entire Spanish Empire marked a process that took old traditions and adapted them to new situations.

In New Granada, the elections marked a significant moment in the restructuring of the Spanish Atlantic empire. More than a transitory moment, the elections and outcome of having an elected official serving in Spain sparked, as will be seen, an explosion of reform plans that ranged from the economic to more radical social proposals. On the one hand, the Junta Central had the potential to step in for the absent monarch and realize creoles’ reform proposals, petitions, and grievances. In many ways, the governing body in Seville promised the return of stability and prevention of anarchy. On the other hand, the interactions that occurred during 1809 were clearly revolutionary. The election repurposed existing colonial territorial divisions and familiar election practices to accomplish the new goal of creating a representative government.

Creole interest in reforming society was not new, but neither were americanos eager to upend the major tenets of their society. Instead, creoles pursued a simultaneous interest in pushing change while reconciling that change with tradition. With few exceptions, americanos in

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28 The concern over the public status of the individuals is further evidenced in the instructions for the real acuerdo to select three individuals from the pool of candidates “who concur with more recommendable qualities, whether they are known personally, or by public opinion and voice.” See “Noticias políticas y económicas,” El Alternativo del Redactor Americano, no. 34, May 11, 1809, 350-51.

29 Governing body connected to the Audiencia and presided over by the viceroy.

30 This is part of an argument made in Martínez Garnica and Quintero Montiel, “La formación de los Estados republicanos en la Nueva Granada y Venezuela,” 83.
New Granada cautiously proposed reform to the *Junta Central*. Nevertheless, creoles supported change. In his published reaction to the *Junta Central’s* declaration, the *cura* of Bucaramanga Eloy Valenzuela hoped that the new Junta would continue after Ferdinand VII’s restoration: “after you have restored Fernando to us, we desire nothing more than the perpetuity of your institution, so that at the side of our Monarchs you relieve them in their tasks, enlighten them in their doubts, direct them in the providences.”31 The call for the representative government in Spain to include *americanos* did not resist monarchy, but encouraged its reform.

While interested in the potential for change that participating in the *Junta Central* could stimulate, Spanish Americans had powerful reasons to avoid revolution. The French invasion not only created a crisis of sovereignty, but put Spanish Americans in a vulnerable position as they faced their own anxiety about internal and external threats.32 Elite participation in the elections in New Granada reveals an acceptance of the election process in what would be the only election to bring together every *ayuntamiento* of the viceroyalty at least until the establishment of the republic in the 1820s. Far from fueling secessionism, the proceedings demonstrated a functional electoral process in a transatlantic empire that two years prior would have been unthinkable.33

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32 Fears of race war, anarchy, and foreign invasion by one of the powerful European empires became significant motivations for creoles to navigate this revolutionary moment with great care. Concerns about defending from foreigners or disrupting the social order repeatedly appear in newspapers, correspondence, and other exchanges. Importantly, conceptions of the need for defense took on many forms after the imperial crisis. Viceregal authorities feared sedition and insurrection while *americanos* invoked ideas of defense to convey loyalty. Moreover, questions of independence were accompanied with discussions of how to properly defend the new state.

While elections occurred in every viceroyalty and captaincy general, not every election went smoothly or was even completed. As Jaime Rodríguez has shown, officials in Spanish America implemented the election decree in unequal ways.\textsuperscript{34} Authorities in the Viceroyalty of New Spain limited the number of participating cities to fourteen, the twelve capitals of the intendancies and two other cities. Despite being much smaller in both population and territory, Guatemala allowed the same number of cities to participate in the election as did the significantly larger New Spain. In the Captaincy of Venezuela, six cities held elections. Twelve cities participated in the Viceroyalty of Río de la Plata, sixteen in the sparsely populated Captaincy of Chile, and seventeen in the Viceroyalty of Peru. Some of the elections were cut short, such as in Buenos Aires, whereas others were mired in scandal, like in Venezuela.\textsuperscript{35}

In New Granada, twenty cities held elections, more than any other region in Spanish America. The high levels of participation in New Granada reveals not only that authorities permitted the high participation but that New Granadan cities were interested in the opportunity that the election process could provide as a vehicle for reform.\textsuperscript{36}

The process also provides a good indication of the divisions of power of creole families and networks in 1809. Previous chapters have shown the existence of strong networks formed around the colegios of Santafé and the scientific expeditions in the viceroyalty. Likewise, Uribe-

\textsuperscript{34} Rodríguez O., \textit{The Independence of Spanish America}, 61–62.
\textsuperscript{35} For more on the Venezuelan elections, see Almarza and Martínez Garnica, \textit{Instrucciones para los diputados del Nuevo Reino de Granada y Venezuela}, 14–20; Almarza, “Las elecciones de 1809 en la provincia de Venezuela para la junta central gubernativa de España e Indias.”
\textsuperscript{36} Of the sixty candidate slots, forty-one were unique options. While not as high of a dispersion (68% for New Granada) as regions like Venezuela and New Spain (88% and 79% respectively), New Granada had more unique candidates than Peru and Chile (56% and 37% respectively). For New Granada, see “Elecciones de los Cabildos del Reyno para Diputado a la Real Junta Central,” \textit{El Redactor Americano}, no. 69, October 4, 1809, 429-32, BNC, Hemeroteca digital, Prensa del siglo XIX, accessed January 12, 2022, https://catalogoenlinea.bibliotecanacional.gov.co/client/es_ES/search/asset/88783/35; the other figures are found in Guerra, \textit{Modernidad e independencias}, 195.
Uran’s research highlights the far-reaching networks created by lawyers in New Granada.\textsuperscript{37} Powerful peninsular and creole networks engaged in the new elections, the results of which reflect the regional influences created through professional, occupational, intellectual, and familial ties. Among the most well-known candidates, the lawyer Joaquín Camacho y Lago appeared in the running of five different ayuntamientos.\textsuperscript{38} Of the five, three municipalities included regions with strong connections to Camacho and his network of family and friends.

Born in Tunja, a city northeast of Bogotá, Camacho had become good friends with the Valenzuela family which had a strong presence in government posts of the northeastern regions of New Granada.\textsuperscript{39} For his part, Camacho served as a mayor of Pamplona and Socorro for over ten years which contributed to his selection in Socorro.\textsuperscript{40} In Bogotá, Camacho could rely on the strong alliances he had created through his associations from the Colegio del Rosario, the


\textsuperscript{39} Camacho and Miguel Valenzuela y Mantilla knew each other from the Colegio del Rosario where the two studied. Miguel applied for a beca (grant) but faced competition from two others, including Pedro Salgar, the same cura that testified in the Rosillo plot. Fortunately for Miguel, Camacho was no longer a student but in fact the second chaplain. Camacho undoubtedly helped Miguel obtain the grant. See Agustín Manuel de Alarcón y Castro, “Expediente de oposiciones para obtener una beca en el Colegio Mayor del Rosario,” Bogotá, January 1, 1788, AHUR, vol. 10, fols. 117-24; and Antonio Caballero y Góngora, "Nombramiento de beca en el Colegio Mayor de Nuestra Señora del Rosario a favor de Miguel Antonio Valenzuela y Mantilla," Bogotá, March 8, 1788, AHUR, vol. 10, fols. 143-45. Miguel Valenzuela’s brother, Eloy, also knew Camacho through the Colegio del Rosario where Eloy taught philosophy after he left the Botanical Expedition. Eloy would also become the cura of Bucaramanga. As the parish priest, Eloy befriended a wealthy merchant who, upon his death, left money for Eloy to create a grant to attend the Colegio del Rosario. Eloy used the money to secure an education for his nephews at the Colegio del Rosario. See Juan Eloy Valenzuela, “Escritura de fundación de una beca en el Colegio Mayor del Rosario,” San Juan de Girón, December 18, 1792, AHUR, vol. 91, fols. 635-47. The Valenzuelas also had direct connections to the Mutis family as well. Miguel married Micaela Mutis Consuegra, Sinforoso Mutis’s sister and José Celestino Mutis’s niece. See Jairo Gutiérrez R., \textit{Sinforoso Mutis y la expedición botánica del Nuevo Reino de Granada} (Bogotá: Fondo FEN Colombia, 1995), 74-75.

\textsuperscript{40} Armando Martínez Garnica, “José Joaquín Camacho y su influencia en la Constitución de la Provincia de Tunja (1811),” \textit{Historia y memoria} 5 (July 2012): 49–72.
Botanical Expedition, and colonial government. More than a distinguished individual, Camacho had strong connections that helped secure his candidacies. Among the list of candidates for the delegate position counted prominent clans such as the Durán, Valenzuela, Gutiérrez, Groot, and Pombo families. The province of Socorro elected Miguel Tadeo Gómez Durán over the very well-known lawyers Camilo Torres and Joaquín Camacho as its candidate in the 1809 elections. The selection of Gómez Durán is notable for several reasons. First, his selection demonstrates the familial influence over the 1809 elections. Gómez Durán’s family had commercial ties in Socorro because of his trading partner based in the capital; his cousin José Acevedo y Gómez, an established merchant who had served in a variety of government posts. In addition, Gómez Durán married into the Plata clan, a family that had a strong presence in Socorro that included Joaquín Plata who was a signatory of Socorro’s instruccion to the 1809 representative of New Granada. More interesting is that Gómez Durán, Torres, and Camacho as well as several members of the cabildo of Socorro attended and knew each other through their studies of law at the Colegio del Rosario. While the selection of three rosaristas suggests the value that Socorro placed on knowledgeable candidates,

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42 There are a lot of rich connections between the candidates and the provinces that elected them. Pedro Groot y Alea, who was elected by the province of Mariquita, attended the Colegio de San Bartolome and had served as alguacil mayor, alferez real, procurador general, alcalde ordinario and asesor general. By the late 1790s, Groot had obtained the post of tesorero oficial real in the capital. Groot had also married into the Álvarez clan which had strong ties in Bogotá. See “El muy ilustre cabildo de Santafé,” in Juana María Marín Leoz, Gente decente. La élite rectora de la capital, 1797-1803 (Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Antropología e Historia, 2008), 85-156; Some lesser known candidates, such as Mariquita’s Tomás Andrés Torres, are discussed in “El fracaso de las negociaciones imperiales,” in Gutiérrez Ardila, Un nuevo reino: geografía política, pactismo y diplomacia durante el interregno en la Nueva Granada (1808-1816). Other candidates included creoles that had been arrested in the 1794 conspiracy, such as José María Lozano and Luis Eduardo de Azua.
44 Gómez Durán married Bruna Plata y Álvarez, daughter of Salvador Plata González and Magdalena Álvarez.
45 Gómez Durán attended the Colegio del Rosario from 1792 to 1794, AHUR, vol. 125, fol. 37-52.
Gómez Durán’s victory also underscores the practice of choosing representatives that had practical knowledge as well as familiar knowledge of the province’s ambitions.

By the end of the election process over twenty cities in New Granada had participated in the election. Numerous respected candidates filled the ranks of the candidate pool. Yet, the Audiencia elected three lesser known candidates: the Conde of Puñonrostro for the province of Ibarra, the accountant Luis Eduardo de Azuola (who was implicated in the 1794 conspiracy) for Bogotá, and Antonio de Narváez y la Torre, an accomplished administrator, for Santa Marta. In the final step, the Audiencia awarded Antonio de Narváez by lottery with the position of deputy to the Spanish Parliament, a candidate whose name only appeared three times in the lists.

The election of the deputy marked a major shift in the relationship between New Granada and Spain. The deputy would serve as a representative of the interests of the entire viceroyalty in a government body that envisioned the empire as a nation. As deputy of New Granada, Narváez expected to receive instrucciones (instructions) from the cabildos of the viceroyalty that contained proposals to improve local conditions. The act of proposing reform in an already revolutionary movement should not be understated. In fact, the election process rekindled a spirit of reform that had been missing among creole elites at least since the start of the imperial

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47 Rodríguez O., The Independence of Spanish America, 70. Narváez y la Torre was born in Cartagena and served in several government posts, including governor of Santa Marta, throughout his career. He is also known for his observations about the state of New Granada’s economy. See Ángel Rafael Almarza and Armando Martínez Garnica, eds., Instrucciones para los diputados del Nuevo Reino de Granada y Venezuela ante la junta central gubernativa de España y las Indias (Bucaramanga: Universidad Industrial de Santander, 2008), 129–30; Sergio Elías Ortiz ed., Escritos de dos economistas coloniales: don Antonio de Narváez y la Torre, y don José Ignacio de Pombo (Bogotá: Banco de la República, 1965); For election results, see “Elecciones de los Cabildos del Reyno para Diputado a la Real Junta Central,” El Redactor Americano, no. 69, October 4, 1809, 429-32, BNC, Hemeroteca digital, Prensa del siglo XIX, accessed January 12, 2022, https://catalogoenlinea.bibliotecanacional.gov.co/client/es_ES/search/asset/88783/35.

48 Rodríguez refers to the 1809 elections as a “profound step forward in the formation of modern representative government for the entire Spanish Nation.” Rodríguez O., The Independence of Spanish America, 61.
crisis. For some Spanish Americans, the inefficiencies began before the monarchs abdicated to Napoleon. Not having a monarch or the other political bodies like the Council of the Indies with the legitimacy, or even capability, made the possibility of reform and the implementation of projects based on a practical Enlightenment an unattainable outcome. The creation of a representative body to hear local concerns generated new possibilities from which cabildos across New Granada prepared their own instrucciones (instructions) for Narváez to bring to the national body. While historians have examined the instrucciones of New Spain, little research has been conducted on those of New Granada in 1809. The cabildos of New Granada produced instrucciones that contained pragmatic proposals that resembled the reform plans from as early as the 1770s. Requests for new schools, expansion of administrative positions, promotion of the

49 After the abdication in 1808, many blamed Manuel Godoy, the Prime Minister of Spain for nearly all of Charles IV’s reign. Charles IV ascended the throne in 1788 and abdicated in 1808 to never again take the throne. Godoy served as first minister from 1792 to 1797 and again from 1801 until the Mutiny of Aranjuez in March 1808 when Ferdinand VII ascended the throne. On the ascension of Ferdinand VII, Spanish Historian Carlos Seco Serrano argued “The disastrous last government of Godoy brought together… the reactionary and reformist sectors who placed their hopes of regeneration in the figure of Fernando VII.” Quoted in Gabella, “Entre la revolución y la reacción,” 50.

50 There are simply too many grievances, proposals, and representaciones to be discussed here. For an excellent source on the instrucciones from Popayán, Socorro, Tunja, Quito, Loja, as well as an administrative plan from Salvador Bernabéu of Panama and Ignacio Herrera y Vergara’s “Reflections made by an impartial americano,” see Ángel Rafael Almarza and Armando Martínez Garnica, eds., Instrucciones para los diputados del Nuevo Reino de Granada y Venezuela ante la junta central gubernativa de España y las Indias (Bucaramanga: Universidad Industrial de Santander, 2008). The text was published in anticipation of the bicentennial celebrations of Colombia’s Independence Day (July 20, 1810).

51 The first examination of the instrucciones was conducted by Jose Miranda, see José Miranda, Las Ideas y Las Instituciones Políticas Mexicanas (Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1952); Nettie Lee Benson followed shortly after, reproducing the documents from the Archivo General de Nacion Mexico, see Nettie Lee Benson, La diputación provincial y el federalismo mexicano (México: El Colegio de México, 1955); François-Xavier Guerra was the next to examine the documents almost four decades later, see Guerra, Modernidad e independencias; More recent investigations have been conducted on the instrucciones of New Spain. See Beatriz Rojas, Documentos para el estudio de la cultura política de la transición jura, poderes e instrucciones : Nueva España y la Capitánía General de Guatemala, 1808-1820 (Mexico: Instituto Mora, 2005); Jaime Rodríguez O., “We Are Now the True Spaniards”: Sovereignty, Revolution, Independence, and the Emergence of the Federal Republic of Mexico, 1808–1824 (Stanford University Press, 2012); The instrucciones have been discussed most recently in Frasquet Ivana and Peralta Víctor, La revolución política: Entre autonomías e independencias en Hispanoamérica (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2020).

52 Diana Soto Arango, La reforma del plan de estudios del fiscal Moreno y Escandón 1774-1779 (Universidad del Rosario, 2004); Juan Manuel Dávila Dávila, Ciencias útiles y planes de estudio en la Nueva Granada: método racional y canon wolffiano en la filosofía escolar neogranadina (1762-1826) (Bogotá: Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 2012).
arts and agriculture, fomenting population growth, and stimulating commerce are major features of most of the instrucciones. Along with the practical requests, cabildos proposed more radical ideas that dealt with a range of issues from regional representation to radical social changes.\textsuperscript{53} Rather than examples of the breakdown of empire, the instrucciones of New Granada reveal Spanish Americans’ efforts to reimagine the Spanish Empire.

The instruccion of Tunja exemplifies the notion of practical reform in 1809. After affirming “the residents of this city and province aspire to the good success of the Spanish Nation, and to its inseparability,” the town council of Tunja called for the creation of new eccelesiastical, royal, and civil institutions based on its distance from Bogotá, its population, and the extent of its territory.\textsuperscript{54} The cabildo requested “a colegio [to] be established for the instruction of the youth…because many do not achieve their due application because of how distant the schools are from the capital of [this] republic and cannot afford it, and for this reason many subjects are lacking what could make them useful to \textit{el estado} and \textit{a la patria}.”\textsuperscript{55} The background of the officials of the cabildo underscores their desire to create a local school as only three of the nine signatories obtained an education in the colegios of Bogotá.\textsuperscript{56} Tunja’s requests

\textsuperscript{53} There is a tendency in the historiography to label radical proposals (abolition of the slave trade, slavery, indigenous tribute, and the resguardo system) as signs of political modernity. But this implies a correct path forward and undercuts the sense of experimentation and uncertainty that occurred, especially, during revolutions. See Guerra, \textit{Modernidad e independencias}; and “Presentacion,” in Almarza and Martínez Garnica, \textit{Instrucciones para los diputados del Nuevo Reino de Granada y Venezuela}, 28–30.

