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CIDE

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**ECONOMIC REGIONS, FUEROS AND POLITICAL
INTEGRATION IN MÉXICO (1821-1824)**

Abstract

Some historians have completely ignored the period 1821-1824 as a fundamental one in Mexico's birth as a nation. This essay challenges the traditional ideas that i) political integration in Mexico was achieved by establishing a federal republic; ii) that the colonial heritage was enough to achieve it; and iii) that it was achieved just because a nationalist sentiment was present in all the provinces of New Spain after independence was accomplished. The essay argues that economic and political integration were indeed related, and that the religious and military *fueros* were a fundamental element of the process by which political integration was achieved.

Resumen

Algunos historiadores han ignorado el período 1821-1824 como una de las etapas fundamentales en el proceso de formación de México como nación. Este ensayo cuestiona las ideas tradicionales de que i) la integración política de México se logró a través del establecimiento de una República Federal; ii) dicha integración fue un resultado de la herencia colonial; y iii) que la integración se logró simplemente porque ya existía un sentimiento nacionalista en todas las provincias de la Nueva España antes de que se lograra la independencia. El argumento de este ensayo es que la integración económica estuvo ligada a la integración política, y que tanto el fuero religioso como el militar fueron un elemento clave en el proceso por el cual se logró la integración política.

Introduction

On March 19, 1823, Agustín de Iturbide sent his secretary of justice, Juan Gómez Navarrete to Congress, who presented a handwritten statement from the emperor abdicating the throne.¹ This was just ten months after Congress had elected him emperor on May 19, 1822, under the provisions of the *Plan de Iguala*.² Perhaps, it is because of the brevity of Iturbide's empire that some historians have completely ignored the period between September 27, 1821 -when Mexico finally became independent from Spain- and October 4, 1824 -when the first Federal Constitution was promulgated- as a fundamental one in Mexico's birth as a nation.³

On the one hand, it is as if the period never existed, and as if the history of independent Mexico began in 1824, with the Federal Constitution as its birth certificate. On the other hand, it is as if the provinces had followed a natural path from kingdoms (inside the Spanish Empire) to states (inside a federal republic). In fact, after Iturbide's abdication, what would later become Mexico started to fall apart, for province after province began to conform and declare an independent government from Mexico City.⁴ Moreover, Central America never did go back to form part of Mexico: the Mexican Congress formally recognized Guatemala's withdrawal from the Mexican nation on July 1, 1823.⁵ What shocks one the most when going through the historiography of the period is how many historians neglect the importance of this disintegration process for both the maintaining of unity and the formation of Mexico's political institutions after 1823.⁶

¹ Timothy E. Anna. *The Mexican Empire of Iturbide* (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1990), p. 197.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 64-70. See also *Actas Constitucionales Mexicanas (1821-1824)* (México, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 10 volumes, introduction and notes by José Barragán Barragán, 1980-1981), vol. 2, pp. 279-302.

³ See, for example, Donald Fithian Stevens. *Origins of Instability in Early Republican Mexico* (Durham, Duke University Press, 1991); Stanley C. Green. *The Mexican Republic: the First Decade, 1823-1832* (Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Press, 1987); Charles W. Macune Jr. *El Estado de México y la Federación Mexicana, 1823-1835* (México, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1978); and Michael P. Costeloe. *La Primera República Federal de México (1824-1835). Un estudio de los partidos políticos en el México independiente* (México, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1975).

⁴ Two very detailed descriptions of this process are Nettie Lee Benson. *The Provincial Deputation in Mexico. Harbinger of Provincial Autonomy, Independence, and Federalism* (Austin, University of Texas Press, 1992), especially chapter 7; and José Barragán Barragán. *Introducción al Federalismo. La formación de los poderes en 1824* (México, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1978), pp. 135-163. See also Josefina Zoraida Vázquez. "El Federalismo Mexicano, 1823-1847", in Marcello Carmagnani (coord.). *Federalismos latinoamericanos: México/Brasil/Argentina* (México, Fondo de Cultura Económica-El Colegio de México, 1993), pp. 20-27.

⁵ Benson, *The Provincial Deputation...*, p. 121.

⁶ I have found only four works that are concerned directly with the issue: the classic study by Nettie Lee Benson, *The Provincial Deputation*; Barragán, *Introducción...*, especially pp. 113-169; Vázquez, "El Federalismo...", pp. 15-27; and Agustín Cue Cánovas. *El Federalismo Mexicano*

It was during the first years of independent life that Mexico's political and economic institutions first took form, one that shaped the country's history for the next half of a century. It was during the first few months of independent life that some of the provinces decided to stay together and form a nation. This paper seeks to explore those first years of independent life in Mexico, but specifically trying to answer the question of why some of the provinces decided to stay together.⁷

The paper is divided in three parts. The first one reviews what historians have said about Mexico's birth as an independent nation. Many things have been written about Iturbide's empire and Mexico's first independent years.⁸ Nonetheless, very few -if any- historians have tried to answer why, after declaring themselves independent from the central government in Mexico City, the provinces decided to send deputies to the National Congress in order to negotiate a way to maintain the newly formed nation together.⁹

Three are the most common explanations of how political integration was achieved in Mexico after the wars of independence. The first one places the emphasis on the national or patriotic identity that evolved mainly in the Creole circles from very early in the colonial period. The second one emphasizes the role played by the provincial governments and elites in the formation of a federal republic. The third one centers on the centripetal forces present in Mexico's colonial heritage. The first part of the paper analyzes these three different explanations. Far from being a detailed survey of the secondary literature, the point is, instead, to

(México, Libro Mex Editores, 1960), pp. 15-32. See also Alfredo Avila, "Representación y realidad. Transformaciones y vicios en la cultura política mexicana en los comienzos del sistema representativo" (M.A. thesis. México, UNAM, 1998), especially chapter 7.

⁷ The process by which Guatemala became an independent nation -both, from Mexico and from Spain- and Chiapas a part of Mexico is an interesting one. Nevertheless, it is far beyond the scope of this paper to analyze that process, precisely because Guatemala did not, in the end, form part of Mexico.

⁸ Many nineteenth century historians -who had been deputies at the time- wrote about Iturbide's empire and the first years after independence. See, for example, José María de Bocanegra. *Memorias para la historia de México Independiente* (México, Imprenta del Gobierno Federal en el Ex-Arzobispado, vol. 1, 1892); Lorenzo de Zavala. *Ensayo histórico de las revoluciones de México. Desde 1808 hasta 1830* (México, Oficina Impresora de Hacienda, third edition, vol. 1, 1918); Carlos María de Bustamante. *Diario histórico de México (diciembre 1822-diciembre 1824)* (México, Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 2 volumes, 1980-1981); and Lucas Alamán. *Historia de Méjico. Desde los primeros movimientos que prepararon su independencia en el año de 1808 hasta la época presente* (México, Imprenta de J. M. Lara, vol. 5, 1852). Some examples of twentieth century historians that have worked on the period are Barragán, *Introducción...*; Anna, *The Mexican Empire...* and also by him *Forging Mexico: 1821-1835* (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1998); Benson, *The Provincial Deputation...*, and also by her "The Plan of Casa Mata", in *The Hispanic American Historical Review* (volume 25, February, 1945, No. 1, pp. 45-56); and Brian R. Hamnett, whose extensive work -or at least some of it- is listed in the bibliography of this paper.

