

## Political Economy and Knowledge Production in the Making of the Viceroyalty of New Granada

*Economía política y producción de conocimiento en la formación del Virreinato de Nueva Granada*

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**María José Afanador-Llach**

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# Political Economy and Knowledge Production in the Making of the Viceroyalty of New Granada<sup>28</sup>

María José Afanador-Llach  
*Universidad de los Andes, Colombia*

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**Abstract. Objective/Context:** During the eighteenth century, officials from different colonial powers attempted to turn the viceroyalty of the New Kingdom of Granada—present-day Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela, and Panama—into an economically viable territory. The Spanish Crown embraced its most radical jurisdictional reform in centuries to exercise effective state control, extract more revenue, and defend the colonies from foreign incursions. This article explores the particularities of New Granada’s economic governance and argues that colonial officials produced local discourses of political economy to turn unfamiliar spaces into familiar places for economic, political, and military ends. In doing so, producing knowledge about the land and its resources became a key bureaucratic practice that shaped the imagining of a paradoxical territoriality in Northern South America. First, I detail the impact of political economy frameworks on imperial governance and bureaucratic practices. I then showcase how administrative narratives, mapping projects, and fiscal networks reveal the workings of Bourbon economic governance and the search for regional integration. **Methodology:** This article is built from an analysis of archival documents consisting of a selection of evidence from chorographic texts about New Granada and its provinces produced between 1720 and 1808. **Originality:** Reflecting on the ways in which the pursuit of knowledge for wealth creation affected the creation of territorialities contributes to uncovering how the imperial political economy was never a top-down imposition. Local officials negotiated it *vis-à-vis* singular geographical realities and knowledge production practices. **Conclusions:** Chorographic texts were central devices of imperial reform. The search for wealth production and territorial integration occurred in colonial outposts, not in intellectual treatises in Europe. In forging New Granada as an integrated, potentially rich place, bureaucrats’ experience of moving across the territory and inscribing the landscape on paper shaped perceptions of cohesion and difference, economic dependence, and regional fragmentation.

**Keywords:** Bourbon reforms, economic government, knowledge production, political economy, territory, Viceroyalty of New Kingdom of Granada.

## Economía política y producción de conocimiento en la formación del Virreinato de Nueva Granada

**Resumen. Objetivo/Contexto:** Durante el siglo XVIII, funcionarios de diferentes potencias coloniales intentaron convertir el virreinato del Nuevo Reino de Granada —actuales Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela y Panamá— en un territorio económicamente viable. La Corona española acometió su reforma jurisdiccional

<sup>28</sup> This article is derived from the doctoral research *Political Economy, Geographical Imagination, and Territory in the Making and Unmaking of New Granada, 1739-1830*, and its completion is one of the results of the FAPA Project “Inventing Gran Colombia: utopia, knowledge production and the political economy of space” funded by the Research and Creation Center (Centro de Investigación y Creación [CIC]), The Arts and Humanities Faculty and The Vice-Rectorry for Research and Creation at Universidad de los Andes, Colombia.

más radical en siglos para ejercer un control estatal efectivo, obtener mayores ingresos y defender las colonias de incursiones extranjeras. Este artículo explora las particularidades de la gobernanza económica de Nueva Granada y sostiene que los funcionarios coloniales elaboraron discursos locales de economía política para convertir espacios desconocidos en lugares familiares con fines económicos, políticos y militares. Con ello, la producción de conocimiento sobre la tierra y sus recursos se convirtió en una práctica burocrática clave, que dio forma a la imaginación de una territorialidad paradójica en el norte de Sudamérica. En primer lugar, detallo el impacto de los marcos de la economía política sobre la gobernanza imperial y las prácticas burocráticas. A continuación, muestro cómo las narrativas administrativas, los proyectos cartográficos y las redes fiscales revelan el funcionamiento de la gobernanza económica borbónica y la búsqueda de la integración regional. **Metodología:** Este artículo se construye a partir de un análisis de documentos de archivo, consistente en una selección de evidencias de textos corográficos sobre Nueva Granada y sus provincias, producidas entre 1720 y 1808. **Originalidad:** Reflexionar sobre las formas en que la búsqueda de conocimiento para la creación de riqueza afectó la creación de territorialidades contribuye a desvelar cómo la economía política imperial no fue nunca una impuesta desde arriba. Los funcionarios locales la negociaron ante realidades geográficas singulares y prácticas de producción de conocimiento. **Conclusiones:** Los textos corográficos fueron dispositivos centrales de la reforma imperial. La búsqueda de la producción de riqueza y la integración territorial se produjo en los puestos de avanzada coloniales, no en los tratados intelectuales en Europa. Al forjar Nueva Granada como un lugar integrado y potencialmente rico, la experiencia de los burócratas al desplazarse por el territorio e inscribir el paisaje sobre el papel configuró percepciones de cohesión y diferencia, dependencia económica y fragmentación regional.

**Palabras clave:** economía política, gobierno económico, producción de conocimiento, reformas borbónicas, territorio, Virreinato del Nuevo Reino de Granada.

## Economia política e produção de conhecimento na formação do Vice-Reinado de Nova Granada

**Resumo. Objetivo/contexto:** durante o século 18, funcionários de diferentes potências coloniais tentaram transformar o Vice-Reinado do Novo Reino de Granada — atual Colômbia, Equador, Venezuela e Panamá — em um território economicamente viável. A Coroa espanhola empreendeu sua reforma jurisdicional mais radical em séculos para exercer o controle efetivo do Estado, aumentar a receita e defender as colônias de incursões estrangeiras. Neste artigo, são exploradas as particularidades da governança econômica em Nova Granada e argumenta-se que os funcionários coloniais elaboraram discursos locais de economia política para transformar espaços desconhecidos em lugares familiares para fins econômicos, políticos e militares. Ao fazer isso, a produção de conhecimento sobre a terra e seus recursos tornou-se uma prática burocrática fundamental, moldando a imaginação de uma territorialidade paradoxal no norte da América do Sul. Primeiro, detalho o impacto das estruturas da economia política na governança imperial e nas práticas burocráticas. Em seguida, mostro como as narrativas administrativas, os projetos cartográficos e as redes fiscais revelam o funcionamento da governança econômica borbônica e a busca pela integração regional. **Metodologia:** este artigo foi construído a partir de uma análise de documentos de arquivo, consistindo em uma seleção de evidências de textos corográficos sobre Nova Granada e suas províncias, produzidos entre 1720 e 1808. **Originalidade:** refletir sobre as maneiras pelas quais a busca de conhecimento para a criação de riqueza afetou a criação de territorialidades ajuda a revelar como a economia política imperial nunca foi imposta de cima para baixo. As autoridades locais a negociaram em face de realidades geográficas e práticas de produção de conhecimento únicas. **Conclusões:** os textos corográficos eram dispositivos centrais da reforma imperial. A busca pela produção de riqueza e pela integração territorial ocorreu em postos avançados coloniais, não em tratados intelectuais na Europa. Ao forjar Nova Granada como um lugar integrado e potencialmente rico, a experiência dos burocratas de se deslocar pelo território e inscrever a paisagem no papel moldou as percepções de coesão e diferença, dependência econômica e fragmentação regional.

**Palavras-chave:** economia política, governo econômico, reformas borbônicas, produção de conhecimento, território, Vice-Reinado do Novo Reino de Granada.

## Introduction

The Jesuit priest Joseph Gumilla highlighted the agricultural and commercial potential of the Orinoco basin in the northern South American kingdom of New Granada in his widely read 1741 book *El Orinoco Ilustrado*.<sup>1</sup> Gumilla, determined to raise awareness of the region's natural riches, encouraged Spaniards to settle in the fertile lowlands of the Orinoco River and establish villages and cattle ranches. The region was located in the eastern part of the newly established Viceroyalty of the New Kingdom of Granada and included provinces where Jesuit fathers had established missions since the 1570s. In Gumilla's image of agrarian riches and the Orinoco River, we find a discourse that envisioned the newly created viceroyalty as a hub of agriculture and trade. He noted that in those lands, "everything invites cultivation, and this country offers rich and abundant fruits everywhere."<sup>2</sup> Gumilla's utopia attempted to persuade the Spanish crown of the value of the Orinoco region's natural resources to gain additional missionary, economic and military support.