\textsuperscript{54} Other cabildos affirmed their loyalty as well. The town council of Popayán requested the deputy to under no circumstance “compromise the Kingdom to suffer a foreign yoke, nor any other domination, than that of the people who currently make up the Royal Family of Bourbon.” See Cabildo de Popayán, “Instrucciones del Cabildo de Popayán adjuntas al poder dado al diputado del Nuevo Reino de Granada ante la Junta Central, 1809,” in Almarza and Martínez Garnica, 119–125.

\textsuperscript{55} The cabildo proposed a new bishopric and caja real (royal treasury) ought to be considered because of “products of its taxes.” Cabildo de Tunja, “Instrucción que el Cabildo de la ciudad de Tunja da al excelentísimo señor don Antonio Narváez, diputado para la Suprema Junta Central de España por el Nuevo Reino de Granada, de los puntos que ha de promover en beneficio público, cuando lo estime por conveniente y oportuno,” in Almarza and Martínez Garnica, 137–42.

\textsuperscript{56} José María Andrade, the alférez real (royal standard-bearer), attended the Colegio del Rosario with a beca from 1793 to 1798, AHUR, vol. 125, fols. 44-72; Joaquín Umaña, the procurador general (lawyer), attended the Colegio del Rosario with a beca from 1781-82 and 1796-97, AHUR, vol. 125, fols. 13-17; 64-67; and Antonio de Rojas y Espinosa, the fiel ejecutor, who attended San Bartolomé.
also demonstrate an early attempt to diffuse power away from the capital, an interest that became a major point of debate after 1811.

For some Spanish Americans, the call to convene the Spanish Parliament represented an opportunity to correct injustices committed by the *antiguo régimen*. Article three of the *instrucción* of Loja called for the *Junta Central* “to end the dispute” over educational material that had been granted to the *cabildo* upon the death of a local educator. Since 1805, the town council had attempted to acquire the material, which included property, that had been used to teach “the ignorant peasant and youth of the country algebra and how to read.”  

57 However, on several occasions, the Audiencia of Quito had prevented the *cabildo* from resuming control of the property. In order for the Loja to obtain the property, the Audiencia required the town council to repair all of the visible damages. Except, the *cabildo* of Loja contended that the *ejecutor* of the court continued to “invent miscellaneous items” that needed to be fixed. Normally, a petition would be sent to the royal court to correct the local injustice, but for Loja, the *Junta Central* had the potential to stand in for the absent monarchy.  

58 For the *cabildo* to view the *Junta Central* as a legitimate guarantor of justice adds another layer to understanding the willingness of parts of the viceroyalty to participate in the representative experiment.

57 Cabildo de Loja, “Instrucción que forma el ilustre Cabildo de Loxa para que se dirija al diputado representante del Virreinato, en que se comprende esta Provincia, y promueva sus artículos ante la Suprema Junta Central que gobierna a nombre del señor Don Fernando VII (que Dios no los ha de restituir),” in Almarza and Martínez Garnica, *Instrucciones para los diputados del Nuevo Reino de Granada y Venezuela*, 155–65.

58 This point is made in Gonzalez-Silen, “Judging Freedom and Loyalty in Venezuela during the War of Spanish Independence.” While not related to the *instrucciones*, other instances of petitioning the *Junta Central* occurred in 1809 that show the new governing body had the potential to fill in for the monarch as guarantor of justice. In early 1809, Francisco Rangel accused Andrés Rosillo (the same Rosillo arrested in October 1809) of committing adultery with Luz de Obando, Rangel’s wife, calling the *canónigo magistral*’s relation with his wife a “scandalous friendship.” However, Rangel did not send his petition to local courts, but to the *Junta Central*. Although the resolution of the case is unknown, Rangel’s petition marks a significant moment in viewing the 1808-1810 period of the *Junta Central*’s rule as a functional imperial government. See “Memorial de agravios de Don Francisco Rangel,” Bogotá, April 27, 1809, AGN, Miscelánea, legajo 125, fols. 672-676.
Along with practical reforms, several cabildos put forth requests that reveal the spectrum of reform ideas that existed in 1809. The town council of Socorro framed its instruccion as a series of changes that “will strengthen, if it even can be, the union of the mother country with the inhabitants of this vast hemisphere.”\(^\text{59}\) The cabildo also emphasized the benefits of pursuing constitutional government, arguing “that the happiness of the State essentially depends on the inviolability of the constitutional precepts” that could “lay the foundations of the public opinion, confidence and patriotism.”\(^\text{60}\) Contained within were proposals that laid out extensive administrative reforms, requesting for the “reduction of redundant royal employment, lands and labor [should] be freed from excessive taxation and regulation, and that the imposition of taxes, their collection and distribution [should] follow the laws of justice that the social pact supports.”\(^\text{61}\)

The town council’s reforms sought to refine local taxation to improve economic opportunity, but they also highlight the conception of the relationship between Spanish America and Spain. Socorro’s request for a constitutional government that abided by a social pact reveals a shift in the understanding of the responsibilities of government. While the implicit argument points to changes in assumptions of sovereignty, Socorro’s instruccion defended the need for a constitution on the bases of promoting “public opinion, confidence, and patriotism.”\(^\text{62}\) These are issues of trust that point to the importance of avoiding anarchy and the preservation of order by law.


\(^{60}\) Ibid, 132.

\(^{61}\) Ibid; also found in Michael J. LaRosa and Germán R. Mejía, Colombia: A Concise Contemporary History (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), 5–6.

\(^{62}\) Almarza and Martínez Garnica, Instrucciones para los diputados del Nuevo Reino de Granada y Venezuela, 133.
Socorro’s *instruccion* contains more radical ideas, specifically those that deal with the *castas*. While the *cabildo* demanded for the “unproductive classes [to] be suppressed,” the fourth article of Socorro’s *instruccion* called for the abolition of the slave trade and slavery, labeling the practices as a “degradation of the human nature.”63 For the *cabildo*, ending African slavery also had social and economic incentives as it was slavery that “caused the debasement of all those professions that are destined for the miserable Africans.” Removing the stigma of slavery from occupations would encourage others, particularly those “unproductive classes,” to pursue new labors. On the abolition of slavery, the town council encouraged that such a decision be made “in consolation with the interests of the owners,” but with the ultimate goal of enabling “them to enter society as the other free races that inhabit the Americas.”64

Yet the call for the “unproductive classes [to] be suppressed” was more likely directed to the indigenous of the province. In its description of the state of the province, the town council underscored its problem with the indigenous. Along the province's southern border, “there is believed to be one or more hordes of savages, living by hunting and fishing, and they have no trade with civilized towns.” Even among the *pueblos de indios* (Indian towns), the *cabildo* depicted them as “living commonly in communities...they are foolish and so poor that it appears that they do not understand ideas beyond the present moment.”65

Elites’ concerns over the state of the viceroyalty’s economy, its inhabitants, and the potential to improve those areas of the kingdom became explicit topics that, with the increased availability of the printing press, could be shared to a wider audience. The *cabildo* of Socorro’s

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63 More research needs to be done on this topic. Recently, Yesenia Barragan’s depiction of abolition in post-independence Colombia mentions a free womb proposal in Socorro, see Yesenia Barragan, *Freedom’s Captives: Slavery and Gradual Emancipation on the Colombian Black Pacific* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 57.
64 Almarza and Martínez Garnica, *Instrucciones para los diputados del Nuevo Reino de Granada y Venezuela*, 133.
65 Ibid, 130.
call for the suppression of unproductive classes importantly did not refer to the castas. Rather, the instruccion used terms found in publications from Bogotá. Mauricio Nieto has shown how José Francisco de Caldas’ *Semanario del Nuevo Reyno de Granada* (published 1808-1810) depicts a creole social order that emphasized the importance of education, science, and the application of useful knowledge to benefit the viceroyalty. In dealing with questions of prosperity, creoles’ anxiety extended to los barbaros (barbarians) and considered the division of salvages (savages) from hombres civilizados (civilized men) a central component to realizing their vision of the future. As part of the civilized, creoles held the special privilege of “constituting a nobility of the new Continent.” The distinction between the civilized and barbarous groups affirmed at once the need to identify the weak and to accept that “not all men and women could enjoy such freedoms.” Caldas argued that studying the humans of the viceroyalty offered the potential to make the population known and allow for better administration of the kingdom.  

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68 This was not considered a “right,” rather more of a burden that creoles needed to carry to counter theories of degeneracy. José Francisco de Caldas, “Estado de la Geografía del Vireynato de Santafé de Bogotá con relación a la economía y al comercio,” *Semanario del Nuevo Reyno de Granada*, no. 2, January 10, 1808, 10-11, Banco de la República, Hemeroteca Digital Histórica, accessed January 30, 2022, https://babel.banrecultural.org/digital/collection/p17054coll26/id/1547/rec/12.  
70 There are strong links between Caldas’ approach and political arithmetic. See Andrea A. Rusnock, “Biopolitics: Political Arithmetic in the Enlightenment,” in *The Sciences in Enlightened Europe*, ed. William Clark, Jan Golinsky,
Yet Caldas’s language of suppression does not fully account for Socorro’s proposals to reshape society. The town council’s reforms lacked the same emphasis that Caldas placed on the role of creoles in improving the other castas. Instead, the contents of the instrucciones contain significant tenets of nineteenth century liberalism in Latin America.71 The cabildo targeted the “unproductive” and indios as products of colonial practices that failed to realize their economic potential for the viceroyalty. Socorro’s request to end reguardos (reservations) sought to convert the indigenous into active participants in the economy that “will pay more to the general mass of income than what taxes produce today.”72 Others in New Granada shared this liberal idea. In his letter to the deputy, the lawyer Ignacio Herrera y Vergara likened Indians’ status to slavery and suggested it would be “better to set them free, let them pay alcaldes and other state taxes. Then they will unwrap their talents, they will work with more utility in their labor” both in the land and their own industry.73 Like Socorro’s instrucciones, Herrera argued that centuries old practices had wrongfully impeded the indigenous from realizing their potential.

The instrucciones expose elites’ anxieties about the colonial order that, while predating the 1808 imperial crisis, took on new significance during the imperial crisis. For the cabildo of Popayán, the loss of the monarch had exposed the vulnerabilities of government by creating a situation in which the state had “forgotten its ancient constitutional laws” and permitted the

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71 Among other proposals discussed that are beyond the scope of this chapter are calls for free trade and increased access to education. For more, see “Introduction” in Brooke Larson, Trials of Nation Making: Liberalism, Race, and Ethnicity in the Andes, 1810-1910 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 1–19.


73 Ignacio Herrera y Vergara, “Reflexiones que hace un americano imparcial al diputado de este Reino de Granada para que las tenga presentes en su delicada misión,” September 1, 1809, in Almarza and Martínez Garnica, 80.
“arbitrariness of ministers entrusted with absolute power.” To avoid the “state of depression that it finds itself in today, and the misfortunes it has experienced,” the Monarchy needed to not hold uncontested power. The French invasion placed the Spanish Nation on the edge of disorder. The cabildo charged the elected deputy to pursue the creation of a “constitution or journal of fundamental laws” that importantly did not disrupt monarchical rule but guarded the sovereign and his successors.

The period saw a wide spectrum of voices emerge from across the viceroyalty as creoles took the opportunity to depict their version of what a future New Granada could look like with an improved government holding the reins of the empire. Far from possessing unified goals, the cabildos demanded changes that reflect the patterns of regionalism. The use of liberal ideas of individual liberty and linking liberty to economic potential offers powerful examples of the extent to which elites were willing to experiment even in a highly chaotic period. Moreover, the willingness to experiment further reveals the extent to which Spanish Americans had bought into the representative government in Spain. Finally, rather than showing the faults in networks, the diversity of the instrucciones confirms elites’ shared interest in improving the viceroyalty.

Writers on both sides of the Atlantic also turned to new terms to depict the crisis, their demands, and the status of individuals. With greater frequency, Spaniards and Spanish Americans used words such as ciudadano, derechos (rights), libertad, and igualdad (equality) to

75 Ibid.
76 Historians have more recently depicted nineteenth century Latin America as at the forefront of experimenting and expanding democratic practices after independence. See Hilda Sabato, Republics of the New World: The Revolutionary Political Experiment in Nineteenth-Century Latin America (Princeton University Press, 2018).
77 What remains unclear is the extent to which the elite were connected to the social and intellectual networks discussed in previous chapters and in Renán Silva’s research. See Renán Silva, Saber, cultura y sociedad en el Nuevo Reino de Granada, siglos XVII y XVIII (Medellín: La Carreta Editores, 2004); Silva, Los ilustrados de Nueva Granada, 1760-1808; Renán Silva, Universidad y sociedad en el Nuevo Reino de Granada: contribución a un análisis histórico de la formación intelectual de la sociedad colombiana (Medellín: La Carreta, 2009).
describe new expectations for the treatment of the Americas and the behavior of its inhabitants.\footnote{The Junta Central’s instructions for the elections requested that the ayuntamientos try to avoid factionalism in the election process and only attend to those that “constitute a good Ciudadano (Citizen) and a zealous patrician.” See “Noticias políticas y económicas,” El Alternativo del Redactor Americano, no. 34, May 11, 1809, 350, BNC, Hermoteca digital, Prensa del siglo XIX, accessed January 16, 2022, https://catalogoenlinea.bibliotecanacional.gov.co/client/es_ES/search/asset/158360; Ignacio Herrera’s “Reflection” depicts active citizens becoming discouraged by low profits. Socorro’s instrucción referred to the Junta Central as “that assembly of wise and good citizens. See Almarza and Martínez Garnica, Instrucciones para los diputados del Nuevo Reino de Granada y Venezuela, 80, 137.}

However, creoles did not label their actions or their proposals as revolutionary. Even the Junta Central and the creation of the representative body did not receive that title, with one exception. In his reform plan for Panamá, Salvador Bernabeu de Reguart referred to the events in Spain as a “memorable revolution that has completely changed the face of the government of the monarchy Spanish, driven by the reading of many public papers learnedly written by patriots worthy of the Spanish name.”\footnote{Salvador Bernabeu de Reguart, “Plan de economía y buena administración o prospecto al gobierno político, militar y económico para el istmo de Panamá,” December 30, 1809 in Almarza and Martínez Garnica, 167–250; On the elections of 1809, Gutiérrez Adrila points out that Panamá and Quito were removed from the creole networks of New Granada and so follow different patterns. See “El fracaso de las negociaciones imperiales,” in Gutiérrez Ardila, Un nuevo reino: geografía política, pactismo y diplomacia durante el interregno en la Nueva Granada (1808-1816).} This is notable for two reasons. First, Panamá had few connections to the creole elite of the inner viceroyalty, the colegios of Bogotá, the scientific ventures, periodicals of the capital, or the reading circles. Second, the absence of the word revolution among neogranadinos’ writing says more about creoles in the center of the viceroyalty than the isthmus province. The word revolution, at least in 1809, possibly carried an implication of insurrection in New Granadan circles. Eager to work within the experimental imperial system, creoles sought to avoid that confusion while terms like liberty, rights, and equality were not encumbered by the specter of revolt. The Junta Central created space to contest membership to the Spanish Empire, but the language did not accompany the threat of sedition.\footnote{For more on the use of citizen, see Tamar Herzog, Defining Nations: Immigrants and Citizens in Early Modern Spain and Spanish America (Yale University Press, 2003).}
Nevertheless, serious challenges emerged in the final months of 1809 that underscore the tension of trying to reform an empire using principles of equality. While Spanish Americans viewed the _Junta Central_ as a legitimate government for its attempt to rally support against the French invaders, some _americanos_ disagreed with the model of representative government that the _Junta Central_ outlined. After the election of the deputy, the _cabildo_ of Santafé expressed their disapproval of the disproportionate representation that the _Junta Central_’s January decree had allotted. The nine positions were available for Spanish America compared to the thirty-six for the Spanish provinces despite having similar population sizes. At the request of the _cabildo_, Camilo Torres, a lawyer by training and _asesor del cabildo_ (lawyer of the town council) of the capital, drafted the _Representación del Cabildo de Santa Fe a la Suprema Junta Central de España_. The document, more commonly referred to as the “_Memorial de agravios_” (a petition of grievances), focused on the unequal representation, the poor implementation of equality, and called for greater autonomy through the creation of _juntas provinciales_ (provincial committees). The timing of the petition, however, is significant. The _cabildo_ completed the document on November 20, 1809, after the results of the election were published rather than in mid-1809 when city officials received the _Junta Central_’s decree that outlined the division of candidates between Europe and America. More importantly, Camilo Torres participated in the election process and earned the candidacy of over six _ayuntamientos_. Despite the frequency of his name in the pool of candidates, Torres did not appear in the list of finalists.

The option to resist the reforms of the _Junta Central_ with violence existed. The nine deputies were to come from viceroyalties and the captaincies general, not _audiencias_.

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81 It is likely that Spanish officials did not know how many people resided in Spanish America. See “El fracaso de las negociaciones imperiales,” in Gutiérrez Ardila, _Un nuevo reino: geografía política, pactismo y diplomacia durante el interregno en la Nueva Granada (1808-1816)._
Audiencia of Quito considered their exclusion as a violation of the very principles that guided the Peninsula’s embracement of representative government, complaining “isolated in a corner of the earth, it had no one to sustain its hopes, to dissipate its fears, or to take any measure whatsoever in its defense.”

In addition, rumors spread to Quito in the summer that the Junta Central had fallen, thus ending the Spanish resistance to the French invasion. Uncertainty gripped the audiencia and on August 10, 1809, Quiteños seized control, creating their own junta and declaring itself autonomous.

In Santafé, Viceroy Amar viewed the Quito junta as a clear act of sedition but when pressed by creoles in Santafé to hold a meeting to discuss solutions to the apparent revolt, the viceroy agreed. While the viceroy and high-ranking officials supported a quick and violent end to the movement in Quito, creoles such as Camilo Torres and Baltazar Miñano favored a diplomatic approach.