⁹ See, for instance, Anna, *The Mexican Empire...*, chapter 1, but especially p. 25; and John Tutino. *From Insurrection to Revolution in Mexico. Social Bases of Agrarian Violence, 1750-1940* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1986), p. 215, where the question is asked in slightly different terms, but is never answered. See also Benson, *The Provincial Deputation...*, especially pp. vii-xiii; Barragán, *Introducción...*, especially pp. 113-169; and Vázquez, "El Federalismo...", pp. 15-16.

make a critical review of the most dominant explanations that have so far been given to the question of how political integration was achieved in Mexico.

The paper discusses the cases of three regions: Guadalajara, Oaxaca and Querétaro. The purpose is to show that, at least in these three particular cases, there were reasons for maintaining political integration that lay far beyond nationalism or federalism as ends in themselves. The second and third parts of the paper deal with those reasons. In the second one, the paper describes how these regional economies worked. As will be shown, New Spain's economy was not an integrated one in many ways, and some regional economies inside New Spain had enough economic resources of their own to form a distinct nation. In that sense, in spite of the nationalism that may have existed, it was never obvious that the newly formed country would "inherit" New Spain's territory, nor that the provinces had only one choice: to preserve their ties to Mexico City. And yet, Guadalajara, Oaxaca and Querétaro did because strong enough economic links between them and Mexico City, but above all between them and other regional economies (like Zacatecas and California in the case of Guadalajara, and Veracruz in the case of Oaxaca) had developed after the Bourbon Reforms to make political integration an enticing choice.

In the third part, the paper analyzes some of the debates held in Congress between March 19, 1823 -when Iturbide abdicated the throne- and October 4, 1824 -when the Federal Constitution was promulgated- as well as the Constitution itself and other primary sources. The aim is to show that it was neither mere nationalism -or Creole patriotism- that drove the deputies from Guadalajara, Oaxaca and Querétaro to accept the establishment of a federal republic in 1824; nor federalism *per se* what the provincial deputies negotiated with the central government. Drawing from the descriptions of the three regional economies made in the second section, this paper will argue that the origins of Mexican federalism -as a form of political integration- can be traced to the way in which the different economic regions interacted with each other during the final years of the Spanish domination. That is to say, federalism, in a way, was a result of Mexico's colonial heritage, but because it worked as a mechanism by which *some* provinces, but not all of them, managed to protect their common economic interests *vis-à-vis* the central government in Mexico City.

But other factors should be taken into account. The provincial deputations and other political institutions already present during the last years of the colonial period did simplify the negotiations between the provincial and central governments, but they were not enough to ensure political integration. In that sense, the army and the church —the only two "national" institutions that survived the collapse of the colonial regime— played a role that can hardly be overstated. It was through the military and religious *fueros* that the central government secured the loyalty of the army and the church, which became central to subdue the most radical provinces.¹⁰

¹⁰ The interested reader may want to check Lyle McAlister's *The "fuero militar" in New Spain, 1764-1800* (Gainesville, University of Florida Press, 1957), and Nancy Farriss, *Crown and*

Finally, a short conclusion will close the paper, trying to pour forth some ideas on the relationship between economic regions, the *fueros* and political integration in Mexico, from independence to the adoption of the Federal Constitution of 1824.

Nationalism, federalism, colonial heritage and political integration in Mexico

The origins of Mexican nationalism have been extensively studied.¹¹ One of the main contributions of those studies has been to establish a clear relationship between the development of a national conscience and the independent movements in Mexico. David Brading argues that sentiments of nationalism emerged very early in the colonial period and that, even then, the Spanish authorities were very much concerned with the effects those sentiments could have:

During the 1590s (...) many descendants of the conquerors now dwelt in poverty (...) If the men of honour were not provided with some means of subsistence, they might well conspire with the 'mulattoes, blacks and other people' in a general insurrection. What is remarkable about these petitions and memorials of the 1590s is the degree to which they attested to the emergence of a creole identity, a collective consciousness that separated Spaniards born in the New World from their European ancestors and cousins. It was an identity, however, that found expression in terms of anguish, nostalgia and resentment.¹²

Anthony Pagden has also argued that the relationship between nationalist sentiments and independence was established in the colonial period. According to him, although many of the nationalist documents produced by "the citizens of Spain's dependencies in America" were not meant to be a discourse of political emancipation from Spain, they were often taken to be "revolutionary document[s], a call to an explicitly political self-awareness, if not exactly a call to arms".¹³

Jacques Lafaye argues in *Quetzalcóatl and Guadalupe* that in the attempt to establish an independent *Iglesia Indiana* (an American church), the Creoles of New

clergy in colonial Mexico, 1759-1821: the crisis of ecclesiastical privilege (London, Athlone P., 1968) to learn how the *fueros* worked before the end of the colonial period.

¹¹ Four examples are David Brading. *The Origins of Mexican Nationalism* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985); also by him *The First America. The Spanish monarchy, Creole patriots, and the Liberal state, 1492-1867* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991); Anthony Pagden. *Spanish Imperialism and the Political Imagination* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1990); Jacques Lafaye. *Quetzalcóatl and Guadalupe. The Formation of Mexican National Consciousness, 1531-1813* (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1976).

¹² Brading, *The First America...*, p. 293.

¹³ Pagden, *Spanish Imperialism...*, pp. 91, 117.

Spain developed a national identity that actually opened the possibility to achieve political emancipation also.

If we compare this text [the *Real Congregación de Na. Sra. de Guadalupe de México*] with that of Francisco Javier Clavijero [*Historia antigua de México*]—says Lafaye—we get a clearer idea of the emergence of a Mexican national consciousness on the linguistic level and the approximate date of that phenomenon [1757]. We discover that each time we must push farther back in time the appearance of a conscious sentiment of national identity capable of explicitly asserting its primordial claim of dignity against the dominant Spanish nation.¹⁴

These studies about nationalism emphasize the relationship between a Creole national identity and the independent movements, but do not relate explicitly nationalism to the issue of political integration. Nevertheless, some historians have implied that there is not even the need to establish that relationship and question why most of New Spain remained as a single nation after independence. Nationalism becomes, then, the only reason behind the political integration achieved by the Mexican provinces after the fall of Iturbide's empire. One such example is Ernesto de la Torre Villar,¹⁵ who argues that New Spain was, for the Creoles, a “common mother, a *patria*”, but fails to mention that Spain also was. Furthermore, after the wars of independence, he says, they did not seek a *patria*, because they already had one. He also argues that the *patria* was “the reality” upon which a national state could be built. In his view, both Morelos and Iturbide were sure that

beyond racial origin and socio—economic situation, integrating forces existed, ideals and values that united all the different groups under the same spirit, *giving them the possibility of existing as a nation*, and that the integrating force that made coherent different groups was the one that fostered and permitted the formation of a *national state*...¹⁶

How can one explain then political disintegration in Central and South America?