Along with Gumilla, other members of the clergy, the military, and the civil administration worked together to establish Spanish territorial control of the Orinoco region and gain royal support. Julián de Arriaga, a royal official, sent a dossier to the Council of the Indies detailing how different corporate powers collaborated to defend Spanish sovereignty in the region. It included a geographic description, a map created by the governor of Cumaná and several territorial descriptions written by the Catalan Capuchins who oversaw the region's missions. Finally, the document contained a few letters and maps by José de Iturriaga, the military commander of the Limits Expedition, who was tasked with demarcating borders between the Spanish and Portuguese crowns.<sup>3</sup> Colonial bureaucrats on the Orinoco's outskirts portrayed the region in their writings to make it visible to reformers in Madrid. Their territorial descriptions and maps gave Spanish bureaucrats a spatial sense for establishing Bourbon economic governance in the eighteenth century.

Colonial administrators in the Orinoco region did not explore and describe the colonies' geography for their own sake. They studied and wrote about the landscape searching to turn it into a natural resource. In a context of inter-imperial competition, they applied the framework of political economy to figure out how to transform the natural riches of their territories into wealth for the Spanish Crown. Imagining how to connect sources of wealth—crops, fisheries, mines, flour mills, textile workshops—and revenue collection hubs to internal fluvial and terrestrial means of transportation and sea outlets was central for this endeavor. The principal aim of royal officials in the peripheries of the empire was to energize domestic trade, hinder foreign incursions, and strengthen the region's participation in Spain's commercial empire.

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1 During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the *Orinoco Ilustrado* was edited five times, first in Spain and then in Colombia and Venezuela. It was also translated into French. The edition of 1791 switched the name to *Historia, natural, civil y geográfica de las naciones situadas en las riveras del Río Orinoco*. See Margaret R. Ewalt, *Peripheral Wonders: Nature, Knowledge, and Enlightenment in the Eighteenth-Century Orinoco* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2008).

2 "[...] todo convida al cultivo, y por todas partes ofrece el país larga correspondencia en ricos, y abundantes frutos." Joseph Gumilla, *El Orinoco Ilustrado; Historia Natural, Civil Y Geográfica De Este Gran Río* (Bogotá: Editorial ABC, 1955), 172.

3 Julián de Arriaga, "Sobre los Límites de Cumaná y Guayana y derecho que pretenden tener los Olandeses a la pesca en la embocadura del Orinoco", in "Sobre la colonia holandesa de Esquivo", San Idelfonso, s.f. / ¿1785?. Archivo General de Indias (AGI), Seville-Spain, Estado,62,N.2., ff. 17r-42r.

The case of the Orinoco region exemplifies a more extensive history of administrative, economic, and territorial reform in northern South America during the eighteenth century. This Spanish empire's area of the Viceroyalty of New Granada was characterized by a mountainous topography, vast inter-Andean valleys, plains in the east, and Atlantic and Pacific coastal regions vulnerable to foreign incursions. During this period, the Spanish Crown implemented its most radical territorial reform in centuries, with long-term implications for republican territoriality. The Bourbon crown laid out a renewed plan for imperial reform in what then were the northernmost reaches of the viceroyalty of Peru with the establishment of the new viceroyalty of the New Kingdom of Granada between 1717 and 1723 and then again in 1739.<sup>4</sup> The reform aimed to increase territorial control over northern South America and the Caribbean, increase revenue, and protect the overall territorial integrity of the American colonies. Over the century, colonial officials devised numerous of plans to order the territory and achieve cohesion as a condition for wealth production.

In a set of inscriptions on New Granada's natural world, its geographic characteristics and sources of wealth, colonial officials imagined and worked to transform the viceroyalty of New Granada—present-day Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela, and Panama—into a wealthy and geopolitically safe political entity. The following questions occupied the time and work of bureaucrats in the colony at this time: How could colonial wealth be safeguarded from intruders from other empires? How could the peripheral areas of northern South America be sources of wealth for the Spanish Monarchy? How could the Andean region be integrated with coastal cities? Colonial officials created political economy discourses that rendered conflicting territorialities in northern South America: a cohesive colony that was regionally differentiated. While the contemporary literature on political economy focused on empire competition, the Bourbon centralization and economic and administrative reforms led to competition between Spanish colonies. Inter-colonial geopolitical and economic conflicts erupted as a result of Bourbon territorial reform. Moreover, while territorial integration and wealth generation were difficult to achieve on the ground and were full of tensions among provinces within the viceroyalty, bureaucratic fiscal networks enabled it to function as an administrative whole that linked coastal and Andean areas, as well as the colony, to the Greater Caribbean and Europe.

An era of territorial organization guided by the precepts of political economy led to the establishment of the viceroyalty of New Granada. Bureaucrats aimed to forge a connected, wealth-producing colony in northern South America in response to the challenges that foreign incursions imposed on Spain's territorial control and wealth production. By exposing bureaucratic knowledge production practices, I shed light on the peculiarities of New Granada's economic governance during a period of remarkable economic growth in the Spanish empire.<sup>5</sup> Although the Iberian empires have long been neglected or occupy an ambiguous place in the history of capitalism and globalization,<sup>6</sup> the Spanish colonization process addressed here led to an enormous

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4 The Captaincy General of The New Kingdom of Granada—created in 1564—was raised to the status of viceroyalty on March 27, 1717. In 1723, due to poor results in containing foreign incursions and the high costs of maintaining a viceroyalty in a poor and unpopulated territory, the Spanish monarchy extinguished the viceroyalty.

5 Gabriel B. Paquette, *The European Seaborne Empires: From the Thirty Years' War to the Age of Revolutions* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019), 123.

6 Daniel Nesmer, "Introduction: Iberian Empires and the History of Capitalism," *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 19, n.º 2 (2019): 1-15.

acquisition of wealth in Europe and to the insertion of northern South American commodities and staples into the global markets.<sup>7</sup> Imperial reform and its negotiation across colonial outposts forged bureaucratic practices based on the production of knowledge about the territory, which impacted wealth production, geographical imaginaries, and territorial disputes. This type of knowledge that shaped territoriality and capital accumulation deserves a place in the histories of global capitalism.

## 1. Imperial Reform, Political Economy, and Knowledge Production

Recent contributions have begun to uncover the larger shifting geopolitical configurations that influenced the pace and character of the reform that resulted in the establishment of the viceroyalty of New Granada. According to historian Francisco Eissa-Barroso, its creation reflects profound changes in the understanding of the monarchical rule and the role and responsibilities of the king. He claims that reform did not begin in Spanish America and was not driven by Spanish American interests. The reforms stemmed, he asserts, from the king's belief that his main responsibility "was to provide his subjects with good economic government and conditions for development."<sup>8</sup> However, this imperial-centered inquiry into reform in the empire's periphery does not glance beyond imperial politics inside Madrid's court. The idea for a new viceroyalty came from the metropolis, but the creation of the administrative muscle to make it possible was the work of hundreds of colonial bureaucrats. Separated by an ocean of distance, colonial officials were the ones who faced and dealt with the on-the-ground challenges of administering the colonies. They worked to represent and transform New Granada into a territorial, economic, and administrative unit with a long-term vision of integration and wealth creation.

Establishing the viceroyalty of New Granada was just the beginning of an era of territorial rearrangements that emerged as byproducts of the science of political economy. Developing from the study of power, this field of learning developed over time under the heading of "political economy."<sup>9</sup> The imperatives of fiscal survival in a hostile international environment, according to this conceptualization, made economic knowledge necessary. As Europeans embraced this knowledge during the seventeenth century, state competition served as the backdrop for eighteenth-century political economy reflection.

Northern European historians tend to favor a scale of analysis that confines political economy as a science that emerges in the texts of European thinkers and merchants. They trace the circulation of influential political economy books and their translations across Europe to demonstrate how Europeans studied political economy in order to emulate Britain's economic and political success.<sup>10</sup> Recent contributions, on the other hand, have looked at the emulation of foreign

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7 For the case of New Granada's emeralds see Kris Lane E., *Colour of Paradise: The Emerald in the Age of Gunpowder Empires* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).

8 Francisco A. Eissa-Barroso, *The Spanish Monarchy and the Creation of the Viceroyalty of New Granada 1717-1739: The Politics of Early Bourbon Reform in Spain and Spanish America* (Leiden/ Boston: Brill, 2017), 3-4.

9 Sophus A. Reinert, *Translating Empire: Emulation and the Origins of Political Economy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011); Sophus A. Reinert and Røge, Pernille (eds.), *The Political Economy of Empire in the Early Modern World* (Houndmills/Basingstoke/ Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

10 New approaches have emphasized the role of various political communities—corporations, smugglers, and municipal leaders—in contesting mercantilist practices. See Phillip Stern and Carl Wennerlind (eds.), *Mercantilism Reimagined: Political Economy in Early Modern Britain and Its Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).



political and economic ideas in eighteenth-century Spain and its peripheral American colonies across the Atlantic.