For the creole opposition, Quiteños’s actions sent a powerful message that needed to be tempered by condemning the use of violence but also acknowledging the importance of the issue of representation. Between September 5 and 11, high-ranking officials listened to creoles’ ideas to end Quito’s experiment peacefully through a myriad of reform proposals.

In a duplicitous move, the viceroy agreed to the creole sentiments in the September deliberations while at the same time he dispatched troops to suppress the Quito unrest.

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82 Quoted in Rodríguez O., The Independence of Spanish America, 61.
84 The distinction between independence and autonomy is made in Jaime Rodríguez O., “Los orígenes de la revolución de 1809 en Quito,” Secuencia 1, no. 72 (2008): 201–27; For more on Quito in 1809, see Demetrio Ramos Pérez, Entre el Plata y Bogotá: Cuatro claves de la emancipación ecuatoriana (Madrid: Centro Iberoamericano de Cooperación, 1978); Carlos de la Torre Reyes, La revolución de Quito del 10 de agosto de 1809 (Quito: Banco Central del Ecuador, 1990); Daniel Gutiérrez Ardila, “Revolución y diplomacia : El caso de la primera junta de Quito (1809),” Fronteras de la historia 12, no. 12 (2007): 341–70.
85 As of August 1809, Baltazar Miñano had not been arrested.
86 Among the proposals is one by the rosarista (graduate of the Colegio del Rosario) Frutos Joaquín Gutiérrez. Gutiérrez proposed the creation of a junta in the capital to restore trust between Quito and the Spanish government. However, the junta would continue to operate after the resolution with Quito to work toward the shared defense of the viceroyalty and maintain open lines of communication between the major cities. Gutiérrez to Manuel Martínez Mansilla, Bogotá, September 22, 1809, AGN, Miscelánea, legajo 135, fol. 653; Gilmore, “The Imperial Crisis, Rebellion, and the Viceroy: Nueva Granada in 1809,” 17–18.
rebellion. The viceroy’s actions not only rejected Quito’s claim to autonomy, but creoles’ proposals as well.

For however much the Quito episode displayed the viceroy’s hostility to notions of popular sovereignty, the election process had nevertheless brought notable change to the viceroyalty. The election itself had been a welcome change according to Camilo Torres, but the implementation and the results failed to meet the potential that the ideas of equality had inspired among Spanish Americans. Written in late November 1809, the Representación del Cabildo de Santafé outlined how “true union and fraternity between Spanish Europeans and Americans” could be accomplished. Under the Junta Central, the empire upheld new principles that sought to alter “our relations with our colonies,” promising “we will embrace more fraternally” and work to “reunite Spain and Spanish America” and, through its actions, make it so “all are Spanish: let us, then, truly unite in the defense of Religion, the King and la Patria.” The petition continued, framing its argument in the terms established by the Junta Central: if America and Spain were “two integral and constituent parts of the Spanish Monarchy,” then “under this principle, and that of their mutual and common interests, there could never be a love sincere and fraternal but on the reciprocity and equality of rights.” The demand for equality did not come from the cabildo, rather from the fact that from the beginning “the Junta Central has promised that everything it will establish will be based on justice, and justice cannot subsist without equality.”

87 Viceroy Amar had been in correspondence with the Viceroy of Peru about the suppression of Quito. Forces sent from Peru entered Quito, whereas the forces sent by Amar guarded the border.
89 Ibid, f. 8.
90 Ibid, f. 9. Torres suggests here that “if the government of England had taken this important step, maybe they would not cry today about the separation of their colonies.”
91 Ibid, f. 17.
Santafé cabildo argued that the new government ought to consider Spanish America and Spain as truly equal parts of the Empire and allow the “the vast, rich, and populous domains of America” to have equal representation. Rather than calling for independence, the petition embraced the experimental government established in Seville and called for further iteration.

While the cabildo demanded equality in representation, its members also recognized the implication of such a major reform on questions of loyalty. Just as the imperial crisis of 1808 had brought patriotismo to the forefront of publicized discussions, the Junta Central’s move to unite the empire under a representative government had opened the door for competing ideas of loyalty to be voiced. Writing on the point of maintaining union with the Peninsula, the petition reads “do not fear that the Americas will separate from you. They love and desire your union, but this is the only method to conserve it.”

The veiled threat emphasizes that continued loyalty could occur even in a system that granted greater autonomy to the Spanish American territories. Yet, the need to reform had already arrived according to Torres. On the point of implementing principles of equality in every region, Torres argued “if this important step had been taken…when the deputy from Seville came to have the Board recognized…today the sad

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92 Ibid. The final two sentences of the petition reiterate this point, “Oh! May heaven hear the sincere votes of the cabildo, and that its sentiments are not misunderstood! May heaven prevent other less liberal principles and ideas from producing the disastrous effects of an eternal separation!” Ibid, f. 24-25.

93 Torres’s call for equality related specifically to equalizing representation and not granting greater rights to subalterns in Spanish America. Near the end of the petition is a depiction of the signatories that reads “without omitting any of the respectable votes that were given in writing; noting in these, and in each one of the others, the origin of the members, that is, if they are Spanish, European or American, so that it can be seen who has opposed such a fair thing, so in accordance with Your Majesty's intentions and to the laws.” The signatories included ecclesiastical officials, leaders of the local colegios, government officials, and lawyers: Andrés Rosillo, canónigo magistral; Antonio Gallardo, rector of Colegio del Rosario; José María del Castillo, catedrático de derecho civil; Tomás Tenorio, catedrático de derecho canónico and Camilo Torres’s uncle; Pablo Plata, cura rector of the Santa Iglesia Cathedral of Bogotá; Frutos Joaquín Gutiérrez, fiscal del crimen of the Audiencia of Santafé; Luis de Ayala, administrador of la real renta de aguardientes; Manuel de Pombo, contador de la real Casa de Moneda; and three officials of the cabildo, José Acevedo y Gómez, José Gregario Gutiérrez, and Camilo Torres. Ibid, f. 23.
consequences of the turmoil in Quito would not be experienced.”\textsuperscript{94} Increasing the power of municipalities did not equate to walking down the path of complete independence.

While the instrucciones and Bogotá’s Representación reimagined the government of the empire as rooted in representation and equality, these requests and petitions never reached the peninsula. Despite the successful elections of 1809, the Junta Central did not call Narváez y la Torre to Spain. The combination of devastating defeats near Madrid and French forces amassing 60,000 troops to invade Andalusia had prevented the Junta Central from convening the Spanish Parliament. In an attempt to preserve the government, the Junta retreated to the southernmost port city of Cádiz but in late January 1810, the Junta Central dissolved itself to create the five-man Consejo de Regencia (Council of Regency). Spanish Americans once again encountered an unprecedented situation with no clear outcome.

Yet news of the catastrophes in the Peninsula did not reach New Granada until early 1810. Instead, neogranadinos read and experienced internal threats that escalated fears about the viceroyalty’s stability. The viceroy’s decision to forcibly put down Quiteños’ junta and the hasty prosecution of those involved in Rosillo’s plot of October 1809 were real moments of tension, but creoles also read reports from Spain about the dangers of traitors. An edict from the Tribunal de seguridad publica (Court of public security) of the Junta Central warned of the disastrous impact that “this despicable race of spies, traitors, and evil Spaniards” could have on the empire. These enemy agents, who were depicted as “friends of Napoleon,” threatened the ruin of the Peninsula and to promote anarchy.\textsuperscript{95} Importantly, traitors were not republicans or those seeking

\textsuperscript{94} Ibid, f. 22.

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equality, but Spaniards that had joined the French. Indeed, by the end of 1809 fear of the French
or of Napoleonic France declaring victory over Spain added to Spanish Americans' long list of
anxieties.96

At the same time that they engaged in reforming the framework of imperial government,
Spanish Americans grappled with an atmosphere that feared division and sedition. In the
penultimate publication of the Redactor Americano, the editor Manuel Socorro de Rodríguez
depicted Spanish America as at a tipping point in which it could be vulnerable to Napoleon’s
ambitions. Rodríguez celebrated Spanish America as “a brilliant and unique spectacle among the
other nations of the universe,” boasting that “no one reached the summit of enlightenment as
quickly.” Building on his claim of enlightenment, Rodríguez added “and if this has been in a
time of inertia and darkness, what will be its progress now in the happy era of a Government”
that acts with “the most beneficial intention for the common prosperity of these provinces”97

“But alas!” Rodríguez warned:

quite the opposite should be feared, if unfortunately the spirit of division is introduced in the American
peoples!...Then that damned Genius of the revolution, who grazes on carnage and havoc, would give
himself a thousand pleasures for the ease that was presented to him of extending his iron scepter over the
richest and most beautiful portion of the earth. Then that horrible monster of iniquity, who has vowed to
annihilate the Empire of virtue, would take advantage of such an opportune occasion to satisfy the
ambitious desires of his despotic tyranny…Throw me away, eternal God! Throw me into the grave, so as
not to see that the people of Spanish and Catholic America, dominated by the vile motives of preference
and singularity, fall into such a horrendous guilt, into such an outrageous desolation! I will never see such
disastrous days: may my existence perish, so as not to witness the ruin of my beloved country by the
infamous war of its own children98

96 This point is made in Jaime Rodríguez O., “Los orígenes de la revolución de 1809 en Quito,” Secuencia 1, no. 72
97 Manuel Socorro de Rodriguez, “Apendice,” El Redactor Americano, no. 68, September 19, 1809, 422-23, BNC,
98 Rodríguez continued by quoting Valerius Maximus, “Every State divided by factions, is a country open to the
enemy, that hopes to see the weakest party join them, and take revenge on the strongest.” His commentary finished
with “Peace Americanos, unite my brothers, and we will be eternally happy.” Ibid, 423-425.
While his warning by no means applies to all those that read the *Redactor Americano*, Rodríguez’s depiction of the dangers of division linked sedition to anarchy. Importantly, the editor’s comments underscore the fear of revolution. In this case, revolution in France had produced a monstrous tyrant. In New Granada, despite the incredible participation in what historians have labeled a revolutionary moment, *neogranadinos* shied away from depicting their actions as revolutionary.

CONCLUSIONS

The imperial crisis of 1808 and the trickle of news regarding the struggles on the Peninsula created a space of opportunity for *neogranadinos* to explore and experiment. The experimentation that occurred in 1809 brought a serious opportunity to reforge the Spanish Empire into a constitutional monarchy. Far from using the moment to pursue independence, creoles took to municipal centers of power to produce proposals to address local concerns. Through their *instrucciones, Cabildos* produced a wide array of demands that reflect the textures of *neogranadinos*’ interest in reform. While they were interested in promoting the common good, creole elites did not possess a uniform set of principles that guided their instructions for the elected deputy. Spanish Americans used a variety of understandings of republican and liberal ideas of liberty, citizenship, and equality to respond to the unprecedented frequency of challenges made to the old order and resolved to maintain their vision of stability. Nevertheless, it is precisely that variation of desires that reveals not only the vibrant culture that had space for competing ideas of liberty, but also the uncertainty of the period.
The diverse demands of the cabildos underscores the dynamic nature of New Granada’s elite. None of the major cities of New Granada took the reins of the 1809 period to try to direct the viceroyalty’s demands. Instead, creole elites embraced the potential that the Junta Central offered by calling for the Spanish Parliament to include Spanish Americans. This dynamism would continue into 1810. As they learned about the dire turn of events in the Peninsula, neograndoninos pursued greater autonomy to counter growing anxieties about the uncertain future. Yet even in their shared pursuit of autonomy, creole elites did not possess a singular concept of autonomy, sovereignty, or independence. The dissolution of the Junta Central coupled with the alarming French victories across the Peninsula continued the imperial crisis and left Spanish Americans in a perilous position.
CHAPTER VI

“OUR REVOLUTION”: CREOLES AND THE NEW PUBLIC

As French forces pressed further into southern Iberia, the Junta Central retreated still further. By January 1810, however, the Junta Central had established itself in the last southern section of the Peninsula with no more ground to give. While the French army set in for the siege of the port city Cadiz, the Junta Central created a five-man governing body, the Consejo de Regencia (Council of Regency), and then dissolved itself. As part of the transfer of power, the Junta Central required the Council of Regency to convene the Cortes. Like its predecessor, the Council of Regency dispatched delegates to Spanish America to obtain the loyalty of the American domains. The emissaries of the Council of Regency, however, failed to secure recognition from most of the Spanish American cities in Venezuela and New Granada. Instead, Spanish American cities organized their own juntas in rejection of the supremacy of the council in as early as May 1810.

Only a few months prior, neogranadinos engaged in the elections of 1809 and demonstrated an eagerness to reform the empire. Yet within a year of the dissolution of the Junta Central over fifteen provincial juntas had emerged (with still more on the way) and an attempt at creating a federal system had failed. Even more demonstrations of highly localized autonomy would occur in what would become a civil war. What occurred between late 1809 and late 1810 that contributed to the dissolution of the viceroyalty? If the generation of creole elites that now
found themselves at the helm of these autonomous movements shared so many experiences in the late colonial period, why did that sense of community not carry over into the 1810 period and beyond? These questions are significant for a period that has become defined by its factionalism.¹

Between 1810 and 1816, competing ideas of the nature of the revolution combined with a sense of urgency to organize the defense of the fledgling political communities that continued to interrupt and hamper attempts to form a larger political union. While these divisions were present across the viceroyalty, this chapter will mainly focus on the experience in the former capital of New Granada: Santafé de Bogotá. Following the creation of the junta, fierce competition erupted in Santafé to win the approval of the citizen body over the autonomist project. The claim of the resumption of sovereignty had marked a significant revolution, but one that required refinement and direction according to creole leaders. In the aftermath of the July Revolution, creoles debated the nature of the revolution and constructed new narratives to justify the acquisition of sovereignty. The need to define the revolution and form a more permanent form of government, however, did not come from long-term secessionist urges. Rather, creoles grappled with the tension of their decisions to adopt varying forms of representative government and the need to defend those nascent institutions against internal and external forces.

Recent depictions of the revolutionary period in New Granada have shifted the analysis away from investigating the structural components of the viceroyalty to exploring the textures of

¹ The lack of unity experienced in the interregnum does not necessarily disprove the notion of an “imagined community,” but it does question the size of those imagined communities. Anderson’s emphasis on national identities does not align with the evidence that suggests municipal identities far outweighed any sense of “neogranadinos.” Other identities prevailed included cultural, religious, and linguistic. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1991).
political ideology in the first wave of independence.\textsuperscript{2} Daniel Gutiérrez Ardila’s extensive research on the interregnum has emphasized the importance of understanding the turmoil of the period, arguing “the way in which the revolution itself developed in the New Kingdom had a decisive weight in the course of events.”\textsuperscript{3} Moreover, his study on the diplomatic interactions of the ephemeral states of New Granada reveals the ad hoc nature of the revolutions. Likewise, Isidro Vanegas has shown that Spanish Americans reacted to the imperial crisis by experimenting with government reform as the vestiges of the \textit{antiguo regimen} were not quickly discarded. This chapter adds to these depictions by emphasizing the importance of understanding the intersection of the use of ideas with local networks. This intersection can be explored as having a spatial element that incorporates the social ties creoles constructed and the physical space those connections inhabited during the interregnum.

Overthrowing the old authorities began a trial by fire. Creoles in New Granada did not cast off the colonial structures of the viceroyalty in unison nor did creole leaders have an alliance brokered with the other municipalities. Instead, \textit{juntas} emerged in highly localized circumstances that relied on alliances, albeit temporary ones, forged between elites and \textit{castas} within the city rather than elites from different cities.\textsuperscript{4} The second half of 1810 witnessed the formation of

\textsuperscript{2} Marta Herrera Ángel, \textit{Ordenar para controlar. Ordenamiento espacial y control político en las llanuras del Caribe y en los Andes centrales neogranadinos} (Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Antropología e Historia, Academia Colombiana de Historia, 2002).


\textsuperscript{4} For an example of this dynamic in Pamplona, see Lina Constanza Díaz Boada, “La élite local ante la crisis de la monarquía española: redes sociales de poder en el cabildo de Pamplona - Virreinato de Nueva Granada, 1800-1810,” \textit{Anuario de Historia Regional y de las Fronteras} 15 (October 2010): 37–63; For elite perspectives in Tunja, see Olga Yanet Acuña Rodríguez, “La Independencia de la provincia de Tunja vista a través del ideario de Juan Nepomuceno Niño y José Joaquín Camacho, 1810-1815,” \textit{HiSTOReLo, Revista de Historia Regional y Local} 4, no. 7 (2012): 188–217.
multiple *juntas* not only led by provincial capitals, but also smaller towns that emancipated from the old centers of authority.

Nineteenth century historians pejoratively labeled the extreme fragmentation of the 1810 to 1816 period as *la Patria Boba* (Foolish Fatherland), a period defined as a squandered opportunity to create a united national movement for independence.\(^5\) Unable to put aside their differences, federalists and centralists engaged in a civil war that left a weak state standing. The period ended in a dark moment in which a 10,000 strong Spanish army led by Field Marshal Pablo Morillo reconquered Venezuela and New Granada. Yet as historians have pointed out, it would be a mistake to focus on the 1810 to 1816 years as an era of failures.\(^6\) Instead, studying the interregnum as a period full of legitimate attempts to reorganize the political communities of New Granada reveals the extent to which *neogranadinos* proposed revolutionary practices all while underscoring the enormous task that lay before those interested in creating a united New Granada.\(^7\) Acts of revolution, federation, and political alliances abounded in a period full of immense uncertainty highlighting political ideologies as a basis for crafting new alliances, or driving a wedge through others.

This chapter focuses on how Santafereños depicted their struggle. Accepting that the historical actors did not enter the interregnum with predetermined notions of patriotism, liberty, or even the nature of their revolution as necessarily linked to republicanism or liberalism reveals

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\(^5\) José Manuel Restrepo, *Historia de la revolución de la República de Colombia en la América meridional* (1827; Besanzon: Imprenta de José Jacquin, 1858).