Other historians have contested the view represented here by Ernesto de la Torre Villar. Timothy Anna and Brian Hamnett have interpreted the revolutionary years of 1810-1815 —when Morelos campaigned in Mexico's south— in a different

¹⁴ Lafaye, pp. 108-109.

¹⁵ Ernesto de la Torre Villar. “El origen del Estado mexicano”, in Inge Buisson, *et al.* (eds.). *Problemas de la formación del Estado y de la nación en Hispanoamérica* (Bonn, Inter Naciones, 1984), pp. 127-142.

¹⁶ “... por arriba del origen y situación económica y social, existían fuerzas integradoras, ideales y valores que cohesionaban bajo un mismo espíritu a esos grupos *posibilitándoles su existencia como nación*, y que esa fuerza integradora que hacía coherentes diferentes grupos era la que impulsaba y permitía la formación de un *estado nacional* ...”. *Ibid.*, pp. 138-139, emphasis added.

way.¹⁷ Morelos's alternative to Spanish imperial control "consisted of a program of radical social reform, which was (...) unattractive to the elite who aspired to just the opposite —less royal control over the use of Indian and caste labor".¹⁸ Timothy Anna has made a richer interpretation of Iturbide's political thought.¹⁹ Iturbide himself, in his memoirs, shows how conscious he was of the difficult balance that he had to achieve in order to secure the acquiescence of the provinces to his *Plan de Iguala*.²⁰

But this is not the main weakness of the "nationalist view". The most important centrifugal force that worked against achieving political integration via nationalism was *regionalism*. Not only the force of regionalism was present long before the viceregal government collapsed, but it can be said that the destructive effects of the independence wars themselves reinforced the process of disintegration of New Spain into its constituent regions.²¹ Perhaps the best proof of this is the effect that the *Acta de Casa Mata* had on Iturbide's empire. Nettie Lee Benson has argued that the creators of the *Acta* hoped to arouse the country by appealing to the provinces, and that the latter adopted the program because of their desire for independence and greater participation in their own affairs.²² In other words, *Casa Mata* was the perfect opportunity for the provinces to go against what Iturbide had accomplished: the supremacy of the central (national) government over the local governments. The provincial elites and deputations had adhered to Iturbide's *Plan de Iguala* in so far as they judged it to be the only way to carry out political independence from Spain.²³ But in no way did Iturbide's empire overcome the forces of regionalism.

It is precisely from this consensus about the forces of regionalism that another explanation for political integration derives. If regionalism was such a strong centrifugal force, what was it that held the provinces together? The most

¹⁷ Timothy Anna. *The Fall of the Royal Government in Mexico City* (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1978); and Brian Hamnett. *Roots of Insurgency. Mexican Regions, 1750-1824* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986).

¹⁸ Anna, *The Fall...*, p. 96. See also Hamnett, *Roots of Insurgency...*, pp. 142-149.

¹⁹ Anna, *The Mexican Empire...*, *passim*.

²⁰ Agustín de Iturbide. *Sus Memorias Escritas desde Liorna* (México, Editorial Jus, 1973). See especially his views on his election as emperor (pp. 19-22) and on the issue of the dissolution of the National Congress (pp. 15-18, 28-30).

²¹ Eric Van Young. "Introduction: Are Regions Good to Think?", in Eric Van Young (ed.). *Mexico's Regions* (San Diego, Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, UCSD, 1992), p. 14. Antonio Annino has also argued that, as opposed to the French case in which the Assembly inherited the undivided sovereignty directly from the king, in the Spanish case sovereignty fell upon the *reinos*. Hence, that would in part explain why after the French Revolution France remained as a single country while in the Spanish case the division of sovereignty after the fall of the empire produced several different countries. This argument was presented by Annino on September 15, 2000 in the History Seminar at CIDE.

²² Benson, "The Plan of Casa Mata", pp. 50-52.

²³ Brian Hamnett. "Faccionalismo, Constitución y Poder Personal en la Política Mexicana, 1821-1854: Un ensayo interpretativo", in Josefina Zoraida Vázquez (ed.). *La Fundación del Estado Mexicano* (México, Nueva Imagen, 1994), p. 80.

common answer to this question has been that federalism assured unity in Mexico, after the fall of Iturbide's empire in 1823, because it created an "equilibrium" between the regional demands for sovereignty and the central government's call for unity. There is, of course, a wide range of variants to this answer.

José Barragán Barragán identifies the origins of federalism in Mexico with the *Acta de Casa Mata*. Barragán argues that as a consequence of the *Acta* the National Congress dissolved earlier by Iturbide was reinstalled, but that the deputies were unable to soothe the claims for independence and sovereignty of the provincial elites. According to Barragán, Congress agreed to cease its debates and call for the election of deputies to a new National Congress, but that it was only the adoption of federalism that put an end to the process of disintegration. For Barragán federalism was the midwife of the nation.²⁴

Josefina Zoraida Vázquez argues that there is no doubt that federalism was a response to the demands of the provinces and that, precisely because of that, it can be said that federalism guaranteed the political integration of the country.²⁵ For Agustín Cue Cánovas, not only did federalism assure unity, but he goes as far as saying that the origins of Mexican federalism can be traced, among other reasons, firstly, to:

The creation in the central part of the country (sic), before of the Spanish conquest, of a true federation of indigenous states, which recognized as its principal center the triple alliance *azteca-acolhua-tepaneca*, around which 38 small incorporated states were centered.²⁶

And secondly, to the existence, during the colonial period, of perfectly determined geographic and social circumscriptions.

Yet another variant of the "federalist view" is the one given by Nettie Lee Benson:

the Provincial Deputation in Mexico played an important role in bringing autonomy to the provinces of Mexico, in contributing to the legitimization of the Iturbide independence movement with his ultimate success, in the creation of the Mexican monarchical empire with Iturbide as emperor, then to his downfall, and finally to the establishment of a federal republican system of government in order to maintain Mexico as a single nation and not some eighteen different nations, as occurred in Central America, largely as a result of the establishment of the Provincial Deputation in those provinces under Spanish rule.²⁷

²⁴ See Barragán, *Introducción...*

²⁵ See Vázquez, "El federalismo...".

²⁶ "La creación en la parte central del país y en la época anterior a la conquista española, de una verdadera federación de estados y señoríos indígenas, que reconocía como núcleo principal la triple alianza azteca-acolhua-tepaneca entorno de la cual se agrupaban provincias federadas en número de 38 pequeños estados incorporados". Cue Cánovas, *El federalismo...*, p. 10.