Ideology, geopolitics, and knowledge practices influenced the Spanish reformation program in the colonial peripheries. Historian Gabriel Paquette has divided the intellectual foundation of the Bourbon reforms, beginning with Charles III's accession to the throne, into three parts: regalism, political economy, and international rivalry considerations.<sup>11</sup> Imitating, reflecting on, and correcting foreign models became central to Bourbon political thought, which evolved into a "syncretic ideology of governance."<sup>12</sup> Paquette shows that emulation became essential to state survival as the Bourbon state was refurbished with a new common language of reform, that of political economy. Last but not least, he contends that general government reform hastened the integration of the empire's outposts, like New Granada, into the global economy.<sup>13</sup> Paquette's research has made it possible to comprehend the complex conditions under which political economy knowledge was developed and negotiated among colonial institutions during Bourbon rule. I expand Paquette's perspective on intellectual history by focusing on texts and knowledge production strategies that are less frequently discussed in the literature on imperial reform and political economy.

The Spanish Empire has a long history of knowledge-gathering practices and descriptive geography. The empire was built on constantly pursuing information about the territory and its population. The production of *relaciones geográficas* consisting of questionnaires to gather information about the land and its people, was a Spanish policy since the sixteenth century.<sup>14</sup> Through these devices, the Crown requested information to control space occupancy, taxation, and population distribution.<sup>15</sup> As Arndt Brendecke has argued, the objective of the Spanish court's efforts to gather empirical information about the periphery during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was not to maximize the Crown's political rationality. Instead, its objective was to reinforce bonds of loyalty between the king and his colonial subjects.<sup>16</sup> In the 1710s, Spanish reformers started to suggest that the nature of royal authority was not simply to provide order and justice but that the king had to promote the material welfare, common good, and economic and cultural progress of his subjects.<sup>17</sup>

In contrast to the first two hundred years of colonial rule, during the eighteenth century, the collection of knowledge began to coincide fully with a reform program formulated to exploit it.<sup>18</sup> A utilitarian conception of the land and its resources laid at the foundation of imperial re-

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11 Gabriel Paquette, *Enlightenment, Governance and Reform in Spain and its Empire, 1759-1808* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008).

12 Paquette, *Enlightenment*, 5.

13 Paquette, *Enlightenment*, 8.

14 Even in the eighteenth century, *relaciones geográficas* continued to be a device of colonial governance. Juan Pío Montúfar y Fraso responded to the order of the Viceroy of New Granada to produce *relaciones geográficas* of the Audience de Quito on March 21, 1754. Francisco de Solano, *Cuestionarios para la formación de las relaciones geográficas de Indias: siglos XVI/XIX* (Madrid: Editorial CSIC - CSIC Press, 1988), 145.

15 "Significación y tipología de los cuestionarios de Indias." Francisco de Solano, *Cuestionarios, XVII-XXVIII*.

16 Arndt Brendecke, *Imperio e información: funciones del saber en el dominio colonial español* (Madrid/Frankfurt: Iberoamericana/Vervuet Verlag, 2012), 336.

17 Anthony McFarlane, "The Bourbon Century", in *Early Bourbon Spanish America: Politics and Society in a Forgotten Era*, edited by Francisco A. Eissa-Barroso (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 186.

18 McFarlane, "The Bourbon Century", 36-37.

form in the Spanish monarchy.<sup>19</sup> Imperial governance and its main objective of increasing wealth needed the constant production and flow of documents from peripheral areas of the empire to main colonial cities and then to the metropolis. Historian Sylvia Sellers-García has argued that in an effort to overcome distance, officials in Madrid could not “see” the Americas, therefore “they relied on American officials to make it visible and knowable.”<sup>20</sup> In this reform agenda, one of the central problems of colonial state-building was making space legible.<sup>21</sup> This consisted of ordering the population and the landscape to help simplify state functions such as taxation, security, and wealth creation. In fact, an essential component of Spain’s effort to govern, demarcate, and extract wealth from its vast transatlantic dominion consisted in gathering information about the land and its resources. The paper technologies of empire-making were vital components of the social history of knowledge, colonial place-making, and political economy embedded in Spanish colonialism.

The attempts to imagine and consolidate a viceroyalty in northern South America can be traced in a set of bureaucratic documents such as maps, economic improvement projects, administrative reports and petitions, geographic descriptions, and natural histories. These documents are chorographic in nature. In the so-called “Diccionario de Autoridades” of 1729, *chorographia* is defined as “the description of any kingdom, country, or particular province.”<sup>22</sup> The roots of the chorographic tradition are found in classical antiquity. While it entails writing about a country or region, it alludes to the representation of space and place in the framework of spatial history. Chorography is then a non-neutral endeavor in which royal officials use descriptions as part of a process of turning unfamiliar spaces into familiar places for economic, political, and military ends. The construction of the territory of the viceroyalty of New Granada during the Bourbon era unfolded as part of Spain’s tense relationship with other empires, shifts in colonial policy, and situated practices of political economy knowledge production.

## 2. The Economic Government of America and the Viceroyalty of New Granada

The Spanish monarchy ascribed its preoccupation to creating stable and clearly delimited borders for the empire and its colonies to a defensive policy aimed at counteracting the expansion of other European empires. The Treaty of Utrecht, which concluded the War of Spanish Succession, resulted in several territorial and economic rearrangements. While the Treaty protected Spain’s overseas territories, in Europe, Spain ceded Gibraltar, Minorca, and the areas inherited from the Habsburgs in the

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19 Historian Tamar Herzog demonstrates the shifts from an older conception of territory as part of a universal divine order towards “common utility” understandings of the land that insisted on human agency, modifying the making and remaking of territorial divisions. See: Tamar Herzog, *Frontiers of Possession: Spain and Portugal in Europe and the Americas* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2015), 142-144.

20 Sylvia Sellers-García, *Distance and Documents at the Spanish Empire’s Periphery* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014), 25.

21 James C. Scott, *Seeing like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 1-8.

22 “Descripcion de algun Réino, País, ò Provincia particular.”. “Chorographia” in Real Academia Española, *Diccionario de la lengua castellana...* [6 vols, 1726-1739] Vol. 2 (Madrid: en la imprenta de Francisco del Hierro, 1729), 331. See also Darrell J. Rohl, “The Chorographic Tradition and Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Scottish Antiquaries,” *Journal of Art Historiography* 5, (2011): 1.



central and northern parts of the continent, including Italian regions.<sup>23</sup> Spain also ceded the *asiento de negros*, the monopoly over the slave trade, to Great Britain in 1713.<sup>24</sup> The Treaty also consolidated the international recognition of the Bourbon monarchy, which attempted to dismantle the previous two centuries of Habsburg rule, based on federal autonomous provinces.<sup>25</sup> As a result, the new monarchy sought to create a uniform juridical framework for the Spanish Empire and its colonies to recover from the perception that the empire was failing.<sup>26</sup>

Unlike early Spanish colonialism, which emphasized incorporating its subject population into its vision of Catholic Christianity, the Bourbons highlighted the economic government of America. The strategic plan for the *Economic Government of America* written in 1743 by the Minister of the Secretaries of Treasury, the Navy, War, and the Indies, José Campillo y Cossío, contained the basic tenets of the reforms. It reflected renovated visions of the role and purpose of the Spanish monarchy, put in place since the beginning of the century and even since the second half of the reign of Charles II (1665-1700).<sup>27</sup> The work remained in manuscript form until its publication in 1789, yet it influenced eighteenth-century reforms.<sup>28</sup> Campillo y Cossío's text characterized Spanish political economy: his plan was pragmatic, addressed local concerns, and took into account successful foreign economic practices.<sup>29</sup> Campillo envisioned a plan through which the Spanish crown would increase the empire's population and fortify strategic navigation routes and territories. He described the economic government as "good policing, the arrangement of commerce, the manner of civilly employing men, the cultivation of the land, the improvement of its fruits, and finally, everything that leads to the greatest benefit and usefulness of a country."<sup>30</sup> Thereafter, the Council of the Indies—the primary reformation organ of the Spanish Empire in the Americas after 1737—directed all its efforts to the economic recovery of overseas possessions. Imperial reformers started to consider the colonies of the New World as an "integral territory of the Monarchy."<sup>31</sup>

23 Storrs, Christopher, *The Spanish Resurgence, 1713-1748* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016).

24 Consuelo Maqueda Abreu, *El Virreinato de Nueva Granada (1717-1780): Estudio Institucional* (Madrid: Ediciones Puertollano/Dykinson, 2007), 170.