\(^7\) This chapter uses interregnum to refer to the six-year period between the first *juntas* of New Granada and the Spanish Reconquest.
the tension of the period as continuously building. Creoles did not overthrow the *antiguo regimen* all at once. Rather as Isidro Vanegas has pointed out, “progressively they were affirming their conviction that the only form of government that fulfilled their aspirations was a representative democracy, which of course entailed a principle founder of power other than the monarch: the principle of sovereign people”\textsuperscript{8} Neither was popular sovereignty implemented as antithetical to monarchy. The hesitancy to exclude monarchy from the governmental structure (as well as its symbolic political significances) reflects the endurance of colonial institutions and at the same time, the nature of revolution in Santafé as contestable.

Santafereños were also very aware of past revolutions and the challenges that those movements encountered.\textsuperscript{9} Importantly, participants saw themselves as revolutionaries and that change in identity shifted concerns to how best to construct a government that could withstand fundamental crises, such as the imperial crisis of 1808. Santafereños depicted their actions as though they were embarking on a project that was extremely vulnerable, both historically and contemporaneously. As the conflict in the Peninsula continued to rage, the kingdom’s relationship with the powers of the Atlantic remained unresolved. As Santafereños pursued more expansive representative governments, they were caught, to quote J.G.A. Pocock, in a Machiavellian Moment: “the moment in conceptualized time in which the republic was seen as confronting its own temporal finitude, as attempting to remain morally and politically stable in a stream of irrational events conceived as essentially destructive of all systems of secular authority.”\textsuperscript{10} Joshua Simon has shown how in the aftermath of the Independence Wars, Simón

\textsuperscript{8} Vanegas, “Revolución Neogranadina,” 32.

\textsuperscript{9} For more on this idea, see “Introduction,” in Keith Michael Baker and Dan Edelstein, *Scripting Revolution: A Historical Approach to the Comparative Study of Revolutions* (Stanford University Press, 2015), 1–24.

Bolívar faced the dilemma of trying to “maintain American independence against its internal and external enemies. ¹¹ Rather than construct a “pure” model of republicanism, Bolívar looked to combine republican models of government to solve Spanish America’s own crisis of self-rule. Simon’s argument rightly points to the fragility of the early republics as seen by historical actors, but a similar depiction emerged among historical actors in the first wave of independence. Creole leaders believed they were in a revolutionary moment that, while transformative, was vulnerable to internal divisions and powerful external states.

The need to defend nascent projects based on popular sovereignty combined with creole elites’ networks producing factions with strong wills for how to resolve the impending crisis (whatever form that was to take). This approach is not about identifying who was right or wrong, rather this chapter recenters the interregnum in the imperial crisis and the uncertainty of the outcome in the Spanish War for Independence. With the unclear future looming as a threat, creoles turned to familiar kin networks but importantly, a new public body that had been constructed with the shift to popular sovereignty. The public body, which was often referred to as public opinion, became a powerful ally that creole leaders sought to win over. This chapter explores how a competition for public opinion reveals not only that there was an approach to the revolution that others needed to be convinced of, but how that highly competitive space reveals the continuity of community. Understanding the nature of the political communities that elites sought to construct reveals the tensions of the revolutionary moment and exposes the dynamisms of the period.

THE JUNTA SUPREMA

By mid-1810, the promise of the _Junta Central_ had fallen through and impacted elite perspectives. What had been an instance of tremendous participation in the reform of the empire had lost its momentum by April 1810. The _Junta Central_ became yet another example of unresolved tension for Spanish Americans in their struggle to solve the problems posed by the imperial crisis. More importantly, news of events in Spain shaped reactions in New Granada as it became clear that the war with France had frustrated the reform plans presented in the _instrucciones_ of 1809. In a letter to his uncle written in late May 1810, Camilo Torres disparaged the 1809 elections: “About a year and half ago the royal order for the election of Deputies of America for the Junta Central arrived, and up until now only Mosquera, I have heard said, has arrived in Spain as the Deputy of Caracas.”  

As the invading French army took more ground in Spain, Spanish American ambitions of realizing their reforms seemed to go away with the lost territory. Nevertheless, creoles in the governing bodies of Santafé and those involved in the 1809 election proceedings did not move to alter the viceregal government in the months that New Granada’s delegate to the _Junta Central_ awaited his summons. It is likely that in as early as the end of May news of the fall of the _Junta Central_ reached the capital and that by early June, news of a _Junta Suprema_ established in Caracas had arrived in Bogotá. The turbulence of the summer of 1810 lay in the central question of how to proceed should Spain capitulate to the French. The weight of a potential French victory threatened a detrimental outcome for

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13 The lawyer Ignacio de Herrera y Vergara’s proposal for a junta in New Granada makes explicit reference to the Council of Regency in late May 1810, see José Manuel Restrepo, _Documentos importantes de Nueva Granada, Venezuela y Colombia_, vol. 1 (Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 1969), 7–14.
neogranadinos. Rebecca Earle has shown that even while they incorporated French revolutionary symbols and language, Spanish American revolutions were decidedly anti-French.\textsuperscript{14} Even in early 1810, rumors spread to the capital that foreigners, “some say they are French and others English,” were in the Llanos. The rumors caused enough commotion for Jose Maria Caballero to regard it as “terrible” in his Diario.\textsuperscript{15} Fear of the French does not adequately explain why revolutions began in 1810 rather than in 1809 when the creation of the Quiteño junta explicitly framed its actions as countering afrancesados (Frenchified Spaniards).\textsuperscript{16} In that instance, creoles in New Granada opted to negotiate a peaceful return for Quito rather than join Quiteños by forming a junta in the capital. It was French institutions, Spaniards’ wanting to adopt French practices, and their association with Napoleon that Spanish Americans sought to hold at bay.

Anxiety over being tied to the French only partially explains elites’ growing concerns in 1810. The defeat of Spain and the chaos that would follow in the wake of a French victory emerged in Spanish American discourse as a specter of anarchy. Although only Caldas’s paper remained in active circulation, neogranadinos received news from other sources: mail. In a letter to his uncle the oidor of Quito, Camilo Torres wrote of receiving his uncle’s letter bearing “the disastrous news from Spain that we have had confirmed since the previous mail with letters from Cartagena and by English newspapers.”\textsuperscript{17} Already in late May 1810, Torres asked “what are we to do, what measures should we take to sustain our independence and liberty, this independence that we should have enjoyed since the month of September of 1808?”\textsuperscript{18}

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\textsuperscript{15} José María Caballero, Diario de La Independencia (Bogotá: Talleres Gráficos Banco Popular, 1974), 66.
\textsuperscript{16} A slew of pejoratives against Spaniards emerged during the Independence Wars, including afrancesados, Napoleonistas, Bonapartistas, and more See Claude Morange, “¿Afrancesados o Josefinos?,” Spagna Contemporanea 27 (2005): 27–54; For fears of French ties in Quito, see Manuel María Borrero, La revolución quiteña, 1809-1812 (Quito: Editorial Espejo, 1962), 60–90.
\textsuperscript{17} Camilo Torres a Ignacio Tenorio, May 29, 1810, in Documentos históricos, 54-55.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid, 55.
independence here is notable because it can be read as a desire for an independent state but not because of the despotism of Spain. Rather, Torres’s letter underscores the tension of the Spanish War for Independence and the profound impact it would have on Spanish America if the Spanish lost the conflict. And in mid-1810, news from the Peninsula emphasized “the ruin of Spain was inevitable, and that a miracle was necessary to save her.” Torres, one of the leading lawyers of the kingdom and prolific writers of the period, depicted the past years of attempting to salvage the empire as a waste. Instead, “this kingdom, I say, can, must organize itself. With the Monarchy dissolved and Spain lost, we find ourselves in the same situation as the eldest sons would be after the death of their common father.” Indeed, anticipating the fall of Spain contributed to speculation about how to prevent chaos in Spanish America. Plans ranged from convoking a new election to form a regency to rule over Spanish America in Ferdinand VII’s absence to inviting one of the children of House Braganza, the Portuguese royal family, to become monarch. For Torres, none of these plans addressed the dual need of preserving local customs and preventing anarchy in Spanish America.

The formation of the small Council of Regency represented a step back for popular representation endorsed by the Junta Central’s declaration in 1808. For some creoles in Santafé, the formation of a junta for New Granada could offset the imbalance. The establishment of local, representative government not only aligned with practices in the Peninsula, but it could better serve New Granada in an imperial context. Before Santafé would recognize the Council of Regency, the lawyer Ignacio de Herrera y Vergara argued that the Cabildo of Santafé be allowed

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19 Revolution was not a desired outcome. Even in 1809, papers in Bogotá followed French victories against the Spanish as well as the Napoleonic Wars in general with headlines such as “state of the revolutions of Europe.” Napoleon’s conquests were disruptive and produced change, but not in an orderly manner. See El Alternativo del Redactor Americáno, no. 37-44, June 27-November 11, 1809, BNC, Hemeroteca digital, Prensa del siglo XIX. https://catalogoenlinea.bibliotecanacional.gov.co/client/es_ES/search/asset/158360
20 Camilo Torres a Ignacio Tenorio, May 29, 1810, in Documentos históricos, 64.
21 Ibid.
to “summon, then, to this capital the deputies of all the cabildos, so that a Junta be formed, without prejudice to the established authorities. This Body will dictate all the provisions that conform to the conservation of la Patria.”

While it is not clear how many shared Herrera’s specific idea, elites (not limited to creoles) wanted to improve local government without sparking disorder.

Nevertheless, Santafereños did not act until July 20, 1810. Limited sources make it difficult to understand the extent of the hesitant revolution in Bogotá. The unresolved tension from the 1809 elections and concern over the outcome of the war in Iberia were not enough for Santafereños to overthrow the local government. In his research on the Caribe-Colombian experience during the Age of Revolutions, Alfonso Muñera points out the need to consider municipal rivalries, such as the deep rivalry between the coastal city Cartagena and the New Granadan capital in the Andes, as an impediment to autonomist or even independence movements. During the imperial crisis, tensions between the two cities increased as coastal elites requested for Viceroy Amar to loosen trade restrictions which he continued to stymie between 1808 and 1810. Long-term rivalries based on commercial ties also divided the two cities. Cartagena’s role in the viceroyalty’s economy as the primary port of entry and Cartageño elites having loose connections with Santafé presented real risks for Santafereños to overthrow the viceregal government. More importantly, a significant Spanish garrison resided in

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24 A well-known example of the links between Cartagena and Santafé is Jose Ignacio de Pombo, a merchant in Cartagena that supported the Botanical Expedition. He was a significant patron of Francisco José de Caldas and subscribed to Caldas’ Semanario del Nuevo Reyno de Granada (1808-1809) and Continuación del Semanario (1810). However, such links do not necessarily indicate a sense of loyalty between the two regions. See Manuel
Cartagena that could suppress any uprising in the interior of New Granada.\textsuperscript{25} As Gutiérrez Ardila astutely claims, “to be successful, the New Granadan revolution had to begin in the Caribbean and not in the Andes.”\textsuperscript{26}

While a thorough examination of the independence movements in coastal New Granada is beyond the scope of this chapter, Cartagena’s hesitancy to erect an autonomous government underscores a distinct yet similar aspect that elites confronted across the viceroyalty. Embracing popular sovereignty presented Cartagena elites with the frank reality that, as Marixa Lasso has shown, required “first securing the support of the local lower classes.”\textsuperscript{27} Between May and June 1810, creoles actively constructed alliances with \textit{pardos} (people of mixed African descent) in Cartagena to build up support in a movement against the Spanish governor, Francisco Montes. The arrival of the Council of Regency’s deputy, Antonio Villavicencio, did nothing to dissuade local unrest and in fact, he approved of the \textit{cabildo}’s move to establish a \textit{junta}.\textsuperscript{28} Similar alliances between creoles and \textit{castas} emerged in other cities like Mompox and, moreover, had a serious impact on the reforms passed by the Cartagena \textit{junta}.\textsuperscript{29}

\textsuperscript{25} Muñera, \textit{El fracaso de la nación}, 82–87; A similar point is discussed in “A múltiples revoluciones, a múltiples soberanías,” in Gutiérrez Ardila, \textit{Un nuevo reino}.

\textsuperscript{26} See “A múltiples revoluciones, a múltiples soberanías,” in Gutiérrez Ardila, \textit{Un nuevo reino}.

\textsuperscript{27} Marixa Lasso, \textit{Myths of Harmony: Race and Republicanism during the Age of Revolution, Colombia, 1795-1831} (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2007), 44–47.

\textsuperscript{28} “A múltiples revoluciones, a múltiples soberanías,” in Gutiérrez Ardila, \textit{Un nuevo reino}.

\textsuperscript{29} Primarily, granting people of African descent equal citizenship. This was not done in Santafé, instead indios were granted full citizenship very early on. See Lasso, \textit{Myths of Harmony}, 16–33.
By mid-July 1810, the cities of Cartagena, Cali, Pamplona, and Socorro had all created juntas before the capital of the viceroyalty making it difficult to depict Santafé as leading a revolutionary movement.\(^30\) The reduced threat of counterattack from the coastal forces made the possibility of establishing a junta more palatable.\(^31\) Nevertheless, while the coastal provinces engaged in establishing self-rule, elites in Santafé had yet to act. Importantly, the inaction did not occur for lack of a discourse regarding autonomy in the capital. Torres’ letter to his uncle is useful here as Camilo Torres was not only an active member in the creation of the junta in Santafé, but, as an active writer, his letter provides a window into the thinking of Santafereño elite circles before July 20, 1810.\(^32\) The abdication of the monarchs had created a crisis of sovereignty that initially was addressed by the formation of the Junta Central, but when that failed, sovereignty reverted back to the people.\(^33\) The significance of that shift meant, for Torres, that “free peoples have the right to do all that is necessary to conserve and perfect, and in virtue

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\(^30\) Local abuses contributed to the creation of juntas across New Granada. The Junta of Socorro repudiated local government, declaring: “The Province of Socorro, always faithful to the legitimate Sovereign and constantly following the just national cause, has suffered for the space of a year the Corregidor Don Josef Valdes Pozida, with which an activity and zeal without equal has desired to sustain in us the most terror and fright worthy of the infamous Godoy.” See Documentos sobre la revolución de Santafe y Nariño, 1800-1825. This is part of a collection completed by the Biblioteca Nacional de Colombia in 2017 to digitize the Archivo Histórico José Manuel Restrepo (AHR), a collection in the AGN. Accessed February 3, 2022, https://catalogoenlinea.bibliotecanacional.gov.co/client/es_ES/search/asset/134191/0; This point is also made in Diario Político de Santafé de Bogotá, no. 22, December 4, 1810, BLAA, Hemeroteca Digital Histórica, accessed March 1, 2022, https://babel.banrepcultural.org/digital/collection/p17054coll26/id/1423/rec/12

\(^31\) Not all of the coastal provinces chose to create juntas. See Steinar Saether, Identidades e independencia en Santa Marta y Riohacha, 1750-1850 (Bogotá, Colombia: ICANH Instituto Colombiano de Antropología e Historia, 2005); Steinar Saether, “La relación entre Cartagena y Santa Marta, 1810-1813,” in Cartagena de Indias en la independencia, ed. Haroldo Calvo Stevenson and Adolfo Meisel Roca (Cartagena: Banco de la República, 2011), 181–214.

\(^32\) Also see “Declaración judicial de Joaquín Camacho respecto de la riña acaecida en el cabildo de Santafé entre el síndico procurador general y el alférez real Bernardo Gutiérrez. Santafé, 2 de mayo de 1810,” in Joaquin Camacho, Joaquín Camacho: de lector ilustrado a publicista republicano (1807-1815), ed. Armando Martínez Garnica, Isidro Vanegas Useche, and Daniel Gutiérrez Ardila (Bogotá: Universidad Externado de Colombia, 2011), 95–97.

\(^33\) This will become an explicit point after the creation of the junta. See Camilo Torres and Frutos Joaquín Gutiérrez, “Motivos que han obligado al Nuevo Reyno de Granada a reasumir los derechos de la Soberanía, remover las autoridades del antiguo gobierno e instalar una Suprema Junta baxo la sola dominación y en nombre de nuestro soberano Fernando VII, y con independencia del Consejo de Regencia y de qualquiera otra representación,” September 25, 1810, BNC, accessed March 22, 2022, https://catalogoenlinea.bibliotecanacional.gov.co/client/es_ES/search/asset/74480.
of this right they can change the government and reform the constitution whenever those reforms and mutations result in happiness.” Torres’ claims are exemplary of the “pluralism and confusion” of Spanish American political thought. The reclamation of sovereignty can be linked to Spanish traditions of pactismo associated with the scholastic Francisco Suárez. But as other historians have shown, there is plenty of evidence to indicate Spanish Americans used Rousseau’s social contract just as much as they read Hobbes, Locke, and Montesquieu.

Spanish Americans did not wield ideologies as purists, but rather justified their actions using what ideas made sense to them. This point becomes more evident when Spanish Americans invoked past revolutions and expressed their interest in some (or anxieties about others). Torres’s notion of sovereignty emphasized a plural right to establish free governments. Torres was not writing about a united or national pursuit of sovereignty. Rather, Torres’ letter highlights his approach to sovereignty as rooted in many sovereignties. To protect that right, especially for smaller states, Torres pointed to the United States. Despite their “miserable establishments at the time of the independence war,” Vermont, Kentucky, and Tennessee made beneficial agreements with the United States’ government that assisted those territories in realizing their full potential when they reformed as “particular States.”

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34 Camilo Torres a Ignacio Tenorio, May 29, 1810, in Documentos históricos, 59.
37 See “La constitución del Estado de Cundinamarca y su política expansionista,” in Gutiérrez Ardila, Un nuevo reino; For an examination of the usages of nation, patria, and more between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see José Carlos Chiaramonte, Nación y estado en Iberoamérica. El lenguaje político en tiempos de la independencia (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 2004).
38 Torres continues, writing “Let’s imitate the conduct of the North Americans, let’s follow in the footsteps of that philosophical people, and then we will be as happy as them.” See Camilo Torres a Ignacio Tenorio, May 29, 1810, in Documentos históricos, 65.
Torres. In Spanish America, Torres saw regions with the size, wealth, and population “capable of forming a grand family and an independent State.” Torres’ comments about Spanish America’s capabilities were not a critique of Spanish rule so much as commentary on the Americas’ right to sovereignty.