²⁷ Benson, *The Provincial Deputation...*, p. xii.

The first thing that must be said about the relationship between federalism and political integration in Mexico after the collapse of Iturbide's empire, is that, interestingly enough, many of the deputies that participated in the debates concerning the establishment of a federal republic -and that later wrote about the issue looking back on it— said it was exactly the other way around: federalism worked against political integration. Lucas Alamán says in his *Historia de México* that federalism in the United States had served as a way to link what was separate, while in Mexico it had separated what was originally united.²⁸ Fray Servando Teresa de Mier said in 1823 that Mexico needed union, and federalism meant division; that Mexico needed strength, and federalism meant weakness.²⁹ Lorenzo de Zavala, although later a champion of federalism and a promoter of the separation of Texas, said in Congress, in the session of May 9, 1823, that nothing was more contrary to the union than “the simultaneous separation of the provinces, forming each one a separate state from the center”.³⁰ Carlos María de Bustamante says in his *Hay tiempos de hablar* that he had fiercely opposed federalism after Iturbide's fall because, as time had proven, it would cause terrible things to the nation.³¹ José María de Bocanegra, writing in 1862, said that although federalism had in some way given confidence to the provinces and thus had prevented the disintegration of the nation, it had not satisfied completely the wishes of some provinces, which resulted in many upheavals and difficulties.³²

These testimonies should suffice at least to challenge the “federalist approach” to political integration, because contrary to what happened in the United States the provincial elites in Mexico believed federalism was a way to *obtain* the independence they did not have *vis-à-vis* a “strong” central government. The American states saw in federalism a way to *protect* the independence they already had *vis-à-vis* a central government that had just been born.

Mexican federalism, in fact, enhanced the political disintegration process. That is why José Barragán sometimes argues that federalism was the cause of regionalism,³³ going against his own hypothesis that federalism responded to regional demands. Maybe that is also why it is not clear where Josefina Vázquez

²⁸ Alamán, *Historia...*, vol. 5, p. 777.

²⁹ Although Mier did not write *ex post facto*, his case is very interesting because he gave a speech in Congress on 13 December 1823, that was going to be known later as the “speech of the prophecies”, because “all the bad things that he said federalism would cause, actually came true”. See Alamán, *ibidem*. The quote from Mier is from the copy of the speech published in Bustamante, *Diario Histórico...*, vol. 1, pp. 201-208.

³⁰ *Actas Constitucionales...*, vol. 5, pp. 446-447.

³¹ Carlos María de Bustamante. *Hay tiempos de hablar, y tiempos de callar*. The original text is reprinted in Andrés Henestrosa. *Carlos María de Bustamante* (México, Cámara de Senadores de la República Mexicana, 1986). See also Bustamante's speech in Congress on 13 December 1823, in Bustamante, *Diario Histórico...*, vol. 1, pp. 211-216.

³² Bocanegra, *Memorias...*, vol. 1, p. 289.

³³ Barragán, *Introducción...* pp. 113, 135.

locates the origins of federalism: in regionalism, or in the provincial deputations, the tradition of the Spanish *Cortes*, the *Acta de Casa Mata*, the *ayuntamientos*, or in all of them.³⁴

Regionalism indeed preceded federalism, and at least some of the provincial elites saw the latter only as a step to gain complete autonomy from Mexico City, just as they had seen the *Plan de Iguala* as a transitional step (in that case to carry out political independence from Spain, something that they could not have achieved without their alliance with Iturbide's central authority). As Eric Van Young has argued, regionalism existed in New Spain long before anyone even imagined the possibility of establishing any kind of republican government in Mexico.³⁵ Brian Hamnett, whose work centers almost exclusively in the study of regions, has also shown that "regionalism arrived as a political force to the independent country [Mexico]".³⁶ Likewise, Marcello Carmagnani maintains that, during the eighteenth century, a new structure of power of informal character was developed from the *corregidores* and the *alcaldes mayores* on a *regional basis* a long time before federalism entered the picture.³⁷

But most importantly, one has to question that federalism assured political integration in Mexico simply because the evidence that we have does not always support that belief. For instance, the forces of regionalism that built up long before independence was achieved did not find an "equilibrium" in the federalist attempt of 1823-1824, as is shown by the fact that the central government had to use the force of the army to impose a much more moderate form of federalism to some of the most radical provinces. In the case of Jalisco, 2 000 men were sent to occupy the state, and the central Executive power in cooperation with Anastasio Brizuela, military chief of Colima, achieved the separation of that territory from the state of Jalisco on August 12, 1823. The new territory was put under central control. Furthermore, a second military intervention was made during June 1824, and Nicolás Bravo occupied the province until January 24, 1825, to assure the acquiescence of Jalisco.³⁸

The case of Central America, contrary to what Nettie Lee Benson implies, shows that, in fact, neither the provincial deputation, nor federalism was enough to

³⁴ Vázquez, "El federalismo...", p. 15.

³⁵ Eric Van Young, "Introduction: Are Regions...", *passim*.

³⁶ Some of Hamnett's extensive work is cited in the bibliography. See especially "Factores regionales en la desintegración del régimen colonial en la Nueva España: el federalismo de 1823-1824", in Inge Buisson, *op. cit.*, p. 305.

³⁷ Marcello Carmagnani. "Territorialidad y federalismo en la formación del Estado mexicano", in Inge Buisson, *op. cit.*, p. 296. On the issue of how and why regionalism evolved during the eighteenth century see also Carmagnani's "Territorios, provincias y estados: las transformaciones de los espacios políticos en México, 1750-1850", in Josefina Zoraida Vázquez (ed.). *La fundación...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-73.

³⁸ Hamnett, "Factores...", pp. 313-317. Interestingly, Bravo said he was going to "assure order, and the *liberty* of the state [Jalisco]". See *Actas Constitucionales...*, vol. 10, session of 1 June, 1824, p. 2. Emphasis mine. The army's role in achieving political integration is dealt with in the third section and the conclusion of the paper.

achieve political unity. It can hardly be said that the provincial deputation was a “harbinger” of federalism and, even less so, of political integration. Not only did Central America break its political relations with Mexico, but it could not either remain as a single nation. As Brian Hamnett points out, the process by which the central power recovered *vis-à-vis* the provinces has received very little commentaries.³⁹

The third explanation that has so far been given to the question of political integration in Mexico contends that the colonial heritage provided Mexico with the means to survive as a political entity and to construct its territorial integrity. That heritage, Brian Hamnett says, consisted of three centripetal elements: the colonial bureaucratic system, the diocesan structure and the territorial integrity provided by the commercial and financial links of the late colonial period.⁴⁰ However, Hamnett himself argues against this explanation in favor of a more nuanced approach:

New Spain was a complex of provincial societies linked to the center by the bureaucracy of the absolutist State and by common economic interests. While we insist in the predominance of the regions, we must not lose sight of the fact that the Viceroyalty functioned as an effective political and economic system, because its different parts were perfectly balanced. It is also fundamental that we understand that the concept of region was not originated simply because of the ideology of federalism, but that, on the contrary, it was a natural product of the Mexican landscape. Its significance was not only territorial, but also cultural and psychological. *The tensions that arose in the late colonial period broke many of those old elements of cohesion that had sustained until then the balance between the central and provincial powers.* The search for a constitutional alternative to the viceregal absolutism pointed to the problem of the juridical relation of the provinces with the central power. Regionalism arrived as a political force to the independent country. Federalism in 1823-1824, it results, emerged out of this necessity of redefining the relation between the regional and national elites”.⁴¹

³⁹ Hamnett, “Factores...”, p. 316.