25 John Huxtable Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America, 1492-1830* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 321.

26 Although this was the perception at the moment, Christopher Storrs has demonstrated that Carlos II's reign was not a period of decline and that by the end of the century, imperial governance was efficient. See Christopher Storrs, *The Resilience of the Spanish Monarchy, 1665-1700* (Oxford-New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

27 Eissa-Barroso, *The Spanish Monarchy*, 88.

28 Stein and Stein and others have argued that the real author of the "Gobierno Económico para la América" was not Campillo y Cossío but Melchor Macanaz. McFarlane, "The Bourbon Century", 186.

29 A growing literature on the emulation of political economy across European empires has demonstrated that royal officials and merchants thought about economics through this idea and formulated policies. See Gabriel Paquette, "Views from the South: Images from Britain and its Empire in Portuguese and Spanish Political Economic Discourse, ca. 1740-1810," in *The Political Economy of Empire*, 76-104.

30 "Por Gobierno Económico se entiende la buena policía, el arreglo del comercio, el modo de emplear civilmente los hombres, el de cultivar las tierras, mejorar sus frutos, y en fin, todo aquello que conduce a sacar el mayor beneficio y utilidad de un país." José del Campillo y Cossío, *Nuevo sistema de gobierno económico para la América [1743]* (Mérida: Universidad de los Andes, 1971), 68.

31 Campillo y Cossío, *Nuevo Sistema*, 181.

In the case of the Viceroyalty of New Granada, a rural agricultural economy in which gold mining played an important role in shaping the colonial economy,<sup>32</sup> reformers considered jump-starting mining, promoting trade, and combatting smuggling.<sup>33</sup> With this aim, the Bourbon crown laid out a renewed plan for imperial reform in the northernmost reaches of the Viceroyalty of Peru. They established a new viceroyalty between 1717 and 1723. However, financial needs to sustain wars in Mediterranean Europe led Spanish reformers to extinguish the viceroyalty in that last year. Over a decade later, the upsurge of tensions between Spain and Britain, stemming from the Treaty of Utrecht, led to the restoration of the viceroyalty in 1739.<sup>34</sup> As Eissa-Barroso has explained, in the decision to restore the viceroyalty in 1739, “reformers gave extensive consideration to the specific ways in which establishing a viceroyalty would encourage the economic development of northern South America.”<sup>35</sup> Transforming these territories into an agricultural and trade hub, a revenue-producing colony, and integrating them into the Spanish commercial empire became a priority of the Spanish crown during the second half of the eighteenth century.

For this exercise in spatial imagination to succeed, emulation of French political economy proved crucial. The creation of the viceroyalty in 1717 came with a series of reforms introduced by the Italian priest Giulio Alberoni, the Italian cardinal and statesman in the service of King Phillip V since 1715, which significantly altered the form of government of the Indies.<sup>36</sup> Alberoni’s reform was multifaceted and, in some aspects, mimicked French political economy, which started in France under Jean-Baptiste Colbert, often regarded as the leading figure of French mercantilism. Historian Jacob Soll defines ‘Colbertism’ as the idea that a large-scale state needs to centralize and harness encyclopedic knowledge to govern effectively. This knowledge, which can be both formal and practical, he adds, could be used to master the material world and assert claims in favor of the monarchy.<sup>37</sup>

The proposal for a new viceroyalty included a knowledge-gathering strategy. The king directed royal officials to prepare reports to be sent to Spain that described the proposed viceroyalty’s provinces and people. Colonial officials wrote extensively about the northern South American territories they governed. The Council of the Indies sent petitions to America regularly, requesting that royal officials map, evaluate, and control potential sources of wealth for the empire.<sup>38</sup> By producing chorographic texts such as natural histories, petitions, maps, administrative reports, and geographic descriptions, bureaucrats in the colonies promoted the rhetoric and policy of large-scale

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32 Anthony McFarlane, *Colombia before Independence: Economy, Society, and Politics under Bourbon Rule* (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 39.

33 It is important to note that other types of economies coexisted in the kingdom, such as the coastal cacao-exporting economies of Guayaquil and Venezuela, which were linked to overseas markets.

34 Eissa-Barroso, *The Spanish Monarchy*, 73-74.

35 Eissa-Barroso, *The Spanish Monarchy*, 224.

36 Francisco A. Eissa-Barroso, “La Nueva Granada en el sistema de Utrecht: condiciones locales, contexto internacional, y reforma institucional”, in *Resonancias imperiales, América y el Tratado de Utrecht de 1713*, edited by Iván Escamilla González, et al., (México: Instituto de Investigaciones Doctor José María Luis Mora/Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México/Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, 2015), 47-78. For more on the reforms of Alberoni, see Alan J. Kuethe, “Cardinal Alberoni and the Reform in the American Empire,” in *Early Bourbon Spanish America: Politics and Society in a Forgotten Era*, 23-38.

37 Jacob Soll, *The Information Master: Jean-Baptiste Colbert’s Secret State Intelligence System. Cultures of Knowledge in the Early Modern World* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009).

38 Maqueda, *El Virreinato de Nueva Granada*, 170.

imperial reform. These documents reflect the imperial state's search for supreme authority within the empire's periphery. Furthermore, these texts show that colonial officials negotiated political economy ideas *vis-à-vis* specific colonial geographic and geopolitical realities.

On the eve of the eighteenth century, the New Kingdom of Granada epitomized the weaknesses of the Spanish Empire. A patchwork of geographically disparate regions, constantly infiltrated by Portuguese, Dutch, and British smugglers, made it challenging to control. In addition, native sovereignties established trading networks with other Caribbean empires in their borderlands. The area included within the viceroyalty's proposed jurisdiction had mountainous landscapes. The Andean mountain range crisscrosses the central Neogranadian regions, splitting into three distinct chains. This caused the topography of this area to be rugged, making circulation arduous. The dispersion and small-scale settlements, the difficulties of internal transportation, and the scattered nature of the colony's mining all hampered the viceroyalty's economic growth.

While historically New Granada had developed mainly as a subsistence and domestic agricultural economy and as a gold-producing colony, the reforms broadened the scope of economic improvement. The Spanish monarchy shifted from a vision of empire that tended to base the state's power on acquiring markets rather than bullion. Promoting trade, agriculture, and fighting contraband became the central tenets of the project to increase administrative efficacy and reverse the perception that the crown's power had been eroded. Royal bureaucracies supported the development of export economies in cacao-producing cities, such as Guayaquil and Caracas. According to Bourbon policy, economic viability and cohesiveness in the region depended on strengthening royal bureaucracies while improving internal communications, military defense, trade, and fiscal networks. Reinforcing commercial ties between the Viceroyalty and Spain were all steps towards strengthening imperial administration.

This reformation drive required the reorganization of administrative jurisdictions. The *Real Cédula* of August 20, 1739, ordered the erection of the viceroyalty including the jurisdictions of "Choco, Popayan, the kingdom of de Quito and Guayaquil, the province of Antioquia, Cartagena, Santa Marta, Rio del Hacha, Maracaibo, Caracas, Cumana, Guayana, Islands of Trinidad and Margarita, and Orinoco River, provinces of Panama, Portobelo, Veragua and Darién."<sup>39</sup> (See Map 1). The territorial reform included fiscal rearrangements that attempted to centralize the administration of the Royal Treasury in the hands of the viceroy, who resided in the capital city of Santa Fe de Bogotá.<sup>40</sup> The new bureaucratic apparatus was expected to harness fiscal revenues more effectively by subordinating local and provincial officials to the authority of a viceroy—the image of the king in America. In addition, responding to inter-imperial rivalry, the reform of military jurisdictions in coastal locations led first to the separation of the province of Venezuela from Santo Domingo and later from the Viceroyalty of New Granada. Despite detaching the territories of Venezuela, Neogranadian territorialization advanced significantly throughout the century. For instance, from the viceroyalty's creation until the early 1800s, the expansion of imperial structures and policies of land redistribution

39 "Chocó, Popayán, Reyno de Quito y Guayaquil, provincias de Antioquia, Cartagena, Sta Marta, Rio del hacha, Maracaibo, Caracas, Cumaná, Guayana, Yslas de la Trinidad y Margarita y Rio Orinoco, Provincias de Panamá, Portovelo, Veragua, y el Darien [...]" "Real Cédula de 20 de agosto de 1739, San Idelfonso, Felipe V de España", in Manuel Donís Ríos, *Historia territorial de Venezuela. Documentos para su estudio* (Caracas: Universidad Católica Andrés Bello, 2001).