For as much as he admired the United States government, Torres also did not want to simply imitate the North American country. A new government needed to represent and address local concerns and understand local circumstances. The loss of Spain, the dissolution of the monarchy had broken the political links that united the Spanish nation. In response, there was no other remedy: “The kingdoms and provinces that make up these vast dominions, are free and independent and they cannot nor should not recognize another Government or other rulers than those same kingdoms and provinces they nominated and they gave freely and spontaneously according to their necessities, their desires, their situation, their political views, their grand interests and according to their spirit, character, and customs of their habitants.” Torres’ approach to independence for New Granada emphasized that a new government ought not to seek to change local customs. Accepting monarchs from other dynasties could threaten the culture of New Granada.

It is likely Torres’ shared his thoughts on government before the creation of the Junta of Santafé on July 20, 1810. Torres had connections to many of the creoles involved in the revolutionary act that occurred two months later than the date of the letter. Moreover, Torres’

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39 Ibid.
40 Camilo Torres a Ignacio Tenorio, May 29, 1810, in Documentos históricos, 64.
41 Of the thirty-five members of the junta, Torres at least had direct connections with six through the tertulias they attended (Antonio Baraya, José Acevedo y Gómez, Luis Caicedo y Florez, and Frutos Joaquín Gutiérrez) and through the Colegio del Rosario (Joaquín Camacho and Antonio Ignacio Gallardo). Junta members such as Manuel de Pombo had relatives that attended tertulias linked to Torres. See Victor Uribe-Urán, Honorable Lives: Lawyers, Family, and Politics in Colombia, 1780-1850 (Pittsburgh, Pa: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000), 47–49; Hector M. Ardila, Hombres y letras de Colombia (Bogotá: Gráficas Herpin Ltda, 1984), 16–17, 553–58.
letter acknowledges receiving English newspapers and news about Cartagena before May 1810, pointing to the continuation of late colonial reading circles and tertulias in the capital during the imperial crisis. Indeed, creoles’ admiration of the United States’ government is a well-recorded fact. But as David Bushnell has rightly pointed out, it is important to distinguish that admiration from imitation. Other revolutionary examples, like the French model, were not as popular because they had come to be closely associated with Napoleon.

It is significant, then, that the Act of Revolution provisioned Santafé’s Junta Suprema as temporary and established as one of its main objectives the creation of a constitution to govern over New Granada. The new government of the kingdom would form around an elected body of deputies from the provinces of the viceroyalty that would convene in Bogotá. This congressional body would not rule the provinces supremely, rather the act argued the constitution “must be formed on the bases of freedom and independence respecting them, linked only by a federative system.” The act also cemented the place of the sovereignty of the people but the revolutionary step also maintained links to monarchy, declaring the new government could not “abdicate the imprescriptible rights of the sovereignty of the people to another person than that of its august and unfortunate monarch Fernando VII.”

Santafereños’ first autonomous government was to be a revolution under monarchy.

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42 Miguel de Pombo, a rosarista and member of the Botanical Expedition, translated the U.S. Constitution a year after the junta was formed. See “Constitución de los Estados Unidos de América: según se propuso por la Convención tenida en Filadelfia el 17 de septiembre de 1787, y ratificada después por los diferentes Estados, con las últimas adiciones; precedida de las actas de independencia y federación,” Miguel de Pombo, trans. (Bogotá: Imprenta Patriótica de D. Nicolas Calvo, 1811), BNC, accessed March 20, 2022, https://catalogoenlinea.bibliotecanacional.gov.co/client/es_ES/search/asset/73493


44 “Acta de la revolución,” Bogotá, July 20, 1810, AHUR, vol. 6, no. 57.

45 Ibid.
The Act of Revolution, passed on July 20, 1810, marked a fundamental shift in the relationship between colony and metropole. That shift, however, resembled less flipping a switch and more opening a door. The significance of the revolution continued to grow and change after the formation of the Junta Suprema in Bogotá. Likewise, the act did not seek to create a government independent of monarchy nor did it abolish the antiguo regimen in one moment. The junta included Viceroy Antonio Amar in the plan, making him the president of the junta. The document also recognized the Council of Regency as its superior government. It is possible that these were more conservative measures included to help pass the act. In the following weeks, the Council of Regency was no longer recognized as a legitimate governing body and later, the Viceroy was removed from the presidency and placed under house arrest. Taken together, the vestiges of the old order underscore the hesitancy of the revolution and the constant negotiations that took place after the declaration.

Maintaining core elements of the antiguo regimen was not an attempt to conceal sedition, but it certainly was revolutionary. After all, the monarchy, one of the oldest pillars of colonial society, had been confirmed as part of the autonomous experiment. Interestingly, the proclamation included the stipulation that Ferdinand VII would have to travel to the viceroyalty to receive the right to rule. How that would have worked is less important than the assertion of popular sovereignty over the monarchy’s historical right to rule. The modification of the preponderance of monarchy, importantly, retained its hierarchical status but conditioned it on local acceptance. The Spanish Monarchy had been a significant part of Santaféreño society and it

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46 Even the more disliked members of the colonial government, the oidor Juan Hernández de Alba and fiscal Diego Firas, were arrested after the second day of the revolution and did not suffer personal attacks. In August 1810, the Junta sent them to Socorro. See La Constitución Feliz, no. 1, August 17, 1810, 17, BLAA, Hemeroteca Digital Histórica, accessed September 9, 2021.
47 This is discussed in “A múltiples revoluciones, a múltiples soberanías,” in Gutiérrez Ardila, Un nuevo reino.
understood Spanish customs. Conversely, the treatment of Catholicism in the Act of Revolution maintained its reverent place in society. Indeed, as Gabriel Entin has shown, Catholicism retained its significance in Spanish American republican experiments because it was linked to ancient notions of political community.\textsuperscript{48} Catholicism also represented a significant local custom that was essential to not only the maintenance of order but establishing good virtue.\textsuperscript{49}

In the following weeks of the revolution, creole leaders engaged a public that had participated in the revolution. Although he did not speak for everyone, Torres’ outlook on the imperial crisis was not disturbed by overthrowing the viceregal government. Local government relied on “terror and oppression.”\textsuperscript{50} Creoles were far more reluctant to cast off the imperial framework and the benefits of the empire. The viceroyalty during the imperial crisis had become an administrative organization that could be replaced, but creoles lacked the luxury of time to properly plan what an autonomous state would look like under the Spanish Monarchy. Moreover, Torres’ letter exposes the deep-rooted anxieties of elites wrestling with the question of independence, “I open my eyes, and I see nothing but dark clouds that threaten a terrible tempest. There are good patriots, enlightened and virtuous citizens, that know their rights and know how to sustain them; but the number of ignorant, egotistical and motionless is considerable.”\textsuperscript{51} Torres feared the tide of anarchy that many feared would come “in the case that Spain is subjugated.”\textsuperscript{52}

What is clear is that the establishment of the \textit{juntas} in New Granada created a space where the new movements needed to be justified. The Junta of Santafé published \textit{bandos}

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\textsuperscript{49} Newspapers created after the July Revolution consistently referenced the catholic nature of its citizenry.
\textsuperscript{50} Camilo Torres a Ignacio Tenorio, May 29, 1810, in \textit{Documentos históricos}, 55.
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid, 56.
(decrees) and official documents that sought to define the revolution. Even if the elites in Santafé possessed similar goals and agreed on the methods to achieve their objectives, they still had to win support. Bandos were short, published documents that the Junta used “so that it reaches everyone's notice, it will be published by Bando tomorrow and copies of it will be posted in the aforementioned Parishes and other customary places.” For instance, three days after the revolution, the Junta Suprema released a decree to refine the objectives of the provisional government. Responding to the conflict in Europe and desire to avoid “the horrible monstrosity of anarchy and the division of the Provinces,” the Junta Suprema defended its actions as the “inevitable necessity to alter the Government.” The document established nine guiding principles, beginning with first the defense of the Catholic Church and then the rights of Ferdinand VII. The third point, however, emphasized the importance of prohibiting the “spirit of division” which included a call for “the love that el Pueblo (the people) should have for Españoles Europeos, recognizing them as your siblings and fellow citizens.

53 A well-known example is the manifesto written by Camilo Torres and Frutos Joaquín Gutiérrez, “Motives that have obligated the New Kingdom of Granada to resume the rights of Sovereignty.” Written months after the July 20 revolution, the authors depicted the injustices they endured under the interim governments that succeeded the Bayonne Charter of 1808. Rather than a declaration of independence, the document defends the resumption of sovereignty based on ancient Spanish traditions and the hypocrisy of denying americanos the right to popular sovereignty when the juntas of Spain relied on the concept. See Camilo Torres and Frutos Joaquín Gutiérrez, “Manifiesto sobre la revolución de Santafé en 1810,” Bogotá, September 25, 1810, 1-135, BNC, accessed May 26, 2022, https://catalogoenlinea.bibliotecanacional.gov.co/client/es_ES/search/asset/74480/0.

54 Even the notorious event that is popularly regarded as the spark of the revolution, “el florero de Llorente” or the flower vase incident, took place in “the royal street, the most public of the city.” While perhaps not performative, the actions were deliberately meant to rile up support. These events are depicted in Manuel del Socorro Rodríguez, “Relación sumaria instructiva de las novedades ocurridas en la M.N. y M.L. ciudad de Santafé de Bogotá, capital del Nuevo Reyno de Granada, desde la tarde del 20 de julio de 1810, hasta el dia de la fecha,” in La Constitución Feliz, no. 1, August 17, 1810, 2-3, BLAA, Hemeroteca Digital Histórica, accessed September 9, 2021, https://babel.banrepcultural.org/digital/collection/p17054coll26/id/1444/rec/7.


56 “Bando al pueblo sensible, docil, cristiano, y fiel de esta ciudad y su comarca,” in Documentos sobre la revolución de Santafé y Nariño, 1800-1825, July 23, 1810, 91-92, BNC, AHR.

57 Included in the third point is an addition that the Junta committed to “destroy those opposed to the character of a truly Christian People.” Ibid, 92.
sustaining public tranquility, the *Junta Suprema* had anticipated disorder and prevented its arrival. The *junta's* depiction of the course of action signifies the great emphasis placed on the uncertainty of autonomous experiment.

The *Junta Suprema's* continued existence required the consent of the governed. This point not only applies in the theoretical sense of the notion of popular sovereignty, but it is also evident in creoles’ actions. Aside from *bandos*, one of the primary ways in which creoles attempted to obtain that consent was through newspapers. Within four months of the creation of the *junta* in Bogotá, three new periodicals had been created: *La Constitución Feliz*, *El Aviso al Público*, and el *Diario Político de Santafé de Bogotá*. The proliferation of public papers was not coincidental, but rather an intentional product of the *Junta Suprema’s* battle for public opinion.58 In the first issues of each paper, editors differentiated the new government from the *antiguo regimen*. One paper posed the question: “If the governments established by the horrendous title of conquest are respected and obeyed by men; how much more so should those who establish Reason and Wisdom, to make amends to the Divine Religion, ensure legitimate sovereignty, oppose despotism, honor humanity and perpetuate the common good?”59 The increased presence of newspapers also pulled from creoles’ experiences in the late colonial period. Men of letters wrote, read, and debated proposals, scientific findings, and news from abroad throughout the late eighteenth century and first decade of the nineteenth century. Through those practices, creoles had become skilled writers and honed a craft that in the turmoil of the creation of *juntas* became

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useful for entirely different reasons than when creoles engaged in those practices before the imperial crisis.\textsuperscript{60}

The revolution brought a new audience for public papers. Manuel del Socorro Rodríguez, one of the more well-known writers in the capital and editor of three newspapers before 1810, wrote the first and only edition of \textit{La Constitución Feliz}.\textsuperscript{61} While historians have depicted the paper failing because it was not radical enough, \textit{La Constitución Feliz} is nevertheless worth examining because of its coverage of the events of July 20 as well as the language used to depict the events.\textsuperscript{62} It is possible that part of the reason Rodríguez’s paper failed to obtain sufficient interest is that \textit{La Constitución Feliz} followed the format of his previous papers (\textit{Redactor Americano}) complete with drawn out arguments meant for reading and discussion.

Comparatively, the publications of \textit{Diario Político} were significantly shorter (four pages on average compared to Rodríguez’s twenty-four pages) and full of proses that could be read aloud more easily.\textsuperscript{63} The shorter length was intentional. In its prospectus, the \textit{Diario Político} outlined its goal of shaping opinion as being linked to the press:

\begin{quote}
Spreading enlightenment, instructing the peoples, pointing out the dangers that threaten us, and the way to avoid them, fixing the opinion, gathering the wills and strengthening freedom and independence can only be achieved through the printing press. The rapid circulation of public papers, the brevity of the speeches,
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{60} In 1810, the primary editors of the periodicals were the Director of the Royal Library Manuel del Socorro Rodríguez, Fray (friar) Diego Francisco Padilla, Director of the Astronomical Observatory Francisco José de Caldas, and the lawyer and member of the executive body of the Junta Suprema Joaquín Camacho. Aside from Fray Padilla, all of these men edited periodicals and wrote articles in those newspapers prior to 1810.

\textsuperscript{61} The same Manuel del Socorro Rodríguez that edited \textit{Redactor Americano} and \textit{El Alternativo del Redactor Americano}.

\textsuperscript{62} It is also significant that \textit{La Constitución Feliz}’s only publication came out before the first issue of \textit{Diario Político}, indicating that support for Rodríguez’s paper shifted away to the other experienced journalists in Bogotá. See Luis Martínez Delgado and Sergio Elías Ortiz, \textit{El periodismo en la Nueva Granada. 1810-1811} (Bogotá: Academia Colombiana de Historia, 1961).

\textsuperscript{63} The length of Rodríguez’s only issue for \textit{La Constitución Feliz} resembled Caldas’ \textit{Continuación del Semanario del Nuevo Reino de Granada}, which published scientific findings and economic proposals. Hardly the content to be read aloud to crowds passing through the streets. In addition, the issues from \textit{Aviso al Público} averaged four pages long and that paper survived for six months or twenty-one issues.
the laconism and the choice of subjects that characterize them make them the most suitable for achieving these important goals.64

Elites continued to provide the means to support papers through subscriptions, but they were not the only audience for published papers. Low literacy rates in New Granada at the start of the interregnum also shaped how authors packaged news and information into more readable formats.65 The printing press allowed editors to reach a wider audience, an audience that the authors of the Diario Político argued could “multiply at will, carry the principles and enlightenment everywhere, and they dissipate the clouds that at all times form sedition and calumny. Only they can inspire union, calm spirits and calm storms.”66 Oral delivery of the news became a critical part of winning over the public to support the new government.

Even if Rodríguez’s paper represented a more moderate take on the events, there are notable differences in the way the editor depicted patriotism. While papers in 1809 focused on love of country as supporting Spain’s struggle against France, Rodríguez’s new paper demonstrates a fluid use of patriotism that was neither anti-Spanish nor national. Participants were considered patriotas (patriots) rather than just americanos for their contribution to the July 20 Revolution, but this was not a revolution against Spain or the monarchy. Rather, Rodríguez recalls hearing “death to the bad Spaniards, and long live the good!” as the common cry which he poetically put “resonated throughout every neighborhood and plaza in the capital…with the rapidity and activity of thunder, it gave spring to the electrical matter that boiled in all the hearts.”67 Published almost a month after the events, Rodríguez celebrated the city’s inhabitants

65 For more on illiteracy in New Granada, see Rebecca Earle, “Information and Disinformation in Late Colonial New Granada,” The Americas 54, no. 2 (October 1997): 168–70.
66 Joaquín Camacho and Francisco José de Caldas, “Prospecto,” in Diario Político de Santafé de Bogotá, no. 1, August 27, 1810, 1.
67 Rodríguez, La Constitución Feliz, no. 1, August 17, 1810, 3.
level of activity and interest as a demonstration of local virtue. In other words, creoles’ actions proved the *beneméritos* (good merits) of the community and their commitment to the *bien común* (common good). There is tremendous continuity here in the way creoles viewed the political community as rooted in the municipality. Tamar Herzog shows that creoles’ legal efforts to distinguish between European and American Spaniards was not rooted in new cultural or ethnic terms, but rather “depended on the mutual ties of love and integration” that were linked to *vecindad* and *naturaleza*. In the context of the revolution, the emphasis on *patriotism*, then, was not antagonistic to existing in a Spanish political community but rather required vigilance to ensure local needs were fulfilled. At the same time, creoles’ assertion of the right to arbitrate good government, while not insurrectionary, was revolutionary. Creoles knew and used the language of public happiness, common good, and *patria* prior to the imperial crisis and in the context of the crisis of monarchy those terms continued to be the standard of good government.

While he praised the event as a clear example of the patriotism of the inhabitants of the city, Rodríguez focused more on how the day unfolded: “the marvelous revolution that, without spilling a single drop of blood, prevented the shedding of innumerable victims who, due to their fidelity and obedience, were going to sacrifice themselves on the disastrous altars of death.” The triumph of the day had nothing to do with republicanism but bringing the spirit of reform to the capital. The bloodless act had cast away “the black specters of tyranny and despotism” to make way for “the brilliant Aurora of common happiness.” Compassion and respect drove the revolution against tyranny, not vengeance. Keen to highlight that “enlightened and Catholic” nature of the revolution, Rodríguez gave examples of *americanos* shielding Spanish ministers

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69 Rodríguez, *La Constitución Feliz*, no. 1, August 17, 1810, 4.
70 Ibid.
that were “the most culpable enemies of the common good” from harm all while chanting: “Charity with our neighbors, and forgiveness for our enemies.”

Rodríguez's admiration of the bloodless transition of power did not so much wonder how a revolution could have occurred so much as appreciate how it could involve so many without turning more volatile. Lack of violence demonstrated the civility and superiority of Spanish society.