⁴⁰ Brian Hamnett. “La Formación del Estado Mexicano en la Primera Época Liberal, 1812-1867”, in Antonio Annino and Raymond Buve (coords.). *El Liberalismo en México* (Germany, AHILA, 1993), p. 104. Marcello Carmagnani’s work points also in that direction, but emphasizing only the last of the three aspects noted by Hamnett. As is pointed out above, Carmagnani argues that a regional power structure evolved from the *corregidores* and the *alcaldes mayores* in the late colonial period. See note 37 above.

⁴¹ “La Nueva España era un complejo de sociedades provinciales ligadas al centro por la burocracia del Estado absolutista y por intereses económicos comunes. Mientras que insistimos en el predominio de las regiones, no tenemos que perder de vista el hecho de que el virreinato funcionaba como un sistema político y económico eficaz, debido a las balanzas mutuas entre sus partes componentes. Además, es fundamental que comprendamos que el concepto de región no se originó simplemente con la ideología del federalismo, sino que fue, al contrario, producto natural del suelo mexicano. Su significación no fue meramente territorial, sino también cultural y psicológica. Las tensiones de fines de la Colonia rompieron muchos de aquellos antiguos elementos de cohesión que habían sostenido hasta entonces la balanza entre poderes centrales y provincias. La búsqueda de una alternativa constitucional al absolutismo virreinal involucró a su vez el nuevo problema de la relación

It can easily be accepted that there were some centripetal elements in Mexico's colonial heritage,⁴² but Hamnett himself has said that "[t]he relationship between locality, province and centre that made such cohesion feasible [in New Spain] still remains inadequately understood".⁴³ In other words, it is yet to be proven that the links between the provinces and the center that were developed during the colonial period —what Hamnett calls the colonial heritage— actually worked in favor of political integration after independence. If that was the case, how those links were finally translated into demands for establishing a federal republic is a question that has not yet even been asked.⁴⁴

The next two sections of the paper deal with the specific cases of three provinces: Guadalajara, Oaxaca and Querétaro. The purpose is twofold: to show how economic and political integration were closely related —as Hamnett and Carmagnani suggest, but do not explain;⁴⁵ and how twentieth century historians have consistently overlooked the importance of the military and religious *fueros* in the central government's attempt to secure the loyalty of the army and the church, the only two "national" institutions that survived the collapse of the colonial regime and that had the power to subdue the most radical provinces.⁴⁶ This will also serve to

jurídica de las provincias con el poder central. El regionalismo había llegado como una fuerza política en el país independiente. Resulta que el federalismo de los años, 1823-1824, surgió de esta necesidad de redefinir la relación entre las élites regionales y la nacional". Hamnett, "Factores...", pp. 305-306. Emphasis added. It should also be stressed here that the no correspondence between territorial units before and after the Wars of Independence all over Latin America points to a weakness of this type of arguments. That is to say, the fact that neither viceroalties (like in the case of Peru) nor *audiencias* (like in the case of Guadalajara, analyzed below) became in every case national states after independence, points to the need of searching for more nuanced answers.

⁴² The diocesan structure was certainly not one of them. The ten dioceses ceased to match New Spain's spatial organization since the 1786 reforms instituted the Intendancy system. Besides, they did not match the political divisions established in the 1824 Federal Constitution either, and many of the states were left under the jurisdiction of two or more dioceses. See Vázquez, "El Federalismo...", pp. 30-31. See also Horst Pietschmann, *Las reformas borbónicas y el sistema de intendencias en Nueva España. Un estudio político administrativo* (México, FCE, 1996) for an understanding on how the Bourbon Reforms and the Intendancy system worked on an administrative level.

⁴³ Hamnett, *Roots of Insurgency...*, p. 3.

⁴⁴ The church did play a fundamental role in homogenizing into catholicism the cultural diversity that existed in colonial Mexico since pre-hispanic times. This is a factor that can hardly be overstated. The Church also helped certain cities, like Guadalajara, maintain close relations with the diocesan territory that would end up laying outside of what was to become the state of Jalisco. This is certainly a fascinating question, but it is out of the reach of this paper as well. In fact, I think that the only way to answer it would be to take a regional approach, on top of which one could make some generalizations.

⁴⁵ Vázquez also refers to the relation between federalism and economic factors in the particular case of Zacatecas, but she does not elaborate on the issue either. Vázquez, "El federalismo...", pp. 21-22.

⁴⁶ It is also worth noting that although the army could be considered a "new" institution and the Church an "old" one, both Bishops and army officers were mostly Spaniards born in Spain. Thus,

revalue the role of nationalism and federalism in the achievement of Mexico's political integration after independence.

Three economic regions: Guadalajara, Oaxaca and Querétaro

It has been generally assumed that New Spain's economic and political systems had two principal axes around which everything else revolved. One ran from east to west, from Veracruz to Acapulco—passing through Mexico City—and had strategic as well as political and commercial functions. The other one ran from north to south, from Zacatecas to Mexico City, and had social, political and economic functions as well.⁴⁷ Outside these two axes the economy of New Spain consisted of a series of local and regional economies poorly linked to each other, rather than that of a "national" economy.⁴⁸ Compared with Peru, for example, New Spain and early national Mexico were better integrated, but there was a relatively low proportion of goods of intraregional origin exported from most Mexican regions at the close of the colonial period. Regions tended to have their own primate city and neither exported nor were very much integrated to others.⁴⁹

It has also been generally assumed that the big exception to this was the axis Zacatecas-Mexico City, where much more interdependencies were spun.⁵⁰ The mining boom in Zacatecas, and more generally in the North, led to the settlement—and then to the economic development—of the *Bajío*, which by the close of the colonial period was approaching to be "a true urban network".⁵¹

But a third general assumption has been that the Bourbon Reforms had deep consequences that changed completely New Spain's economic system. The three regions that this paper deals with are described before and after those reforms were completed. If there was little economic integration, were there any economic incentives for the provinces outside the main two economic and political axes to maintain unity? This section argues that economic integration outside the two main economic axes in Bourbon Mexico was far more important than it is often presumed, as exemplified by the cases of the three regions analyzed below. Three main issues are key to understand the economic links that existed between regions: a) the location of the markets in which the products of the region were sold; b) the region

they would play a central role when the central government tried to secure the loyalty of both institutions.