40 Maqueda, *El Virreinato de Nueva Granada*, 117.

led to an increase in the number of provinces or governorships. Within the provinces, new parishes and towns were created.<sup>41</sup> This territorial reform stemmed from renewed visions of Spanish colonialism that sought to counteract the growing influence of the British and make Spain rich and powerful again.

While different scales of analysis should help explain the unfolding of territorial reform, the literature on political economy centered on the competition among empires dominates the tales of empire-making in the Atlantic world. Competition, however, also emerged at the inter-colonial scale, and jurisdictional conflicts were a common feature in the Spanish polycentric monarchy.<sup>42</sup> In tandem with foreign incursions—such as the British attack on Portobelo in 1739—Bourbon territorial reform unleashed inter-colonial geopolitical and economic conflicts with long-lasting consequences in South America. For example, the change in jurisdiction impacted Peruvian mercantile interests. In a set of letters directed to royal officials in Madrid, Peruvian authorities and merchants protested the separation of Panama and Guayaquil from Perú.<sup>43</sup> In 1741, Antonio José de Mendoza Caamaño y Sotomayor, Viceroy of Peru, raised his concerns regarding the trade of Peruvian goods at Portobelo, located on the Atlantic side of the Isthmus of Panama.<sup>44</sup> The viceroy complained because Peru's trade primarily flowed through Guayaquil and Panama, which would now belong to the newly created viceroyalty. Mendoza Caamaño also noted that due to the distances and broken terrain between Santa Fe and Portobelo, the resources and governmental ordinances from Santa Fe would arrive late, to the detriment of Spanish trade.<sup>45</sup>

Decades later, in 1779, the controversy was still current as José García de León y Pizarro, President of Quito's *Audiencia*, revisited the issue to attempt to segregate Guayaquil from the newly created viceroyalty.<sup>46</sup> Later on, a royal decree in 1803 ordered the annexation of Guayaquil to the Viceroyalty of Peru. The rationale for this decision was distance and the interest in facilitating control of fiscal revenues and sending defensive support from Lima to Guayaquil, as opposed to Santa Fe.<sup>47</sup> The conflict between Peruvian and New Granadian leaders over the jurisdiction of

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41 Throughout the century, several towns, cities, and settlements petitioned to the Council of the Indies for changes in their jurisdiction. See: Humberto Montealegre Sánchez. "Conquista y creación del espacio urbano en la Provincia de Neiva, Timaná y Saldaña," *Historiolo. Revista de Historia Regional y Local* 5, n.º 9 (2013): 148-204, doi <https://doi.org/10.15446/historiolo.v5n9.36928>. Also: Marta Herrera Ángel, *Ordenar para controlar: ordenamiento espacial y control político en las llanuras del Caribe y en los Andes centrales neogranadinos, siglo XVIII* (Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Antropología e Historia/Academia Colombiana de la Historia, 2002), 151-170.

42 Pedro Cardim, et al., *Polycentric Monarchies: How Did Early Modern Spain and Portugal Achieve and Maintain a Global Hegemony?* (Eastbourne, UK/ Portland, Oregon/ Vaughan, Ontario: Sussex Academic Press, 2012).

43 For the viceroy, losing direct control over the provinces of Guayaquil and Panama elicited additional burdens for Peruvian trade that emerged from the fact that the port of Guayaquil was the only supplier of flour to Peru. "Inconvenientes de la segregación de las provincias de Tierra Firme." Quito, 1741-1748. AGI, Quito, 126, N. 32, ff. 342v-343v. "Juan de Berria: contra segregación de provincias," May 16, 1739. AGI, Quito, 145, N. 29, ff. 342v-343v.

44 The Spanish Crown held the Portobelo fairs biannually among merchants from Sevilla, Lima, and Panama to trade European finished goods for silver. After 1686, however, the fair was interrupted for long periods, subsequently leading to a general decay of the Isthmian trade. See Christopher Ward, *Imperial Panama: Commerce and Conflict in Isthmian America, 1550-1800* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1993), 56.

45 "Carta del Marqués de Villagarcía, Virrey de Perú, a José del Campillo, Secretario de Guerra", Lima, november 9, 1742. AGI, Audiencia de Lima 651, N. 3, ff. 13-234.

46 *Segregación de Guayaquil*, "Carta no. 67 de José de León y Pizarro a D. José de Gálvez comunicando que está haciendo las diligencias necesarias para segregar Guayaquil del virreinato de Santa Fé." AGI, Quito, 240, N. 23, f. 1.

47 Vicente Santamaría de Paredes. *Estudio de la cuestión de límites entre las repúblicas del Perú y del Ecuador* (Madrid: Imprenta de los hijos de M. G. Hernández, 1907), 128-132.

Guayaquil—a pivotal outlet to the Pacific Ocean—grew during the struggles for independence. Territorial reform affected inter-imperial political economies, revealing the contested nature of colonial jurisdictional change and igniting a long-standing conflict over the southwestern border of the viceroyalty. In the short term, the authorities of Santa Fe responded and directed their efforts to legitimize the existence of the new viceregal territoriality.

To this end, the conjunction of bureaucratic practice and mapping projects contributed to shaping New Granada's conceptual and imagined territory within South America and the entire empire. Bureaucrats in Santa Fe readily worked towards inscribing the space of the viceroyalty in chorographic texts. They sought to advance commercial and territorial visions of the provinces to improve the newly created viceroyalty's position within the empire. In the framework of the Bourbon reforms, efforts were made to establish territorial cohesion in New Granada and the rest of the colonies. This brought about the creation of cartographic representations, as well as a comprehensive reformation of the fiscal administration. By the early 1770s, colonial reformers sought to depict the viceroyalty as a cohesive administrative and geographic space, distinguished from Perú. They unleashed a knowledge-gathering campaign guided by the spirit of the Enlightenment and the tenets of the economic government of America.

### 3. Wealth Creation, Cartography, and the Search for Legibility

In December 1770, Viceroy Pedro Messía de la Cerda requested local officials throughout the kingdom to produce reports on the territories under their command. The request asked colonial officials to describe their *pueblos* (villages), cities, *villas* (towns), and places within their jurisdiction, as well as any borders differ due to ecclesiastical and spiritual jurisdictions. The request also asked for rough estimates of the number of inhabitants and their circumstances, provincial incomes, and, if possible, a map to “facilitate knowledge of the places described.”<sup>48</sup> This information was required by Messía de la Cerda to assess the kingdom's situation, first in its smaller territorial units and then as a whole.

The effort was supported by a network of royal bureaucrats from the fiscal, military, and ecclesiastical administrations. Local governors, fiscal administrators, and clergy members wrote their own reports. Although it is unclear how many local officials submitted chorographic reports, evidence of report-gathering processes within specific provinces exists. For example, in response to the viceroy's request, the report titled “General State of the Cities and Towns of Cauca, 1771” was created. On January 31, 1771, the Governor of Popayán, Joseph Ignacio Ortega, redirected the viceroy's petition to provincial officials. Ortega distributed the request to royal officials of the cities and places within his governorship. Local administrators responded to the petition. The same request was sent from different cities to Quiebralomo's mining centers (*reales de minas*), where the priest (*cura doctrinero*) responded. Local bureaucrats were part of the network of

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48 “Relación del Estado del Virreinato de Santa Fe, presentada por el excmo. Señor Don Pedro Messía de la Cerda...,” in *Relaciones de mando de los virreyes de la Nueva Granada: memorias económicas*, edited by Gabriel Giraldo Jaramillo (Bogotá: Publicaciones del Banco de la República, Archivo de la Economía Nacional 13, 1954), 95.



chorographic knowledge that circulated from the colony's outskirts to Santa Fe de Bogotá, the administrative center.<sup>49</sup>

Few local governments had access to trained surveyors or cartographers. In addition, moving across the New Kingdom of Granada was a costly and challenging endeavor. Therefore, most of the local chorographic texts presented descriptive information about local territories gathered through the experience and observations of local administrators. Viceroy Messía de la Cerda attempted to craft his *relación de mando* (government report), relying on information provided by local administrators. He felt that his report lacked detail. For this reason, he commissioned the Crown Attorney, Protector of Indians, Judge, and Preserver of royal incomes (*fiscal protector de Indios, juez y conservador de rentas reales*) of the *Real Audiencia* of Santa Fe, D. Francisco Antonio Moreno y Escandón, to compose yet another general compendium of the state of the Viceroyalty regarding civil, political, economic, and military matters. Moreno y Escandón, an official of the viceregal capital, produced the text entitled "State of the Viceroyalty of Santafé, New Kingdom of Granada" (*Estado del Virreinato de Santafé, Nuevo Reino de Granada*). Along with the report, he ordered the creation of a map of the viceroyalty, entitled *Plan Geográfico del Virreynato de Santafe de Bogotá, Nuevo Reyno de Granada* in 1772.<sup>50</sup> The map, which he referred to as a "geographic plan," included information on the territorial demarcation, islands, rivers, provinces, forts and main cities.<sup>51</sup> Moreno spent some time gathering information for his report and faced difficulty compiling reliable information on distant provinces.