Conversely, *Diario Político* and *Aviso al Público* covered the revolution as a realization of liberty and independence from the Council of Regency. While *Diario Político* had explicit links to the *Junta Suprema* of Bogotá, Fray Padilla’s periodical *Aviso al Público* received support from Jorge Tadeo Lozano. Padilla’s paper justified the revolution as a rejection of the tyranny of the Council of Regency. It was the Regency, Padilla argued, that caused “calamities” in Quito. The friar cited a *Gazeta* from Seville that reported the *Junta Central* had approved of Quito’s *junta* established in August 1809. However, when the Regency succeeded the *Junta Central*, it “changed the opinion or at least it did not act in time to prevent hostile action against Quito.”

The Regency’s tyranny, then, could be identified in its negligence of the Americas and local concerns.

In the months following July 1810, two themes emerged in the periodicals of the capital that highlight the use of newspapers to sway public opinion in favor of the *Junta Suprema*. First, both *Aviso* and *Diario Político* identified threats to the primacy of the Santafé’s *Junta* that took the form of both external and internal dangers. Authors of the papers emphasized the benevolence of the *junta* in the capital and marked cities that rejected Santafé’s assumed role as *de facto* leader of the viceroyalty as duplicitous. Second, the periodicals constructed competing

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71 The two officials were * oidor* Juan Hernández de Alba and *fiscal* Diego Frias. Ibid, 17-19.
narratives of how to solve the revolution’s uncertain future. *Diario Político* depicted overthrowing the viceregal government as an obvious good that not only stirred subalterns to act but could be seen as a just cause historically by framing select individual’s past actions as having always wanted revolution. The revolution became an ambiguous term that permitted reaching into the past to create precursors. Aviso al Público, on the other hand, warned of the divisions that the assumption of sovereignty could cause without a strong central authority to guide the transition.

It is worth spending some space discussing the first point as it illuminates the political situation Santafé found itself in during the closing months of 1810. The urge to identify the capital’s revolution with the spirit of liberty, or at the very least, opposed to tyranny is clear in the representation of Spanish royalists’ suppression of Quito that had been ongoing since the Quiteño junta was crushed in October 1809. News of the Mutiny of 1810, however, escalated Quito’s experience from passive recipient of tyranny to a city actively suffering. In August 1810, a mass revolt occurred in Quito attempting to free members of the junta of 1809 that had been in the city’s prison since the previous year. It was a massacre. At least two hundred Quiteños died along with some of the prisoners and Spanish soldiers. In Santafé, *Diario Político* published a decree that declared while the Junta “has extended its beneficial sight over every place in the New Kingdom, it has taken a keener interest in the fate of the illustrious and afflicted inhabitants

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73 I find this process similar to what Lina Del Castillo examines in her excellent investigation of nation building in the early Republic of Colombia. She shows how early republicans reached into the past to separate Caldas and his work from Bourbon Spain to justify independence and the republican experiment. See especially “Gran Colombian Print Culture and the Erasure of the Spanish Enlightenment,” in Lina Del Castillo, *Crafting a Republic for the World: Scientific, Geographic, and Historiographic Inventions of Colombia* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2018), 27-75; Also see Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).
The proclamation committed Santafé to “conspire with the best energy to lift them from the oppression they were suffering.” At the same time, the Junta’s decree issued a warning to the presidente of Quito:

So that he beware of committing the slightest excess against the unfortunates who were imprisoned there for the events of August 10, because in case he exercised with them the slightest act of hostility, the Junta would take complete revenge and satisfaction, proceeding to the punishment of such an execrable crime, and of the injustice with which some men have been persecuted who, far from being criminals, were worthy of reward and praise, if their deeds were looked at with impartial and just eyes, without the concern that dazzles tyrants.

Of course, the Junta of Santafé utterly lacked the capability of enforcing its threat.

Nevertheless, the warning positioned the capital as the resistor of tyranny and guarantor of justice, a role that the ex-viceroy might have been able to claim, or most significantly, a status reserved for the monarch. Quito took on a rhetorical position in the capital as serious action could not be committed, at least not while the kingdom was divided. In claiming superiority, Santafé sought to secure the right to lead the reconstitution of the kingdom.

More locally, the Junta Suprema feared anarchy and disorder within the city. Since the day of the revolution, the new government had faced challenges to the social order. Despite being bloodless, the revolution was not clean and certainly not accomplished by creoles or men alone. Rodríguez’s depiction of July 20 writes of the involvement of los naturales (indigenous) joining the cries against “bad Spaniards:” “The apathetic submission in which the natives lay was converted, by a rare metamorphosis never imagined, into a courageous energy, which, acting in common concert, produced admissible effects, certainly worthy of the greatest astonishment.”


75 Ibid, 36.

76 Clément Thibaud shows that the size of the engagements between 1810-1815 were small. Thibaud points to creole leaders’ distrust of the military institution as a main reason. See “Las fuerzas armadas en tiempos de la Patria Boba en la Nueva Granada (1811-1816),” Clément Thibaud, Repúblicas en armas: Los ejércitos bolivarianos en la Guerra de Independencia en Colombia y Venezuela, trans. Nicolás Suescún (Bogotá: Planeta, 2003), 237–82.

77 Manuel del Socorro Rodríguez, La Constitución Feliz, no. 1, August 17, 1810, 3.
While his representation of indigenous activity is in line with contemporary approaches, Rodríguez’s inclusion of the indigenous in his account of the day’s events is notable when compared to depictions of blacks. Creoles were intimately aware and anxious about shifting the social hierarchies of colonial society. One paper reported on rumors of three hundred well-armed negros marching on the capital “to attack the people and free” Spanish officials. The rumors were only half true. An armed group of people of African descent did arrive days after the revolution, but they voiced their interest in becoming “auxiliaries for la Patria.” Learning of blacks’ intentions, the author wrote, allowed for the town to return to a calm state. Black interest in participating in the revolution, however, did not receive attention from the paper. Instead, the report celebrated creoles’ quick response to the rumor in which men and women armed themselves to defend la patria.

In contrast, indigenous participation could not only be depicted as part of the revolution, but the status of indigenous communities became a concern for the Junta Suprema. Indeed, indigenous communities became a part of the junta’s early efforts to construct a paternalistic image of the new government. In a decree passed two months after the July Revolution, the Junta declared its desire “to give a convincing testimony of the paternal sentiments that animate it towards all the inhabitants of this Kingdom, to whom its influence extends, and singularly towards the Indians.” The decree was a massive reform of indigenous status in the Santafe meant to counter what the Junta labeled as a “degraded” group “lacking representation” and

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“denied the right of land ownership.”\textsuperscript{80} Blaming the indigenous status on the Conquest and the society they came out of it, i.e. the Black Legend, the law ended Indian tribute, granted the indigenous full citizenship, dismantled the resguardo system, established a process to distribute the resguardo land to indigenous families, and outlined the creation of public schools.\textsuperscript{81} Inspired by early liberalism, the reform moved the indigenous under the auspices of the new government project. The Junta’s reorganization of colonial hierarchies served as a means to restructure the antiguo regimen into a new political family. Importantly, the action represents a significant effort on the part of the vulnerable junta to secure allies while, at the same time, to avert anarchy.

The revolution not only created opportunity for the castas, women were also involved in the transformative day. In the Diario Político de Santafé de Bogotá, the newspaper ended its third publication with the following report:

\begin{quote}
A woman whose name we do not know and who we regret not immortalizing in this Diary, gathered many of her sex, and in their presence took her son by the hand, gave him the blessing and said: ‘Go die with the men; we women (turning to those around her) will march forward; let us present our breasts to the canon, let the shrapnel unload on us; and the men who follow us, and whom we have saved from the first barrage, pass over our corpses, seize the artillery and liberate la Patria.’\textsuperscript{82}
\end{quote}

According to the editor, the unknown woman, “this formidable Amazon,” deserved a “sash of honor to reward merit and courage.”\textsuperscript{83} Rodríguez’s account of the day also confirms women participating in the events, writing “Women of all conditions and ages appeared armed alongside

\textsuperscript{80} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{81} The Cortes de Cádiz also implemented some of these reforms in the Spanish Constitution of 1812 but independent of New Granadan input. Other regions of the empire pushed for these changes in the debates. See Scott Eastman and Natalia Sobrevilla Perea, The Rise of Constitutional Government in the Iberian Atlantic World: The Impact of the Cádiz Constitution of 1812 (University of Alabama Press, 2015).


\textsuperscript{83} Named women accompanied the “unknown heroine:” Josefa Baraya, Petronila Lozano, Gabriela Barriga, Melchora Nieto. See Diario Político de Santafé de Bogotá, no. 2, August 29, 1810, 8.
the men.” Women as active participants appeared again on August 14 when a group of creole women prevented a mob from attacking the vicereine.

Honoring women’s visible participation, however, did not last. In the period after the revolution, depictions shifted from celebrating the mobilization of Santafereños on July 20 to constructing an image of the community that sought to mobilize support on the bases of loyalty and patriotism. Familial allusions that linked citizens in the capital to a new family rooted in the defense of the patria aimed to unite the public about the roles of its members.

Yesterday the Sun set on us in slavery, and today it has shed its rays on a free People, victorious and resting on its laurels. Proud of its liberty, [they] walk full of happiness from plaza to street. The husband recounted to his wife his efforts and exploits: An immense weight has been lifted from our shoulders; We no longer fear the fertility of our wives: the children, this sweet marital bond, will no longer be a heavy burden for the father; it will be more of a token given to la Patria. This patria will feed them, and satisfied with this tribute, will fill with the honors and goods of those who have given Citizens.

Women became crucial cogs in the defense of the new family that centered around the paternal Patria. Revolution had enabled the return of liberty, but it needed to be defended by all.

Anxieties about social hierarchies were accompanied by new narratives about the past. Identifying heroes of the revolution put the revolution of 1810 on a pedestal as a momentous historical moment that other individuals had tried to achieve but failed. The practice emerged specifically in Diario Político wherein the editors called to celebrate the accomplishments of Santafereños over Spanish tyranny, and, by pointing to individuals from the past, the revolutionary movement in the capital could claim creoles as their own to construct the narrative of a long struggle against injustice. For instance, one issue singled out Sinforoso Mutis, a creole

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84 Manuel del Socorro Rodríguez, La Constitución Feliz, no. 1, August 17, 1810, 8.
85 The group of women included Francisca Prieto, Magdalena Ortega and one of her daughters, and Rafaela Isazi (a peninsulare). See José Dolores Monsalve, Mujeres de La Independencia (Bogotá: Imprenta Nacional, 1926), 23; Garrido, Reclamos y representaciones: Variaciones sobre la política en el Nuevo Reino de Granada, 1770-1815, 289–90.
from Bucaramanga, as “one of the most worthy and zealous citizens for the good of the Patria” because he apparently “displayed these feelings” of revolution since he was arrested in the 1794 conspiracy (despite returning to Santafé and working in the Botanical Expedition). This practice was used to emphasize the enlightened status of the capital and that those with links to the city had benefited from its virtuous people and became compelled to resist oppression. Creoles born in other parts of the kingdom joined the pantheon of heroes. Moreover, because the capital contained the seat of viceregal power, creoles that came to the city witnessed firsthand the abuses of the corrupt government and had no other option, the narrative went, but to fight against the abuses of local officials. Depicted as a historical struggle, creoles could justify their seizure of power.

The editors of Diario Político embraced a polemic approach that not only glorified the events of July 20 but went back to previous events to elevate them to the same status as the revolutionary day. In the third issue of the paper, the editors singled out the 1809 instrucciones and Camilo Torres’ Representación of the cabildo of Santafé as a document that “had the courage to tell terrible truths to former officials” and “blamed Spain for its procedures with the Americas.” Other heroes of the revolution were identified for having endured “the eyes of the tyrant,” such as the magistral Andrés Rosillo who was arrested in October 1809 and imprisoned until the July Revolution. Rosillo’s example was so important in fact that in the Act of Revolution, the Junta Suprema explicitly expressed their desire to have Rosillo released from

88 “Se continua la historia de nuestra revolución,” in Diario Político de Santafé de Bogotá, no. 3, 9.
prison and that he be given a position in the government. Rosillo’s importance in the community as a religious leader made him a key individual to celebrate. In addition to those included in this pantheon of heroes, it is also significant to note who was excluded: Antonio Nariño. Like Rosillo, Nariño had been arrested in October 1809. And like Mutis, Nariño encountered Spanish “tyranny” in 1794. Nevertheless, no mention of Nariño appeared in public papers until Magdalena Ortega petitioned the Junta Suprema to release her husband.

This early dispute reveals the contestable nature of the revolution and the textures of creole’s political community present from the very beginning of the movement. Indeed, not every creole active in the spaces of sociability wanted to be a part of the revolution. For example, Francisco José de Caldas, one of the most productive naturalists in Santafé, did not participate in the events of July 20. Instead, he wrote to his wife about “terrible revolution that has happened to the Government.” Having spent the past two years trying to secure support for the Astronomical Observatory and Botanical Expedition, Caldas was more concerned that the commotion would take him away from his work. Conversely, Nariño contested the nature of revolution on account of his exclusion and what he came to see as hypocrisy. More fascinating is

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90 The line reads: “In this state, the people proclaimed with cheers and acclamations in favor of all those named; and noting the moderation of his Deputy, the aforementioned señor Regidor Don José Acevedo said that he should be the first of the Vocals, and immediately he also appointed the Magistral Doctor Don Andrés Rosillo as Vocal, acclaiming his freedom, as he has done all afternoon, and protesting to go at this moment to get him out of the prison where he is; señor Regidor made the crowd aware of the risks to which the personal safety of the individuals of the town would be exposed if he rushed to violence, offering him that the first provision to be made by Junta will take will be the release of said Magistral and his incorporation in it.” See “Acta de la revolución,” Bogotá, July 20, 1810, AHUR, vol. 6, no. 57.
91 It is not as though creole leaders were not aware that Nariño had been arrested, Torres’ letter makes a clear reference to “three that equally have been victims” in the Rosillo plot. See Torres a Ignacio Tenorio, May 29, 1810, in Documentos históricos, 56.
92 Nariño appears alongside Rosillo, Baltasar Miñano, Camilo Torres, and other creole leaders as individuals that “were the object of hate and vengeance of Amar and the Oidores.” See Diario Político de Santafé de Bogotá, no. 12, October 2, 1810, 45-48, BLAA, Hemeroteca Digital Histórica, accessed February 6, 2022, https://babel.banrepcultural.org/digital/collection/p17054coll26/id/1405/rec/12.
that Magdalena Ortega, Nariño’s wife, supported her husband in this contestation of meaning. In August 1810, Ortega petitioned the Junta in Santafé to order the release of her husband after he remained imprisoned more than a month after the July Revolution. Ortega’s argument focused on Nariño’s past actions, specifically his translation of the Rights of Man and Citizen, and claimed that for sixteen years Nariño “has been suffering for a crime that [now] all of Spain has taken advantage of to use their rights and establish their respective governments, for a crime that favors the present revolution in this kingdom and for a crime that was committed in the Castilian language, not in the French language.” More than any of the other creoles at the helm of the junta or its associated bodies, Nariño had experienced the Spanish justice system. Like the provisional government, Ortega constructed a new depiction of her husband’s past to make him appear as part of the present revolution. Her assertion contended with the identity of the revolution and its historical struggle.

While it is not clear if Ortega’s petition secured his release, Nariño had returned to Santafé by early December 1810 and obtained a position in Santafé’s delegation to the first attempt to form a common government between the juntas that had declared self-rule. His return to the city marks the start of increased social and political tension between the factions in the old capital. Not including the incredible variety of factions present across New Granada, two clear factions had emerged in Santafé by the end of 1810 that would come to define the civil war over the nature of representative government in the capital. One faction coalesced around rosaristas (graduates of Colegio del Rosario) and former members of the Botanical Expedition, such as

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95 Magdalena Ortega, “Representación de Magdalena Ortega a la Suprema Junta de Santafé de Bogotá,” Bogotá, August 31, 1810, AGN, Historia, legajo 11, fols. 79-81.
96 I am referring to royalist cities, royalist blocks which included indios and slaves that sought to modify their social status under crown authority, as well as the Confederated Cities of the Valley of Cauca, an autonomist movement formed between six cities in western New Granada.
Camilo Torres, Joaquín Camacho, José Acevedo y Gomez, and Miguel de Pombo. Importantly, these creole elites also had strong ties to provinces outside of the capital but had constructed ties in the capital through their occupations, activities, and interests. The other group centered around two kin groups that had significant power in the capital: the Álvarez and Lozano clans. Both families’ origins in New Granada stretch back to the early eighteenth century. By 1810, the families occupied a wide network of positions of power in the local government.

Although the factions are typically referred to as federalists and centralists, more recent scholarship has more precisely defined the groups’ debate to be over models of federalism. Federalists, those connected to Camilo Torres, were more closely aligned with confederation as they pursued a system where each province would resemble an independent state and be bound by common agreements. The other side, linked to the Álvarez and Lozano clans, desired a federalist system with a general government that did not need to negotiate with the provinces, but the provinces of the state would retain certain designated powers. These factions, however, did

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97 The Spaniard Jorge Antonio Lozano de Peralta, son of the oidor of the Audiencia of Santafé from 1722 to 1729, married María Josefa Caicedo, a creole a part of the wealthy Caicedo clan from the capital. Their marriage established a massive estate outside of Bogotá that then supported the Lozano clan in the coming decades, including the establishment of the Marquisate of San Jorge first awarded to Jorge Miguel Lozano de Peralta (grandson of the oidor) in 1772 by Viceroy Messia de la Cerda and confirmed by Charles III. The Marquis’ siblings and his children made powerful alliances with the other creole families through marriage, including the Sanz de Santamaria, González Manrique, and Álvarez clans. Likewise, the Álvarez family created extensive ties among the Bogotá elite. Founded through the marriage of the peninsulares Manuel de Bernardo Álvarez and María Josepha del Casal y Feiria in Bogotá in 1738, the Álvarez family came to include members of the Lozano and Valenzuela clans. Finally, Antonio Nariño y Álvarez and Magdalena Ortega’s marriage added yet another powerful creole family to the alliance of the Bogotá elite. See Vázquez Varela Ainara and Marín Leoz María Juana, “Señores del muy ilustre cabildo”: Diccionario biográfico del cabildo municipal de Santa Fe (1700-1810) (Editorial Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 2017), 366–81; Uribe-Uran, Honorable Lives, 60–64; and McFarlane, Colombia Before Independence, 200–41.