⁴⁷ See, for example, Carmagnani, "Territorios...", p. 40.

⁴⁸ Enrique Semo. *The History of Capitalism in Mexico: Its Origins, 1521-1763* (Austin, University of Texas Press, 1993), p. 84.

⁴⁹ Van Young, "Introduction: Are Regions...", pp. 12-13.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 13; and Semo, *The History...*, p. 72.

⁵¹ Van Young, "Introduction: Are Regions...", p. 13. See also David Brading, *Haciendas and ranchos in the Mexican Bajío: León, 1700-1860* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1978).

from where the financing for this production came from; and c) the role of the Church in the regional economic system.

The analysis of these three issues sheds some light on the relation between economic and political integration. Two of the regions that are going to be described laid outside the main two axes of New Spain's economic system: Guadalajara, which is located northwest from Mexico City and southwest from Zacatecas; and Oaxaca, located southwest from Mexico City. Querétaro, the other region described, was part of the main route from Zacatecas to Mexico City, and was also part of the "urban network" that evolved around the *Bajío*.⁵² Yet, all three of them, at some point, demanded political autonomy. Therefore, although one can expect, from the very beginning, a much more radical position of Guadalajara and Oaxaca when political integration became an issue after the fall of Iturbide's empire, no easy relation between the two main axes of the general economic system and the demands for political autonomy can be established: the different degrees of economic integration that the provinces had —between them and with Mexico City— shaped the way in which the issue of political integration was perceived by some of the provincial elites.

*Mexico's jewel of the west*⁵³

Guadalajara came to be a distinct political and economic region very early in the colonial period. In 1529, Nuño de Guzmán, hoping to make himself independent from Hernán Cortés, began the conquest of what is today western Mexico—a much less populated and complex Indian culture area than those in New Spain or south into the Tarascan zone. By 1533, Nuño had already been named governor of *Nueva Galicia*—the Christian name given to the area after Nuño's native province in Spain—, and the lack of control by the central authorities in New Spain led to a high degree of autonomy for the newly established kingdom.

Nevertheless, it was during the eighteenth century that the area around Guadalajara was progressively integrated into a regional economic system, which relied almost entirely upon the city as a market for agricultural products and a source of credit and capital. The motive force of that integration was precisely the growth

⁵² Interestingly, Enrique Semo says that "the magnitude of transit trade between Mexico City and the North was such, that the city of Querétaro was moved to a site closer to the highway in order to take advantage of it". *The History...*, p. 75.

⁵³ This description of the Guadalajara region, which is meant only to highlight some aspects of its economy relevant for this paper, is mostly based on Eric Van Young. *Hacienda and Market in Eighteenth-Century Mexico. The Rural Economy of the Guadalajara Region, 1675-1820* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1981). Not only Van Young's book is an obliged reference in the historiography of the region, but he gives a very detailed description of how the regional economy worked. See also the work by Tomás Calvo listed in the bibliography.

of an urban market, and its mechanism was the expansion of commercialized agriculture to supply that market. Specifically, it was the growth of the urban population that fostered the commercialization of agriculture in the city's hinterland and drew all groups of rural society into an expanding network of relations mediated by a cash economy.⁵⁴

Guadalajara was not itself a primary producer of wealth in the form of industrial goods or minerals. Although it did develop a good deal of light industry toward the end of the colonial period, Guadalajara was preeminently a mercantile and administrative center. Its function was mainly that of a broker—commercial, financial, political, and cultural—with the area around it progressively integrated into a regional economic system. In this sense, the Guadalajara region clearly illustrated the case of a colonial city that was in the center of administrative, political, and commercial networks with identifiable regional boundaries. What gave the region its cohesiveness was the importance of the regional agricultural economy with the city as its main market.

By 1810 the city was clearly in its heyday of splendor and influence. Its judicial authority covered all of western Mexico, and stretched up the Pacific coast to the Californias, so that, conceptually speaking, “the functions of Guadalajara as a central place can be visualized as a series of concentric rings, the most inclusive of which was its judicial authority, followed in successively declining size by its financial and commercial influence, its political and ecclesiastical jurisdiction, its market area, and the immediate urban zone itself.”⁵⁵

But what needs to be stressed here is that Guadalajara points to the importance of an urban market in integrating a large region economically. This integration manifested itself in many forms, but as in many other largely pre-industrial economies of the eighteenth century, commerce was the glue that held society together and the nexus that integrated the various sectors of the economy. Precisely, what gave the Guadalajara region its economic autonomy at the close of the colonial period was that commerce was dominated, and most importantly, financed by its own merchants. This is proven by the fact that “[t]he largest single reservoir of landowners and agricultural capital during the eighteenth century was the mercantile economy centering in and around Guadalajara, with its connections to the northern mining districts, the coast, and Mexico City.”⁵⁶ Most *ranchos* in the region were integrated into the rural credit system through the supplies and working capital they received from city or provincial merchants, who also gave credit and supplied agricultural units, large and small, who themselves had no mercantile sources of wealth.

⁵⁴ Van Young's hypothesis is that urban population growth was the impelling force behind the production of foodstuffs and not vice versa, as it is commonly supposed by malthusian scholars. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

This had not always been the case. Although Guadalajara had occupied a strategic position as the center of its own region long before the eighteenth century, the entire region had been —financially and commercially— almost totally dependent upon Mexico City. Besides, Mexico City had been also a very important market for cattle breeders in Guadalajara: *Nueva Galicia* exported quite a lot of cattle to New Spain until the first decades of the eighteenth century. But this situation began to change towards the end of the colonial period due mainly to three factors: a) the growth of Guadalajara itself, which meant also a growing urban demand for the products of the region; b) the Bourbon Reforms of the late 1770s and after, which included measures to free trade; and c) the unsettled conditions of the Napoleonic period, which contributed also to freeing-up trade.

The most important effect of these three factors, and of the increase in commercial activity —and prosperity— in the region that resulted, was the foundation of the *consulado* of Guadalajara in 1791, which considerably weakened the Mexico City commercial monopoly on the overseas trade. By 1814, the Guadalajara *consulado* had deputations in a number of important cities and towns, including Zacatecas, Durango, Aguascalientes, Chihuahua, Sombrerete, Bolaños, Saltillo, Rosario, Fresnillo, Tepic, Colima, Sayula, and San Juan de los Lagos, and had begun financing the works to improve the notoriously poor roads both, within and outside of the Intendancy (though, its road —and bridge— building activities were primarily concentrated in the immediate vicinity of Guadalajara after 1800).

Another contributing factor to the late colonial commercial prosperity and autonomy of Guadalajara's merchants was the increased use of the port of San Blas after the early 1790s, which became crucial after 1812, when Intendant José de la Cruz opened the port without restriction because of the closing of the road from Mexico City to Guadalajara. In fewer words: the main result of all these changes was a better integration of Guadalajara as a region in itself, weakening the links that the province had with Mexico City and strengthening its links with other regions, mainly to the north.