Bureaucrats in the periphery frequently complained about a lack of "substantial knowledge" of their kingdom's distances, incomes, peoples, and topography.<sup>52</sup> According to royal administrators, the scarcity of accurate information led to failures in political decision-making and hampered economic governance. Moreno y Escandón, for example, emphasized the kingdom's "defective" settlements. He added that not knowing the number of inhabitants, "qualities, class, funds, and way of life," and the state of commerce stymied good governance. For him, this disorganization was also reflected in the fact that "the houses, streets, and public places are not numbered."<sup>53</sup> This principle of partitioning the urban landscape into numbered individual registries simplified the work of officials in charge of ensuring tax collection in the quest for legibility.<sup>54</sup>

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49 "Estado general de las ciudades y pueblos del Cauca en 1771", *Cespedecia. Boletín Científico del Departamento del Valle del Cauca*, n.º 45-46 (1983): 407-409

50 Part of the analysis of this map is published in my chapter "El Plan geográfico del virreinato de Santafé de Bogotá, 1772: las utopías de orden, la prosperidad virreinal y la defensa del imperio," in *Entre líneas. Una historia de Colombia en mapas*, edited by Sebastián Díaz Ángel, et al., (Bogotá: Editorial Crítica, Universidad de los Andes, 2023), 199-208.

51 Moreno y Escandón. *Plan Geográfico del Virreinato de Santafé de Bogotá Nuevo Reyno de Granada [...] Por el D. D. Francisco Moreno, y Escandón...*. Biblioteca Nacional de Colombia (BNC), Bogotá-Colombia, Colección Archivo Histórico Restrepo, Fondo Mapoteca, 262, F. Restrepo 36.

52 Francisco Antonio Moreno y Escandón, "Estado del Virreinato de Santafé, Nuevo Reino de Granada, y relación de su gobierno y mando del excelentísimo señor Bailio Frey don Pedro Messía de la Cerda", in *Relaciones e informes de los gobernantes de la Nueva Granada*, Tomo I, edited by Germán Colmenares (Bogotá: Biblioteca Banco Popular, 1989), 153.

53 "[...] las casas, calles y lugares públicos no se numeran". Moreno y Escandón, "Estado del Virreinato de Santafé," 163.

54 Scott. *Seeing like a State*, 1-8.



Making the Viceroyalty of New Granada into a revenue-generating colony, like Peru and New Spain, began with representing its material conditions. The “Geographic Plan” of 1772 reflects the Spanish monarchy’s desire to create a unified image of all American possessions (See Map 1).<sup>55</sup> The map depicted the viceroyalty as a single unit, with a thick line clearly separating it from Peru and New Spain.<sup>56</sup> The chart and chorographic texts described its natural wealth as subject to human intervention. The map focuses on fiscal and demographic data, as well as the potential for future wealth in the space occupied by the viceroyalty. The central legend at the bottom of the map states that its goal is to present the viceroyalty’s current state and potential to determine the most appropriate measures for its improvement. In doing so, the map assessed the causes and origins of the viceroyalty’s backwardness. The geographical chart also mentioned the “deterioration of [the Viceroyalty’s] trade, its abundant and valuable agricultural fruits, and mines.”<sup>57</sup> Although cartographic representations typically aim to present physical space in an economical manner, Moreno y Escandón included a significant amount of text on the map. His textual additions mapped the viceroyalty’s administrative structure. He charted urban and rural spaces as a record-keeping bureaucrat and translated them into fiscally relevant numbers along a narrative of potential wealth.

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55 A good example is the map of geographer Juan de la Cruz Cano y Olmedilla (1734-1790), produced in 1775, representing South America with an impressive depth of detail, and tracing the line of division between Spanish and Portuguese South America. See Ken Mitchell, “Science, Giants, and Gold: Juan de la Cruz Cano y Olmedilla’s Mapa Geográfico de la America Meridional”, *Terra Incognita* 31, n.º 1 (1999), 25-41.

56 A later map of 1781, “Descripción geográfica del Virreinato de la Nueva Granada” resulted from a *visita* (survey) that Moreno y Escandón carried out between 1775-1776 and 1778 and 1779 to the towns of the Andean regions of the provinces of Tunja and Pamplona. 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, n.º 1 (2016): 61-91, doi: <https://doi.org/10.15446/achsc.v43n1.55065>

57 “[...] decadencia de su comercio; frutos preciosos de que abunda, y minas que atesora,” Moreno y Escandón, *Plan Geográfico del Virreinato*.



was linked to the Atlantic context.<sup>58</sup> The rivalry between Britain, France, and Spain necessitated the use of resources and abilities that the colonies provided. The map's thick, well-marked borders created the illusion of a bounded space, one claimed by Spain but constantly threatened by foreign incursions. The map appears to show fixed viceregal frontiers and a stabilized colonial space but it also includes areas of potential or ongoing conflict and weakening imperial control. The map indicates areas where foreigners could invade the territory, such as the coast of Veraguas, "where the pirates of the Mosquito [coast] enter, fish for tortoiseshell, and plunder the province."<sup>59</sup> This reflects royal concerns about the viceroyalty's vulnerability compared to the strength of other empires in alliance with independent indigenous groups.

Spanish reformers considered the possibility of partially integrating independent indigenous groups into colonial society through trade. Moreno y Escandón emphasized in his more extended report the hindrance posed by indigenous uprisings to the viceroyalty's progress, and the perils associated to English alliances with indigenous communities residing on the Mosquito coast.<sup>60</sup> The *Plan* contained a section on viceregal religious missions and asserted that the majority of provinces within the viceroyalty were adversely affected by "barbaric Indians, (...) which hinder trade," and frequently established friendships with foreign enemies.<sup>61</sup> He devoted several pages to this issue on the report.<sup>62</sup> The report includes a citation of information provided to Spanish authorities by an Englishman apprehended near Cartagena on the Caribbean coast. The Englishman had used the false Spanish name Alejandro Velasco. Foreigners taught Neogranadian authorities about developing trade networks and English settlements on the Mosquito Coast. In the late eighteenth century, apprehensions regarding their territorial expansion into Calidonia and the Gulf of Darien escalated.<sup>63</sup> Moreno y Escandón believed that Englishmen, in alliance with autonomous indigenous groups, could easily invade the gold-producing provinces of Chocó and Antioquia from the aforementioned area. Moreover, he added, indigenous populations could assist enslaved mining laborers in their quest for emancipation. The fear was primarily justified by the fact that gold mining "is the only product on which the entire viceroyalty depends."<sup>64</sup> He also mentioned that the navigation of the Atrato River in this area had been forbidden for Spaniards since 1730, further exposing the region to vulnerability, compounded by the absence of fortifications. In brief, the

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58 Rafael Torres Sánchez, *El precio de la guerra: el estado fiscal-militar de Carlos III (1779-1783)* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2013); Christopher Storrs (ed.), *The Fiscal-Military State in Eighteenth-Century Europe: Essays in Honour of P.G.M. Dickson* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2009).

59 Moreno y Escandón, *Plan Geográfico del Virreinato*.

60 David J. Weber, *Bárbaros: Spaniards and Their Savages in the Age of Enlightenment* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005).

61 "que causan los indios bárbaros, que habitan (...) impidiendo el comercio", in Moreno y Escandón, *Plan Geográfico del Virreinato*.