98 Among the members include: José Vicente Ortega who worked in the police and commerce section of the government. Crisanto Valenzuela and Ignacio Herrera served in the justice department as a lawyer and judge respectively. Luis Eduardo de Azuola, Pedro Groot, and Antonio Nariño’s uncle, Manuel de Bernardo Álvarez, had positions in the sección de Hacienda. See La Constitución Feliz, no. 1, August 17, 1810, 24.

99 See “Las provincias unidas,” in Gutiérrez Ardila, Un nuevo reino; For an excellent discussion of the links between the patriotic historiography that produced the notion of “Patria Boba” and the conflict between centralists and federalists, see Vanegas and Carrillo, “El pedestal erróneo para un prócer. Antonio Nariño y la revolución neogranadina,” 26–27.
not emerge immediately with the creation of the Junta Suprema nor can they be divided into strict ideological camps. At the beginning of the revolution in Santafé, both factions had yet to coalesce. For example, despite having ties with Camilo Torres, Antonio Baraya and Francisco José de Caldas (Torres’ cousin) did not firmly ally with Torres and the others until 1812. Instead, during the first year of the autonomist movement, faction members resided in the old capital where they could compete for public opinion. The insulated, almost domesticated nature of the political fight for support, however, dramatically shifted when, over the course of 1811, Antonio Nariño and his allies gained more ground in the city. Nariño’s alliance contained primarily family members, both blood and legal relatives. Their success in local politics is also attributable, however, to confederalists having stronger familial ties and greater political commitments to provinces outside of Santafé. Rather than support strong provincial powers because it was “the most right” form of government, elites used ideas of confederation to protect material possessions that were deeply connected to familial ties. However, confederalists conceded valuable ground in pursuit of their vision of general government for New Granada. As they continued in their urgent struggle to resolve the unfinished revolutions, the two factions grew further apart. Spatially, the groups ruptured the associations that they constructed during the antiguo regimen. The factions continued to scramble to define and defend revolution in a historical moment where internal and external threats could end all that had been achieved.

TOWARD GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Following through with the proclamation made in the Junta Suprema of Santafé and in the pursuit of avoiding anarchy, creoles convened a Congress in the old capital on December 22, 1810. Elections for the Congress began in early September and promised to bring together deputies from all of the provincial juntas, including Neiva, Mariquita, Nóvita, Socorro, and Pamplona. The larger juntas of Cartagena and Antioquia were invited as well. Despite being a “milestone in the birth of provincial states,” the elections for the Congress and the subsequent proceedings did not produce a general government.  

Although it held elections, the government of Cartagena refused to send deputies to the Congressional meeting in Santafé. With its own Junta Suprema in charge, Cartagena rejected the experimental Congress for first, not having firmly established proceedings nor being a permanent body. Another Congress would need to be convened, resulting in further delays in resolving the state of the kingdom. Second, the representative model of the temporary Congress did not use population size to dictate the number of representatives a province should be allotted, which undercut Cartagena’s potential advantage. Other regions, such as Antioquia, had not finished the election process and would have required the constituent Congress to delay until their arrival in March.

The uneven commitments of the revolutionary juntas were only the start of the difficulties of the first meeting. From the beginning, disputes threatened to delay or cancel the event, including a debate in the capital over when to start the Congress. Nevertheless, the prevailing opinion organized the Congress to convene on December 22, 1810. The Congress

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101 See “A múltiples revoluciones, múltiples soberanías,” in Gutiérrez Ardila, Un nuevo reino.
102 The Junta of Cartagena would propose its own assembly, not wanting to engage with “aristocracy” of Santafé. The action further entrenched municipal divisions and underscores that the pursuit of general government was an uneven goal, especially in the context of local governance. See Alfonso Muñera, El fracaso de la nación. Región, clase y raza en el caribe colombiano: 1717-1810 (Bogotá: Banco de la República, El Ancora Editores, 1998).
established objectives that would have created a federated state resolving provincial disputes and agreeing to the common defense of the kingdom. However, clear factionalism emerged in what would be the first failed Congress of the interregnum. At the core of the disagreements was the issue of recognition of representatives from smaller towns. The delegation from Santafé, composed entirely of Antonio Nariño’s kin including himself, permitted representatives from towns and cities that had emancipated from colonial provincial capitals. Advocates of a confederative model, like Camilo Torres, disputed the breakdown of provincial power because it could mean “society would be dissolved down to its first elements.”\textsuperscript{104} The contradictory nature of federalists supporting smaller units of political organization was not at all at odds with the faction that wanted to see Santafé retain its preeminence. By recognizing the emancipated cities, Santafé could leverage an alliance to counter the provinces that wanted a confederated system.

The disputes became more public as the Santafereño Congressional representatives clashed with the Junta Suprema of Santafé. Like Camilo Torres, officials on the board of Santafé viewed the actions of its Congressional representatives as tantamount to producing anarchy. Not only was the Junta of Santafé trying to prevent smaller towns in its own borders from declaring autonomy, but the unbalanced approach to representation had caused a greater rift to form between Santafé and large cities that saw the recognition of dissident towns as an infringement on provincial sovereignty. Tensions increased when in mid-January 1811 a mob formed to press the Junta Suprema into considering a draft constitution written by Nariño. To make matters worse, the congressional body accused members of the Junta of being pro-French and called for them to resign. The Junta Suprema responded harshly, arresting instigators of the mob and

closing _El Aviso al Público_. The first Congress experienced further setbacks when in early February news that Cartagena had suppressed the _Junta_ of Mompox by force reached the old capital. By the end of the month, delegates had left Santafé, thus ending the experiment.

For his part, Fray Padilla (editor of _Aviso al Público_) had been a strong critic of the confederalists. With the war in Europe unresolved, Padilla argued the kingdom did not have time to sort out the anarchy caused by the provinces pursuing their own projects. Moreover, the provisional division had impeded the formation of good government: “how could that country be happy, in which discords abound, in which people arm themselves against other people, and in which the interests of one place fight with the private interests of others…Ah! It is the passions that disturb peace, they are that which destroys _la Patria_…the passions have divided us.”

By early February, Padilla’s publication faced opposition from the _Suprema Junta_. Facing censorship, Padilla used his final issues to defend the freedom of the press and accused those that opposed that freedom of “fearing that the free press discovers the tortuosity of their procedures, the public opinion obliges them to work with integrity and justice.” Padilla’s periodical emphasized the vulnerability of the revolution as an experiment under constant threat.

Creoles in Santafé shared Padilla’s sense of urgency. In the months following July 20, _Diario Político_ started to include news from across the Atlantic World. One story from Jamaican and Cuban sources reported on the arrival of two Spanish ships of the line, the _San Fulgencio_ and _San Lorenzo_, as well as an order to construct new ships of the line, frigates, and more. In response, the editors of _Diario Político_ wrote: “We should not lose precious moments to assure

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our liberty, and avoid the new chains they have forged to return us to slavery…unite, strengthen like the stones of a building to sustain this sacred undertaking!” The depiction of the fragility of the revolutionary movements justified the decisive action that needed to be taken to secure the future of experiment.

Out of the failure of the first Congress, two new and profound state-building projects emerged that had the potential to unite the juntas of New Granada: the State of Cundinamarca and the United Provinces of New Granada. Beginning in late January 1811, the Junta Suprema of Santafé began proceedings for the establishment of a permanent government for the province. Inhabitants of the province, including the indigenous, participated in an election for a provincial junta and, at the same time, selected an electoral college whose deputies would draft a constitution for Santafé. The proclamation portrayed the election as “the time to realize our desires,” “exercise our rights,” and, importantly, that “the happiness or ruin of the Province, and even the Kingdom” was pending on the results of the process.

The resulting act further modified New Granada’s relationship with the monarchy, created three branches of government, and established a citizen militia to defend the new state. Signed on April 4, 1811, the Constitution of 1811 created the State of Cundinamarca as a constitutional monarchy that, in the absence of the king, stipulated for the selection of a president along with two councilors all with equal vote. As for the monarch, the document named

109 A thorough examination of the constitution is beyond the scope of this chapter. See “Constitución de Cundinamarca 1811,” Universidad Nacional de Colombia Proyectos Temáticos Biblioteca Virtual Colombiana Colección general (Bogotá: Prensas del Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 1951), 125-198, accessed February 19, 2022,
Ferdinand VII as the rightful king, but in ways that resembled the French Constitution of 1791: “Ferdinand VII, by the grace of God, and by the will and consent of the people, legitimately and constitutionally represented, King of the Cundinamarqueses.” Furthermore, for him to take the throne, Ferdinand VII would have needed to travel to Santafé and be granted sovereignty from the people thus reversing the retainer of sovereignty as it existed in 1811. The modification was not a rejection of monarchy, nor did the constitution see Cundinamarca as incompatible with empire. Were he to combine other titles, Ferdinand VII would have to create a representative body that provided equal voting power to each kingdom. The constitution effectively elevated Santafé from being a part of Castile to becoming its peer.

In a little over two and half months, the elections had been completed and delegates produced the first constitution in New Granada and in the Hispanic World. The rapidity with which the electoral college drafted the constitution can be explained in two ways. First, the federalist faction linked to Nariño did not have a strong presence in the constituent body. Nariño was not permitted to seek a position on account of having a history of debt going back to 1793. While the board had chosen a member of the Álvarez and Lozano clan as the president, Jorge Tadeo Lozano was by no means opposed to the formation of a permanent state. Indeed, even though confederalists had a meaningful grip on the deliberations, transitioning from the ad hoc Junta Suprema to a constituted state became an accomplishment that interested all participants. However, the formation of a new state did not mean an end to the crisis, it did not solve the division of the kingdom, and it did not resolve the battle for public opinion. The nature of that

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111 Luis Eduardo de Azuola also served on the electoral college and had strong links to Antonio Nariño.
struggle continued to unfold over the course of 1811 as delegates from different provinces gathered to try to form a government that could unite the provinces. In that formative state, federalists and confederalists rallied their networks as they competed for the approval of the public and a new network of citizens.

Creoles continued to use print medium to reach communicate with the public. By February 1811, the *Semanario Ministerial del Gobierno* (Weekly Ministerial of the Government) had replaced *Aviso al Público* and *Diario Político* as the only operating newspaper in Bogotá.  

The new periodical maintained the same format as the *Diario Político* but operated under the auspices of the provisional government and later, the State of Cundinamarca. The imminent threats to Santafé became more apparent in early 1811 when royalist forces from Southwestern New Granada captured Popayan. By March, Santafé had committed to an alliance with the autonomist movement that had emerged in the Valle de Cauca against royalists in the southwest. However, the depiction of the conflict was not against realistas (royalists) but rather los esfuerzos de la tiranía (forces of tyranny).

Defeating the tyrants in Popayan not only opened up strategic advantages, but it would exemplify the moral triumph of Santafereños and their allies against an ideological threat. Combating tyranny in New Granada became linked to patriotism and expression of “the liberal ideas of a wise, sweet, and paternal government.”

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112 In its final publication, *Diario Político* announced it had to suspend the paper because it lacked sufficient subscribers within the capital and had “almost none in the provinces.” The cost of operating the press, the paper, and more were too high. See “Aviso,” in *Diario Político de Santafé de Bogotá*, no. 46, February 1, 1811, 179–183, BR, https://babel.banrepcultural.org/digital/collection/p17054coll26/id/1442/rec/12.


114 For more on this struggle, see Echeverri, *Indian and Slave Royalists in the Age of Revolution*.


116 Ibid.
In the following months, news of the turmoil in other parts of Spanish America flowed into the old capital. In late March, the Semanario Ministerial reported that in Guanajuato “a Cura with the character of a general” had risen with 20,000 men which included “all the Indians at his service.” This was of course Miguel Hidalgo and the revolution that began in Mexico in 1810. But for the newspaper in Santafé, the mass uprising was significant enough to make the front page. Importantly, the paper assured its readers that “the parties in which the fire of this revolution lit are far from the capital of Mexico.” The same issue concluded with an essay on the necessity to conserve the integrity of the provinces of the kingdom, which included the ties between each department for “common security, both outside and inside.” As creoles attempted to resolve issues of government, a specter of disorder and anarchy encouraged quick action.

Nariño’s entry into the battle for public opinion fundamentally altered factionalism in the old capital. Utilizing his writing skills, extensive knowledge base, and his experience with the printing press, Nariño embarked on a polarizing campaign that led to his ascension to the presidency. Much like the competition that occurred between the Diario Político and Aviso al Público, Nariño’s La Bagatela offered different depictions of the outcome of the revolution and how best it could be preserved. Founded in July 1811, the paper is fascinating for its use of

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117 Semanario Ministerial del Gobierno de la Capital de Santafé en el Nuevo Reyno de Granada, no. 7, March 28, 1811, 25-28, BNC.
119 His campaign began almost as soon as the Constitution of 1811 was passed. Nariño went before the Tribunal (court) in April 1811 where he criticized the revolutions’ leaders for forgetting about him in Cartagena: “just as my innocence was recognized tacitly and indirectly by the Government, so too they have wanted to incriminate me tacitly and indirectly in the disputes that have taken place with Congress; and lately I have been excluded tacitly and indirectly from the National Representation.” It is a fascinating if not polemic document where he depicts his struggles in the past as the trials of a revolutionary. Antonio Nariño, “Escrito presentado por don Antonio Nariño al Tribunal de Gobierno de Santafé de Bogotá” (Bogotá, April 17, 1811), 248, BNC, accessed January 29, 2022, https://catalogoenlinea.bibliotecanacional.gov.co/client/es_ES/search/asset/134195/0.
literary devices to critique the government of Santafé without earning the ire of the provisional state. *La Bagatela*, or *The Trifle*, depicted its points using fake conversations between friends and often included a woman. The intentional use of characters allowed Nariño to offer harsh accusations behind a veil of innocence. In its first issue, the paper addressed the revolution in the old capital: “The disorder which we have lived in for eight or nine months, and some little things we are not yet free from, has made some to think that our transformation was premature.”

Nariño’s point about the naivety of the republican experiment in New Granada would become a major point in his campaign. Nariño located the inexperience in the ways in which the state sought to limit its opposition. Among the faults of the new state included the Constitution of Cundinamarca’s failure to provide true freedom of the press. Like editor of *Aviso al Público*, Nariño argued public opinion was necessary to promote good government: “Sovereignty resides in the mass of the habitants, who entrust the exercise to Agents whose number is not so considerable that it prevents an in-depth discussion of the matters that are put in deliberation, nor so small that it can give too much influence to any of them.”

A free government had no reason to fear or limit public discussions.

The emphasis on New Granada’s lack of experience with the maintenance of free government connected to the uncertainty of Cundinamarca’s existence. The precarious position of the new state extended to a renewed attempt to form a general government for the provinces of New Granada. As a second congress convened in Santafé, Nariño criticized those that wanted to adopt a government similar to the United States given the present circumstances. Many of

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122 Nariño viewed the federative model proposed by Camilo Torres and others as not carefully thought out: “The author of our freedom barely woke up when the Federation's voice was heard throughout the Kingdom: a vague voice, although general, because it was not assigned the true meaning that according to our situation suited it. But
Nariño’s arguments resemble points that Simón Bolívar would make after the fall of Venezuela’s First Republic in 1812, although there is a significant difference. Where Bolívar would blame three hundred years of Spanish obscurantism, Nariño and other federalists emphasized the perils the situation New Granada faced in the moment. In fact, most of the creoles involved in Santafé’s government admired the United States’s Constitution, but the competing factions disagreed about the timing of the tremendous reforms. For federalists, the urgency of truly securing liberty made it so establishing a system of government that gave significant power to the provinces would only end in disaster.

Importantly, Nariño’s critique of New Granada’s unpreparedness was both particular to New Granada and linked to the Santafereño government’s treatment of the public. In his coverage of Caracas’ Declaration of Independence on July 3, 1811, Nariño celebrated the act because the process of changing government and the institution of major reform intimately involved the public: “From the first day the contest was numerous in the corridors of the College, where the Congress meets again; the discussions were public, and the whole contest expressed the most vivid desires that they be finished, giving the last blow to European despotism.”

Santafé, on the other hand, had shown it was not ready for the plurality of opinions that ought to have been encouraged to form a better government.

\[\text{La Bagatela, no. 5, August 11, 1811, 17, BLAA, Hemeroteca Digital Histórica, https://babel.banrepcultural.org/digital/collection/p17054coll26/id/1506/rec/2.}\]

The two factions moved further apart. In the closing months of 1811, the major actions were taken that had tremendous consequences. First, Nariño seized power in an episode that easily lends itself to polemic interpretations. On September 19, 1811, *La Bagatela*’s frontpage story, featured under the headline “very big news,” reported that the new Viceroy of New Granada, Benito Perez, was not on his way to Panama, but to Santa Marta. From there, Perez would join with officials that had escaped Cartagena and an army of eight hundred that would march against Santafé and the fledgling states. Spanish forces would easily take the north, including Pamplona and Giron, the paper warned. And to the south, the royalist governor Tacon threatened to retake Popayan. Following the news, Nariño turned attention to the government of Cundinamarca: “What measures, what steps are taken in the state of danger in which *la Patria* finds itself?...*La Patria* is not saved with words, nor with alleging the justice of our cause.”

Moreover, Nariño’s allies helped make the news more public by posting the paper in the main road of the city and announcing its contents. Nariño’s appeal to the public worked and in the chaos of the day, Jorge Tadeo Lozano resigned from the presidency and was replaced by Nariño.