But another very important player must be taken into account to complete the picture. The role that the Church played in the Guadalajara region can hardly be overstated, for it was the other main source of financial capital for its agricultural economy. The religious establishments —convents, monasteries, seminaries, hospitals, congregations, and sanctuaries— of Guadalajara were not directly involved in agriculture to a very great extent during the eighteenth century and, on the whole, did not make a very impressive showing as property owners. But the Church was very much involved in agriculture as a source of capital. In fact, the Church was far more important in the Guadalajara region in its role as agricultural financier than as a direct landowner.

Although there were very few major haciendas in the region which were not at some time in their history —or even at some time during the eighteenth century— owned by a priest, it is far more important to note that virtually every rural estate had charged against its value some principal, whether by donation from the owners

or through personal loans from the Church. Furthermore, there is also a great deal of evidence to suggest that personal loans from the various Church agencies were invested in the capital improvement of agricultural properties. Van Young describes the role played by the Church persuasively:

In broad terms, the symbiotic relationship between the Church and large-scale agriculture was very strong. Colonial latifundia provided income for the Church in the form of tithes, gifts, bequests, and annuities, as well as personnel from the elite families whose status was in part based upon land-ownership (...) For its part, the Church provided a degree of social control and acted as a banker to the landowning elite. A vital function of Church investment-banking was to redistribute capital generated in more highly productive but risky economic sectors, primarily mining and commerce, by channeling it into large-scale agriculture.⁵⁷

Guadalajara, thus, was a clear case of the region depicted by Van Young and by many other historians that have contended that New Spain's economy was a collection of "regional economies", rather than a "national" economy. Guadalajara lay outside the main two axes of New Spain's economic system, and its region was pretty much integrated within itself. It was beginning to be fairly integrated economically with other regions —through the financial influence of its *consulado*— when the viceregal government collapsed, and shared with many other regions the fact that the Church was a central actor in this process of integration.

*Antequera de Oaxaca*⁵⁸

Named after the city of Antequera in Spain —which it supposedly resembled—, Oaxaca was one of the main centers of Spanish power in the colonial period. Within New Spain itself, Oaxaca was one of the great Episcopal Sees like Puebla, or Valladolid in Michoacán, under the authority of the Archiepiscopal See of Mexico. Unlike Guadalajara, colonial Oaxaca was a region comparable with Guatemala, Quito, and the highland regions of Peru, in the sense that it was a region where the Spanish encountered with already well-formed indigenous cultures. Because of that, the economic development of the Oaxaca region came to be completely different to that of Guadalajara. In Oaxaca, for example, the Indian landholding community and the Indian landowning nobility were perfectly viable at the close of the colonial period, in contrast to the relatively weak and unstable hacienda system and the minor role of large non-Indian landowners. This Indian economic dominance was

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

⁵⁸ Again, like in Guadalajara's case, this description of Oaxaca's economic region is only meant to highlight some aspects relevant for this paper. It is mostly based on Brian Hamnett. *Politics and Trade in Southern Mexico, 1750-1821* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1971), unless otherwise noted. See also the work by William Taylor listed in the bibliography.

precisely a product of the combination of a dense Indian population with a local urban market of relatively small size.⁵⁹

The difference can also be seen in the type of goods the region produced and in the markets in which they were sold. After the decline of the silk industry in Oaxaca in the course of the sixteenth century, the cochineal scarlet dye, cotton, and cotton mantle trades became the central activities of the indigenous population, upon which the Spanish depended for their prosperity and political supremacy. The indigenous production from the Intendancy of Oaxaca, in particular that of the towns of Villa Alta and Jamiltepec, reached markets as far and diverse as Mexico City, Puebla, the silver-mining communities of Taxco, Guanajuato, Zacatecas, and even some of the European textile centers. Thus, Oaxaca was often considered by the Spanish Peninsular merchants and the Royal administrators to be next in importance to the silver-mining regions of New Spain.

Like agriculture and commerce in Guadalajara, trade in Oaxaca was completely dominated at first by the Spanish Peninsular merchants in Mexico City. The difference was the role played in Oaxaca by the *alcaldes mayores*, mostly of peninsular origin also. The *alcaldes mayores* were the civil administrators of the towns in the indigenous areas of settlement, and were required to offer the Crown a *fianza* before taking office, which would ensure the Crown's receipt of the fiscal revenues it had trusted them to collect. The presentation of the *fiador*, who would reimburse the Crown in the *alcalde mayor's* default, was the condition of receipt of office from the Superior Government in Mexico City.

The *alcaldes mayores* were forbidden by the Crown to hold estates or to engage in trade —either in person or through agents— during their stay in office. But the lack of proper salaries forced them to contravene the Laws of the Indies by indulging in illicit trading practices forbidden by the Crown. In most cases, the goods or cash in which they traded were supplied through a contract with a private merchant member of the Mexico City *consulado*. In return for agreeing to such a contract, the merchant would offer to cover the *fianza* for the *alcalde mayor*. Although it has to be a long quote, Hamnett's words cannot be improved to show the links between merchants in Mexico City and the *alcaldes mayores* and merchants in Oaxaca:

Under the traditional system of *repartimientos* the merchants in Mexico City would frequently supply their associates in Oaxaca with *avío*. The purpose was the financing of the *repartimiento* either by an Alcalde Mayor connected with the local merchant, or by the merchant himself, independently or in association with the administrator [the Alcalde Mayor]. The cash issued to the Indians would be repaid in the final product and in tributes such as the cotton mantles of Villa Alta. These commodities would then be sent by the Oaxaca merchants or the Alcalde Mayor, either to Mexico City, or to the port of Veracruz credited to the account of the *aviador*. The Mexico City merchant then would pay his associate in Oaxaca by

⁵⁹ Van Young, *Hacienda and Market...*, p. 355.

paying into the Royal Treasury General in Mexico City the sums due to the Crown from the revenues of the locality in which the *repartimiento* had been issued. The local treasury in the city of Oaxaca would then reimburse the Oaxaca merchant to the same amount. It would be this reimbursement in cash from the Oaxaca Royal Treasury that would perform the function of *avío* nominally issued to the Oaxaca merchant by his Mexico City *aviador*, but, in effect, merely debited to his account. In this way, money was not transported across country, where it would be exposed to numerous transportation delays and security hazards. The financial relations between the merchants of Mexico City and those of Oaxaca operated, then, on the basis of bills of payment, *libranzas*. The system functioned smoothly due to the intermediary role of the Royal Treasuries of Mexico City and Oaxaca. That is, the revenues of the Crown in New Spain were inextricably bound to revenues and profits of private merchants.⁶⁰

By creating such commercial monopolies within their locality, and by expelling any intruding merchants, the *alcaldes mayores* sought to keep the local trade confined to their partner's interests.