62 Moreno y Escandón, "Relación del Estado del Virreinato de Santa Fe", 173-177.

63 Along with the Darien Gulf, several coastal areas of the viceroyalty of New Granada, such as Cumaná, Caracas and Puerto Cabello, formed part of a smuggling network that "epitomized the incompatibility of narrow imperial models of commercial circulation with more diverse patterns of colonial development and interaction." See Jesse Cromwell, *The Smugglers' World: Illicit Trade and Atlantic Communities in Eighteenth-Century Venezuela* (Williamsburg/ Virginia/ Chapel Hill: Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture/University of North Carolina Press, 2018), 57.

64 "[...] es el único fruto de que depende la conservación de todo el virreinato." Moreno y Escandón, "Estado del Virreinato de Santa Fe", 175.

persistence of sovereign indigenous polities, their coalitions with foreigners, and the closure of the Atrato River constituted a threat to gold extraction. According to royal officials, the viceroyalty had the potential to stimulate both internal and external trade, prevent infiltration of agents from other empires, and connect coastal territories with Andean hinterlands.

#### 4. The Paradoxes of Andean-Caribbean Relationships

Knowledge about the territory was useful but limited in promoting the idea of the viceroyalty of New Granada as a unified administrative, economic, and geographical unit among bureaucrats and merchants. Creating a unified domestic market while competing with other empires in was a major focus for royal administrators and a crucial aspect of the local political economy. Historian Regina Grafe argues that Eli Heckscher's comment that mercantilism was "primarily an agent of unification" is often overlooked in historiography.<sup>65</sup> Grafe explains that Heckscher viewed mercantilism as a set of ideas and practices aimed at state formation and the creation of an integrated domestic market, rather than solely focused on international competition.<sup>66</sup> This section expands on Grafe's critique of the scholarly emphasis on mercantilism's foreign trade dimension. It explores the tensions that arose from efforts to integrate the Andean hinterlands and Caribbean coastal areas through military defense, trade, and fiscal interconnection.

Escandón's *Plan* barely depicts New Granada's viceroyalty economic connections with the Greater Caribbean region. The maritime borders with the British, French, and Dutch empires in the Caribbean significantly impacted its economic culture. The report stated that the viceroyalty had minimal trade activity and only produced few agricultural products, such as cacao.<sup>67</sup> The map and text do not reference the illegal trade's impact on colonial wealth and harm to the Royal Treasury. His limited attention to coastal trans-imperial commercial flows resulted from his interest in conveying a vision of territoriality and viceregal power that is centripetal. He emphasized the creation of an integrated internal market and the symbolic and bureaucratic core of the viceroyalty in the city of Santa Fe de Bogotá.

The map includes a panoramic view of the urban center of Santa Fe in the lower right section. In the view we see a valley of organized houses and buildings with the Cordillera in the back. The city's coat of arms displays a crowned black eagle holding a pomegranate in each claw, surrounded by more pomegranates. This portrayal of Santa Fe as an administrative, commercial, and learning center, as well as an ideal European-like landscape, demonstrates its position as an administrative and learning core. Moreno y Escandón proposed an education curriculum reform, which replaced theological philosophy with Enlightenment natural philosophy.<sup>68</sup> The city led the way in incorporating Newtonian sciences into education and housed the Royal Botanical Expedition

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65 See Regina Grafe, "Polycentric States: the Spanish Reigns and the Failures of Mercantilism," in *Mercantilism Reimagined*, 248-249; and Alejandra Irigoin and Regina Grafe, "Bargaining for Absolutism: A Spanish Path to Nation-State and Empire Building," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 88, n.º 2 (2008): 173-209, doi <https://doi.org/10.1215/00182168-2007-117>

66 Eli F. Heckscher and Mendel Shapiro, *Mercantilism* (London: G. Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1935).

67 Moreno y Escandón, "Estado del Virreinato de Santa Fe," 202.

68 Francisco Moreno y Escandón, "Plan de estudios y método provisional de estudios de Santa Fe de Bogotá para los colegios" in *Documentos para la historia de Colombia, (1767-1776)*, Tomo IV, edited by Guillermo Hernández de Alba (Bogotá: Patronato Colombiano de Artes y Ciencias, 1980), 195-227.

(1783-1808) and the first Astronomical Observatory in the Americas, built in 1803. Creole intellectuals in the capital led the expansion of the public sphere and the circulation of public discourse on political economy.<sup>69</sup>

In contrast to Escandón's portrayal of New Granada, Manuel de Anguiano's geographic-military description of Cartagena in 1805 emphasized the city's significance as a component of the viceroyalty's economic governance.<sup>70</sup> The port city housed a state customs house and a merchant's guild later in the century (*Consulado*).<sup>71</sup> The city of Cartagena played a significant role as a mercantile hub and a primary center for the distribution of slaves, with the customs office serving as the focal point of these activities. Anguiano's interpretation of the landscape of the viceroyalty of New Granada extended the defensive responsibilities of the province of Cartagena to include the protection of the region that connected the Caribbean and Pacific regions of the viceregal territory. Anguiano provided an interpretation of the landscape in relation to Cartagena's role in defending Neogranadian resources. This interpretation was based on a historical context of recurrent Dutch and British incursions in the gold-rich province of Chocó.

Cartagena was designated as a military jurisdiction due to policies aimed at assigning the strategically positioned city with the responsibility of safeguarding the viceroyalty against external threats. Following the British capture of Portobello in 1739 and the attacks to the city in the following years, Cartagena experienced a golden age in the development of military fortifications that persisted for the entirety of the century.<sup>72</sup> The reorganization of New Granada resulted in the establishment of a new territorial hierarchy that pertained to both war and trade matters. As a part of the reform, a politico-military division was established, which had already been included in the decree that established the viceroyalty in 1739. The general commanders of Caracas, Cartagena, and Panama were appointed as the governors of this division. The significance of Cartagena as a defensive entrepôt and commercial center of the kingdom was amplified during the reorganization of jurisdictions and the establishment of the *Consulado de Comercio* in 1795. The *Consulado* represented the regional interests of the city's commercial elite but encountered significant opposition from the merchants of Santa Fe.<sup>73</sup>

Despite the conflicting portrayals of the respective roles of Santa Fe and Cartagena in the viceroyalty, and the competition between their commercial elites for trade dominance, fiscal territoriality under the viceregal system established a reciprocal interdependence between the Andean

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69 Through the publication of several newspapers, such as the *Papel Periódico de la Ciudad de Santa Fe* (1791-1797), the *Correo Curioso Erudito, Económico y Mercantil* (Feb-Dec. 1801), and the *Semanario del Nuevo Reyno de Granada* (1808-1809) knowledge of political economy and geography, climate, and population of the viceroyalty of New Granada circulated in a nascent public sphere. The learned elite of the kingdom also founded the Economic Society of Friends of the Country (*Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País*) in 1802.

70 Puello Suárez, Senén., y Castillo Velasco, Jhandy., "Descripción geográfica militar y política de la provincia de Cartagena de Indias [1805]", por el ingeniero militar Manuel de Anguiano, *El Taller de Historia* 7, n.º 7 (2015), 459-462, doi <https://doi.org/10.32997/2382-4794-vol.7-num.7-2015-732>

71 The merchant guild's function was three-fold: economic growth, efficient administration, and the eradication of contraband. Gabriel B. Paquette, "State-Civil Society Cooperation and Conflict in the Spanish Empire: The Intellectual and Political Activities of the Ultramarine *Consulados* and Economic Societies, c. 1780-1810," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 39, n.º 2 (2007): 263-98, doi, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022216X07002386>

72 Enrique Marco Dorta, *Cartagena de Indias: puerto y plaza fuerte* (Cartagena: Fondo Cultural Cafetero, 1988).

73 Alfonso Múnera, *El fracaso de la nación: región, clase y raza en el Caribe colombiano (1717-1821)* (Bogotá: Banco de la República / El Áncora Editores, 1998).



cities and Cartagena. Paradoxically, the challenge of safeguarding the northern gateway to the kingdom against autonomous indigenous groups and external invasions played a role in Cartagena's fiscal reliance on the interior provinces of the viceroyalty. A number of fortification initiatives within the city were granted substantial financial support from the monarchy. The Spanish government implemented a fiscal system that directed the surpluses of local provincial economies in the Andean region towards supporting the crucial military defense infrastructure along the Caribbean coast. A network of bureaucrats linked towns to regional revenue collection centers by transporting fiscal remittances from Andean cities to the defense outpost of Cartagena. Coastal regions, especially in the Caribbean, aimed to acquire not only commercial benefits but also royal currency.