Under Nariño’s control, Cundinamarca pursued a more radicalized agenda that involved expanding the territorial control of the state at first through intrigue, but later through force. The result was yet another civil war in New Granada, only this time it was not between an ephemeral state and royalists. More immediately, Nariño’s coup contributed to a fundamental shift in the political makeup of the capital. With the Álvarez faction in control of Cundinamarca,

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126 By mid-1811, the neighboring province of Mariquita had already been incorporated into Santafé. Mariquita possessed valuable access to the Magdalena River which fed into the Caribbean.
the confederalist faction struggled to operate within the capital.\footnote{This is discussed in José Manuel Restrepo, \textit{Historia de La Revolución de La República de Colombia}, vol. 3 (Paris: Libreria Americana, 1827), 25–80, BLAA, Hemeroteca Digital Histórica, accessed January 19, 2022, https://babel.banrepcultural.org/digital/collection/p17054coll10/id/2571.} And while Cundinamarca sent delegates to participate in the second Congress, the deputies were firmly a part of the Álvarez clan. Nariño’s uncle Manuel Bernardo Álvarez acted as one of the deputies and the two shared regularly correspondence discussing the articles being proposed at the Congress.

Nevertheless, the confederalist faction continued negotiations with participating provincial delegates and on November 27, 1811, created the Act of Federation of the United Provinces of New Granada.\footnote{Miguel de Pombo, \textit{Acta de Federación de las Provincias Unidas de la Nueva Granada}, 1811, José Joaquín Guerra, ed., (Bogotá: Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 1951), 208-241.} The new state formed an alliance with the provinces of Cartagena, Antioquia, Tunja, Neiva, and Pamplona. The exclusion of Cundinamarca meant that the confederalist faction had an increasingly difficult time appealing to the public of Santafé. While some opponents of the \textit{nariñista} faction remained in the old capital, creole leaders active in confederation experimentation had left. In addition, the scarcity of resources to print and the limited audience that newspapers from other municipalities could reach made it difficult to oppose the grip that Nariño’s kin had obtained in Santafé. Tensions between elites displaced the relationships of the old order.

CONCLUSIONS

Lacking the vertical political relationship provided by monarchy, or more specifically, the viceroyalty, New Granadan cities grasped at attempts to reconstitute what had been broken down to, in most instances, the municipal level. Santafé’s leadership could not replace the role of
the colonial system despite the many assumptions among the creole elite that it should. Then again, elites in the capital never had the hold on the rest of the viceroyalty to allow for that opportunity in the second half of 1810. While there were certainly strong links between elites from different cities, creoles possessed competing ideas of the society they could create from that which they tore down. New Granada, simply put, was not a nation.

Aware of the vulnerability of these political projects, creoles made alliances with groups that only years prior would not have been welcomed in the political scene. Forming the juntas, however, did not mark the success of the movement but rather the beginning. Creoles engaged in political and literary battles for the favorable public opinion of the municipality using the printing press. Through that struggle, creole leaders repeatedly modified depictions of nuestra revolución, a term that, like the new uses of patriotism, was meant to inspire loyalty to a cause with a shifting definition. In Santafé, these battles for public opinion attempted to situate the capital of the antiguo régimen as the city that could lead the other revolutionary experiments to forge a new federal union.

A horizontal understanding of sovereignty became increasingly accepted across New Granada, but this was not a uniform experience. Creoles that at the end of 1810 had been a core part of the Junta Suprema left the city by the end of 1811 to serve as representatives of provinces with which they had strong familial ties. Elites in the capital, meanwhile, consolidated power around strong kin ties and an urgency to resolve the crisis of government being experienced in the capital city. Leaders across the viceroyalty were aware of the fragility of the new states that had been created. In response to that anxiety, creoles pushed for unity in anticipation of internal and external threats, but that unity did not come through cleanly. Informed by the early
constructions of identity and municipal power, *neogranadinos* engaged in a civil war for the defense of *la patria*.
The political landscape of New Granada was fundamentally different at the beginning of 1812. In early November 1811, Cartagena declared complete independence from Spain (and Santafé, for that matter) after pardos stormed the junta and demanded the committee members sign their declaration of independence. 1 Although still a part of the United Provinces, Cartagena and Antioquia had formed independent states by mid-1812. From the former capital of the viceroyalty, Antonio Nariño pursued two major objectives. The first was the reformation of the 1811 Constitution of Cundinamarca. Although he sought greater executive power, Nariño was denied as the revised constitution reaffirmed a triumvirate with one executive and two councilors. Instead, the new document established the Republic of Cundinamarca on April 17, 1812. 2 The document is notable for not including references to the Council of Regency, Spain, nor the king. In this sense, the formation of the republic was less concerned with independence and instead focused on the rights of its citizens. 3

The revision of the constitution reveals the extent to which the electoral body experienced discontinuity since the previous years’ constitutional convention. Comparing the signatories of the 1811 and 1812 constitutions shows that while the size of the assembly had

1 Marixa Lasso, Myths of Harmony: Race and Republicanism during the Age of Revolution, Colombia, 1795-1831 (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2007).
2 Only a month after the Cortes de Cádiz ratified the Spanish Constitution of 1812 (March 17, 1812). See “ Constitución de la República de Cundinamarca,” Manuel Antonio Pombo and José Joaquín Guerra, eds., Constituciones de Colombia (Bogotá: Imprenta de Echeverría Hermanos, 1892): 57-104.
3 While the Constitution of 1811 focused on state structure and relations with the metropole, the Constitution of 1812’s first thirty articles concern the rights of citizens.
increased from forty-three members to fifty-six, over fifty percent of the signatories of the 1811 constitution were not involved in the revision. Furthermore, the Álvarez clan had gained considerable ground with at least nine members present in 1812 versus two in 1811. Although his hold on politics was contestable, Nariño’s seizure of power transformed the politics of Santafé. Creoles engaged in the pursuit of a confederation found not only their ideas of general government no longer welcome, but also felt the physical pressure to leave the capital.

Nariño’s second goal focused on countering the confederation. In an attempt to strengthen the capital, Nariño dispatched forces to subjugate the neighboring provinces of Mariquita, Socorro, as well as three provinces that originally signed the Act of Federation of the United Provinces: Nieva, Pamplona, and Tunja. While some of the leaders of the United Provinces attempted to negotiate a working alliance with Cundinamarca in defense of New Granada, Nariño refused. The conflicts between royalist movements and the ephemeral states ceased to be the only sites of war as Cundinamarca and the United Provinces resorted to the use of force in their contest for neighboring provinces and municipalities that would last until 1815.

In March 1812, Nariño ordered Antonio Baraya to subjugate Tunja. Baraya, who had fought against the royalist block in southwestern New Granada in 1811, turned on Nariño and together with his men joined the United Provinces. Among the creoles who switched sides was Francisco José de Caldas. Having been recruited by Nariño as a military engineer, Caldas came to view the occupation of Tunja as serving the ambitions of the President of Cundinamarca. Caldas criticized Nariño, claiming he was “a tyrant in disguise” and that he should “fear public opinion, fear not

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4 José María del Real, presidente de estado de Cartagena, a Antonio Nariño, Cartagena, February 26, 1812, in Archivo Nariño, vol. 3, no. 44
5 Ephemeral states includes the Confederated Cities of the Cauca Valley (Cali, Buga, Cartago, Caloto, Toro, and Santa Ana), a block formed along the Pacific coast of New Granada. Also known as “The Friendly Cities of the Cauca Valley.” The formation of this alliance in 1810-11 remains understudied, see Alfonso Zawadsky, Las ciudades confederadas del Valle del Cauca en 1811 (Bogotá: Editorial Libreria Voluntad, 1943).
the alarm, but the rage of the Provinces and the fury of all good men.” Cundinamarca’s government responded to the betrayal by granting Nariño dictatorial powers which he used to raise another force to repulse Baraya. Nariño also pursued a campaign against dissidents in the city. For example, upon learning of Caldas’ betrayal, Nariño arrested María Manuela Barona, Caldas’ pregnant wife, and seized her property. As for the confrontation with the United Provinces, Nariño’s forces engaged Baraya’s troops but were defeated. Nariño’s troops retreated to Santafé with Baraya in pursuit. Upon his return, Nariño found the city in revolt against his rule, so he resigned. However, lacking a clear leader to replace him, Nariño returned to power. Under the command of Baraya, the United Provinces laid siege to Santafé but it was quickly broken by Baraya as he thought the city could be easily taken. He was wrong. In a stunning victory, Santafereños defeated the confederation’s soldiers.

The political situation in Santafé continued to change in 1813. The war with the United Provinces exposed the vulnerability of Cundinamarca. Moreover, Nariño secured the return of his uncle Manuel Bernardo Álvarez and his friend Luis Eduardo de Azuola, both of which bolstered the strength of his faction in the city. By June 1813, the electoral board granted Nariño dictatorial power for life to combat the dire circumstances that the state faced. A month later, Cundinamarca declared complete independence from Spain and the Monarchy. Rather than a list of ancient atrocities committed by the Spanish (a practice adopted by Bolívar in the Jamaica Letters), the proclamation draws attention to recent events: “for three years we have maintained

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6 Tunja, April 15, 1812, in Cartas de Caldas (Bogotá: Academia Colombiana de Ciencias Exactas, Físicas y Naturales, 1978), 324.
7 Actas y documentos del congreso reunido en Villa de Leiva, October 12, 1812, in Archivo Nariño, vol.4, no. 107. Nariño pursued other harsh measures, including the seizure of Manuel Meléndez’s assets for money he owed to one of the local militia groups. Even though Meléndez was not present in Bogotá, Nariño issued a special order to claim enough assets to pay the debt. Antonia Flórez, Meléndez’s wife, stood in place of her husband and offered her house as payment for the debt. See AGN, Peticiones-Solict, legajo 1, fols. 1-88.
8 Francisco de Paula Santander fought with the United Provinces in this battle.
9 “Declaración de independencia absoluta,” Bogotá, July 19, 1813, Lilly Library, LMC 1611 Colombia, Box 2.
ourselves in a state of expectation and neutrality with respect to the events in Spain.”

Along with pointing out the lack of political order in the Peninsula in 1813, Santafereños expressed continued anxiety about the threat posed by a French victory. By staying in a perpetual state of “pupillage,” Cundinamarca risked being unable to conserve its Catholic ties and its newly regained “incontestable rights.” The declaration resembled less an attempt to right the wrongs of the past (Spanish rule) and more about preserving a government that followed the customs of the governed. The hesitancy of the act makes it no less revolutionary; popular sovereignty had become the fundamental organizing principle of Santafé.

In practice, however, Nariño had clearly radicalized the movement. By mid-1813, royalist forces under Colonel Juan Sámano captured much of the southwest and threatened to invade Bogotá. In a rare moment of cooperation, the northern provinces agreed to aid Cundinamarca against the Spanish colonel despite Nariño refusing to help Cartagena on several occasions between 1812 and 1813. By September 1813, Nariño was at the head of a multi-provincial force-marching south. The campaign, however, ended disastrously. In May 1814, royalist forces that included indigenous allies and former slaves battered and defeated the allied army from the north. Taken captive on the battlefield, Nariño was imprisoned by the Spanish for a fourth time and sent to Cádiz where he would remain until 1821. In Santafé, however, the imprisonment of its dictator did not change the city’s politics and general stance against the United Provinces. The electoral college named Nariño’s uncle, Manuel Bernardo Álvarez, as dictator and hostilities against the United Provinces recommenced. In response to

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10 Three years is linked to the creation of the junta on July 20, 1810 as opposed to the five years that the empire has been without Ferdinand VII on the throne. See Ibid.
11 Ibid.
12 Nariño was freed during Rafael del Riego’s revolt against Ferdinand VII and the reinstatement of the Constitution of 1812 in 1820.
Cundinamarca’s hardening, the United Provinces enlisted the Venezuelan Simón Bolívar to lead an army against the former capital of the viceroyalty. By the end of 1814, Álvarez had surrendered to the confederation.

The end of the civil war between the United Provinces and Cundinamarca could have been a moment for the confederation to consolidate its hold on the provinces now that Santafé was officially a part of the union. However, news of Ferdinand VII’s return to the throne in 1814, the abolition of the Spanish Constitution of 1812, and his declared intent on restoring the Spanish Empire’s borders greatly altered the stakes of the wars. As the United Provinces fought with royalist strongholds, the arrival of Pablo Morillo and the 10,000 strong expeditionary force interrupted any opportunity for the new state to strengthen its position. Furthermore, the loose alliance weakened the United Provinces ability to respond, as did strong personalities. In a disagreement with the State of Cartagena over military supplies, Bolívar laid siege to the city in March 1815. The attack did not last. News reached Bolívar’s camp that royalist troops had taken the Magdalena River thereby blocking his forces from a safe retreat from Cartagena. In response, Bolívar fled Spanish America. Morillo took advantage of the war-weary and divided provinces, quickly subjugating the viceroyalty. And in May 1816, Santafé surrendered.

Even though the civil war had ended, Spanish forces and their allies were keen on rooting out insurrection. The conquering army established a Consejo de Purificacion (Purification Council) to try the rebels, and those suspected of having links to the revolutionaries. Morillo also setup a Junta de Secuestros (Sequestration Committee) to seize their rebels’ property. For the next three years, Spanish forces executed over one hundred individuals tied to the ephemeral states. Creole officials, military leaders, women spies, and more were killed by firing squad in a
move to suppress future rebellions. With few exceptions, most of the male elites discussed in this dissertation were executed while their wives and children were exiled and stripped of property. A generation of talent was lost in this episode that marked the end of so many creoles’ revolutionary experience.

The conclusion of the first wave of independence ended tragically, yet this fascinating period should not be understood for its failures. Neogranadinos engaged in diverse experiments, many of which were not depicted in this dissertation. Instead, this study of the Santafereño revolutionary experience has shown the multitude of ways that one community of elites organized, dissolved, and reorganized itself. In less than three years, Santafé went from being a cog in the Spanish Empire to establishing autonomous governments that elevated the status of the city to a provisional state ruled by the consent of the inhabitants. The transformation posed serious challenges to the social and political order of the ancient seat of viceregal authority. However, that change did not emerge immediately after the Bayonne Charter nor the Junta Central’s formation of a representative body. Reactions to the imperial crisis were informed by existing social, political, and intellectual links, none of which predisposed creole elites to representative forms of government. Rather, creoles confronted the uncertainties of a future that included the possibility that Spain would not win the war against Napoleon’s French Empire. Foreign monarchs and powers represented not only a geopolitical threat but were unacceptable as alternatives to the Spanish monarchs. Using their experiences and the knowledge they acquire about other revolutions (successes, failures, and anxieties associated with them), creoles

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13 There is a consensus among historians that brutal treatment of colonists in New Granada ended the factionalism and contributed to the creation of a more united front in 1820. See Rebecca Earle, *Spain and the Independence of Colombia 1810-1825* (University of Exeter Press, 2000); Uribe-Uran, *Honorable Lives: Lawyers, Family, and Politics in Colombia, 1780-1850*, 2000, 68–69; Thibaud contends that unification was made possible by those that continued to fight in the Llanos. See Thibaud, *Repúblicas en armas: Los ejércitos bolivarianos en la Guerra de Independencia en Colombia y Venezuela*.
constructed a model of government that fulfilled their desires to maintain local customs and addressed the vulnerabilities exposed by the imperial crisis.

Despite being the seat of the viceroyalty’s authority, creoles in Santafé did not have a strong grip on the other provinces. The colonial structure of the kingdom facilitated greater cooperation in the late colonial period through the vertical power provided by the monarchy and government in Spain. Simply put, creole reformists could turn to the political framework of the empire, an existing and tried channel for petitions. That relationship continued even in the wake of the crisis of monarchy. Creoles across New Granada engaged in similar practices of funneling their ideas for change to a central location during the revolutionary elections of 1809 under the Junta Central. Although the provisional government in Spain lacked the legacy of the crown, creoles approached the political experiment as an opportunity to realize good government. The unquestionable revolutionary nature of the 1809 period also highlights the importance of shared culture as perceived by neogranadinos. The Junta Central could solve the empire’s crisis because the governing body shared a common past and possessed similar virtues (Catholicism being key among those) with colonists in New Granada. The transition to local popular sovereignty, however, exposes the critical role played by the hierarchical structure of the empire. Lacking the vertical associations of the metropole and the viceroyalty locally, elites competed within the limits of political community rooted in municipal ties. Santafereños’ hesitant approach to creating their own junta reveals the powerful weight of that decision, a decision that could upend the social and political structures of the viceroyalty.

The New Granadan revolutionary experience is a tremendous example of what was possible in a transformative age. In the late colonial period, Santafereños read, encountered, and discussed revolutionary events in Europe and the Americas. Far from leading them to
independence, creoles’ activities formed part of a revolutionary experience that pursued reform and the construction of prosperous communities. Bourbon reform initiatives and creole participation formed a portion of those meaningful experiences that shaped New Granadan society in the years preceding 1808. These points emphasize that late colonial societies were not static and not constantly at odds with the metropole. In an age that saw an increase flow of information and knowledge about other regions and their struggles, Santafereños processed and adapted these experiences to their own interests. Elites’ active participation in the transformative experiences would be brought to bear to face the unprecedented challenges of the imperial crisis. The invasion of the Peninsula and abdication of the monarchs were not only major shocks to the channels that made the empire function. News from Iberia continued to produce a sense of crisis in New Granada which generated a sense of urgency to reconstitute political community.

Ultimately, these experiments failed but not before producing incredible examples of what a viceroyalty restructured could resemble. The civil war in New Granada was not a failure to unite a nation that had yet to exist, rather the conflict was the region’s expression of revolution. While the crisis of monarchy caught them off guard, elites could pull from their late colonial experiences to confront the uncertainties of the period. Here ideologies played as significant a role as familial ties and social links. Creoles encountered the imperial crisis not as clean slates ready to cast aside all the bonds they had formed. Instead, creoles moved cautiously, but deliberately, to reform their society.
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