According to historian Rodolfo Meisel, an analysis of Cartagena's fiscal incomes from 1751 to 1808 reveals that "the *situado* became the vital sustenance of the public finances and economy of Cartagena."<sup>74</sup> Meisel notes that the *situado*, which involved a series of intra-imperial money transfers, was regularly utilized to support strategic military outposts such as Cartagena, Santa Marta, and Guayana. During the tenure of Viceroy Solís (1753-1761), the fiscal surpluses obtained from the treasuries of Honda and Mompox, in addition to the fiscal remittances received from Quito and Santa Fe, were utilized to improve the fortification system and to provide sustenance to the troops stationed in Cartagena. The fiscal network that facilitated economic transactions between the Andean hinterlands and the Caribbean coast served as a conduit for the exchange of not only monetary resources but also other valuable commodities. Before 1795, the transportation of royal safes from Quito to Cartagena was managed by merchants who engaged in the buying and selling of goods *en route*, thereby stimulating the local economies of the regions through which they passed.<sup>75</sup> Throughout the century, the fiscal network had been reinforced by the introduction of new fiscal bureaucracy and the establishment of additional local fiscal institutions. The Royal Treasury faced significant challenges due to Spain's precarious authority over the borderlands of the viceroyalty. The *Cajas Reales* were responsible for collecting revenues not only for local improvement projects, but also for larger imperial needs such as wars in Europe, limits' expeditions, fortifications and military sustenance.

Interdependence between the Andean and coastal regions was limited by competing commercial interests. As demonstrated by Alfonso Múnera, merchants hailing from Santa Fe presented arguments that their economic interests were in conflict with those of Cartagena and held divergent perspectives on the viceroyalty's development.<sup>76</sup> The construction of transportation routes to the coast was deemed a priority by Santa Fe's *Consulado* during periods of flour scarcity, to ease the movement of their products. However, the king appointed Cartagena as the facilitator of the internal transportation routes and economic growth of the viceroyalty. The *Consulado* in Santa Fe lodged a complaint, stating that Cartagena exhibited a lack of interest in the progress of the interior provinces. This, coupled with the crisis of flour supply, posed a significant challenge to the efforts of making wheat the foundation for agricultural advancement in the viceroyalty. Moreno y Escandón's report highlights the tension caused by the traffic of foreign contraband

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74 Meisel Roca, Adolfo, "Crecimiento a través de los subsidios: Cartagena de Indias y el situado, 1751-1810." *Cuadernos de Historia Económica*, n.º 9 (2002): 1-26, doi <https://doi.org/10.32468/chee.9>

75 Carmen Dueñas de Anhalzer, *Marqueses, cacaoteros, y vecinos de Portoviejo: cultura política en la Presidencia de Quito* (Quito: Editorial Abya Yala, 1997), 36.

76 Múnera, *El fracaso de la nación*, 119-120.



flour into the kingdom, which was consumed in Cartagena at the expense of its production and trade in the interior provinces.<sup>77</sup>

Despite the controversy that resurfaced during the independence process, Andean cities continued to depend on Cartagena's pivotal role as a commercial and defensive stronghold. In contrast, Cartagena turned on the fiscal surpluses generated by Andean cities. Throughout the century, the Andean and Caribbean regions of the viceroyalty developed a complex interdependent relationship that allowed for a somehow integrated domestic market. Despite Cartagena's significant role as the protector of the viceroyalty of the New Kingdom of Granada and its strong connections to the broader Caribbean area, both in terms of spatial imagination and administrative functioning, it continued to be financially reliant on the hinterland provinces and therefore remained closely linked to Andean urban centers.

## Conclusion

In the eighteenth century, gathering information about the territory, its topography, natural resources, and potential economic prosperity became fundamental to bureaucratic practice and economic governance. The portrayal of New Granada's provinces aided in the design and imagination of entire landscapes in which the viceroyalty emerged as a potentially rich, integrated, yet regionally fragmented space. Bureaucrats, military men, cartographers, and missionaries drew maps and wrote about the landscape and its resources in a non-neutral endeavor that involved debating the boundaries and integration of territorial units and how to generate wealth for the empire. In this sense, the discussion of knowledge production, colonialism, imperial reform, and political economy presented here became crucial for European capital accumulation.

A spatial history of the creation of the Viceroyalty of New Granada thus reveals how language and mapmaking rhetorically served to transform space into place. In this process, the representations of the viceroyalty made it a legible, resource-producing colony not only for the Spanish but also for other European empires. As this article has shown, the production of knowledge in the form of chorographic texts tailored by bureaucrats was inextricably linked to the creation of wealth in Spanish overseas colonies and Europe. As historian James Torres argues, during this time, the viceroyalty experienced "an interlinked process of economic growth, with the linkages of gold and commodity export". This growth, based on regional specialization and commercialization, allowed consumers to access goods from Asia and Europe, thereby allowing the region to expand its markets.<sup>78</sup>

While this was a period of economic growth and global interconnection, many of the visions of territoriality and political economy projects never materialized as colonial officials had imagined them. On the other hand, this type of mapping gave a definitive purpose to ongoing governance, commercial networks, imperial and creole aspirations, and longstanding visions of territoriality, which were often quite fragile illusions in practice. However, New Granada's geopolitically unique position, internally topographically dislocated and permeated by foreign incursions, provides a unique opportunity to delve into the geographical imagination and conceptions of space that were

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77 Moreno y Escandón, "Estado del virreinato," 88.

78 James Torres, "Trade in a Changing World: Gold, Silver, and Commodity Flows in the Northern Andes 1780-1840" (Doctoral dissertation, Georgetown University, 2021): 728.

so central to the negotiation of imperial reform and capitalism before to the collapse of Spanish imperial rule in northern South America.

Chorographic political economies were central devices of imperial reform, and the search for colonial wealth that laid the foundation of production and territorial integration occurred in colonial outposts, not in intellectual treatises in Europe. As Cardim et al. argue, the Iberian Monarchies were polycentric in the sense that “they allowed for the existence of many interlinked centers that interacted not only with the king but also among themselves, thus actively participating in forging the polity.”<sup>79</sup> Reporting back to Santa Fe or Spain, governors, clerics, *oidores*, military men and vice-roys themselves sought to convey a spatial understanding of particular regions within the empire. While local political economies set out to advance the possibilities of connecting a city or town with certain rivers or sea outlets, larger conceptions of the Viceroyalty of New Granada as a territorial unit proved difficult to render a sense of territorial cohesiveness. The same was true on the ground *vis-à-vis* a reality of insurmountable topographical obstacles that impeded fluid communication among provinces. Whether imagined or on the ground, the integration of the viceroyalty from the economic, defensive, and administrative points of view rendered discourses of regional difference, along with utopian representations of territorial integration and knowledge of political economy. Although bureaucratic, fiscal, and military networks enabled the viceroyalty to function as an administrative whole that linked coastal and Andean regions, the tensions between the main cities of Cartagena and Santa Fe illustrate paradoxes in the making of an integrated and harmonious viceregal territoriality in the dawn of the Spanish Empire.

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79 Cardim, et al., *Polycentric Monarchies*, 4.

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### **Maria José Afanador-Llach**

Ph.D. in History from the University of Texas at Austin (United States), she is currently Assistant Professor of Digital Humanities at the School of Arts and Humanities, Universidad de los Andes (Colombia). Her research is centered in two main areas: the first one is the eighteenth century and the transition from colony to republic in northern South America through the lens of spatial practices, geographical imagination and political economy; the second one is digital humanities pedagogy, digital archives, digital history, spatial data curation, and cartographic narratives. She is editor of *The Programming Historian en español* ([www.programminghistorian.org/es](http://www.programminghistorian.org/es)). Her most recent publications include: “The Globally Unequal Promise of Digital Tools for History: UK and Colombia Case Study” (in collaboration with Adam Crymble), *Teaching History in the Contemporary World* (Singapore: Springer, 2021); “Developing New Literacy Skills and Digital Scholarship Infrastructures in the Global South. A Case Study” (in collaboration with Andrés Lombana), in *Global Debates in the Digital Humanities*, edited by Fiormonte D., Ricaurte, P., Chaudhuri, S. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2022). She was the editor of *Cómo nació Colombia. Un país en construcción* (in collaboration with Francisco Ortega, José Nicolás Jaramillo, Sebastián Vargas and Lucía Duque) (Bogotá: El Tiempo, Universidad Nacional, Universidad del Rosario and Universidad de los Andes, 2023). [mj.afanador28@uniandes.edu.co](mailto:mj.afanador28@uniandes.edu.co)