Although illegal, it was precisely this commerce that set Oaxaca's economy in motion, but equally important was the fact that the *repartimientos* were financed by members of the *consulado* in Mexico City and that the products obtained through them—especially the cochineal dye—traveled to distant places, both in New Spain and in Europe. That made Oaxaca a very singular province. It lay clearly outside the principal axes of New Spain's economy, but it produced New Spain's only export crop and was very much integrated with other parts of the economy in terms of its markets and its financing. Perhaps the best proof of this is that when Visitor-General José de Gálvez tried to implement the Intendancy system and enforce the prohibition of the *repartimientos*, he encountered fierce opposition not only in Oaxaca, but also in Mexico City. Trying to administer the province without the intervention and cooperation of the coalition made by the merchants in the Mexico City *consulado* and the officials running the *repartimientos* proved to be impossible.⁶¹

Like in Guadalajara, everything changed with the coming of the Bourbon Reforms, but Oaxaca could not provide by itself for its financing. With a lot less regulation over commerce, in 1789 and 1790 remissions of capital were dispatched to the province by several of the merchants of Mexico City, Puebla, and Veracruz for investment in the cochineal crop, and very quickly the competition between Mexico City's and Veracruz's merchants became evident in the Oaxaca trades. The Crown hoped that a generation of more enterprising and efficient merchants would compete alongside—and eventually replace—the old merchants of the *consulado*

⁶⁰ Hamnett, *Politics and Trade...*, pp. 103-104.

⁶¹ The *repartimiento* was illegal from the very beginning, but it continued to exist until the end of the colonial period. Along with the system of Intendancies, Gálvez tried to put an end to it, but in reality it never ceased to exist. The interested reader may wish to consult chapters 4 and 5 of Hamnett's *Politics and Trade...*

of Mexico, so that the latter knew that their services were not indispensable. And indeed that is what happened.

As a consequence of the incorporation of the *consulado* of Veracruz under the *Real Cédula* of January 17, 1795, finally the merchants of Veracruz took over control of the Oaxaca trade from those of Mexico City. By 1798, for the first time, the Veracruz merchants outpaced their Mexico City rivals, and not just marginally, but by a long lead. This would prove to be a transcendental event in the history of Oaxaca, because after it its merchants developed a consciousness of the declining political and economic importance of Mexico City.

The liveliest example of this was José María Murguía y Galardi, who was involved in the *repartimientos* for the first time in 1795, but connected with Mexico City, rather than with Veracruz. However, by 1798, his interests were entirely oriented toward Veracruz. The importance of his case cannot be overstated, because revealingly enough Murguía y Galardi was, at first, deputy at the Insurgent Congress of Chilpancingo in 1813; then, after “redeeming” himself, he was Minister of the Royal Treasury between 1814 and 1817. After that, he was elected deputy to the Spanish *Cortes* in 1820, where he took his seat in 1821. When the *Plan de Iguala* triumphed in September 1821, Murguía rushed back to Oaxaca and became Intendant of the province under Emperor Iturbide in 1822. But most importantly, after the fall of Iturbide’s empire, he became a *federalist* and the first Governor of Oaxaca under the republican system between December 1823 and November 1824.

The emergence of the *consulado* of Veracruz as an important source of capital for the province of Oaxaca is not the only factor that has to be stressed. As in Guadalajara’s case, the Church was very much involved in the economy of the region. Not only did the *repartimientos* might also be financed from the pious foundations with the approval of the Bishop, but the religious houses of Oaxaca, at the end of the colonial period, were the leading Spanish landowners in the Valley of Oaxaca.⁶² In fact, the chief enemies of the *alcaldes mayores* in Oaxaca were the clerics, whose position was championed by the Bishop, José Gregorio Alonso Ortigoza, in the 1770s and 1780s.

These two groups had not been enemies always. The financial relationships between the Oaxaca merchants and the Church are illustrated by the negotiations undertaken between them when the *Consolidación de Vales Reales* was decreed in 1805. Furthermore, when Morelos began raiding the province after 1810, the merchants denounced the revolutionary movements. But this in itself was not surprising, for their prosperity was tied to the pacific transportation of the cochineal dye to the port of Veracruz and from there to the European markets. What was remarkable was that when the Bishop of Oaxaca, Antonio Bergoza y Jordán, was appointed Archbishop of Mexico on November 23, 1811, after Archbishop Lizana’s death, they begged him to remain in the city because of the proximity of Morelos.

⁶² Van Young, *Hacienda and Market...*, p. 169.

Not only did he stay, but he organized a special militia force from among the very clergy itself to aid in the defense of the city against the approaching Insurgents.

Oaxaca is the perfect example of a province in New Spain that was certainly not integrated to the main two axes of the economy in many ways, but that was much more integrated than it is commonly assumed to other regions in the Viceroyalty. This was especially the case after the *consulado* of Veracruz took over the financing of the *repartimientos* in Oaxaca. Like in Guadalajara, though, the Church was the one “national” institution that gave continuity to the province’s history before and after independence.

Querétaro: the gate to the Bajío⁶³

Of the three economic regions that this paper deals with, Querétaro is by far the one that models best the traditional idea of what New Spain’s economy looked like. Querétaro formed part of the main trunk-line from Zacatecas to Mexico City, and never could brake its ties with the viceregal capital. Unlike Guadalajara and Oaxaca, Querétaro was founded in 1531 in a region where no developed Indian culture existed. The province, like the modern state of Querétaro today, was located in the southeastern valley of what is known as the *Bajío*. The province occupied very fertile lands that produced exceptionally good crops and that were ideal for livestock production. Because Querétaro was on the main route from the mines in the north to Mexico City, its growth began very early in the colonial period. Even before the discovery of the mines in Zacatecas there was abundant traffic in the road that communicated Mexico City with Querétaro. Then, after the discovery, the road that went from Zacatecas to the south ran through the Bajío, split in two branches that reunited in Querétaro and continued on to Mexico City. By 1790, five roads connected Querétaro with the rest of Mexico.

The Indians of Querétaro arrived to the region only after the conquest, so that the *encomienda*, for example, was never an important institution in the relation between Indians and Spaniards. This, of course, made Querétaro very different from both Oaxaca and Guadalajara. With a very little indigenous population, immigrants to the Querétaro region initially used the land to raise sheep and to grow citrics and vegetables. Little after the foundation of the city, external demand—that is to say, demand from other regions in New Spain—made livestock production the main activity in the region: rams, sheep, mules, oxen, goats, and cows were bought and

⁶³ As for the other two regions, this description of the Querétaro region is only meant to highlight some aspects of its economic system. It is mostly based on John Super. *La Vida en Querétaro durante la Colonia, 1531-1810* (México, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1983). See also Brading, *Haciendas and ranchos...*, and the work by Marta Eugenia García Ugarte listed in the bibliography.

sold in Querétaro to be driven afterwards to varied and distant markets. By 1590 big herds traveled from Querétaro to Mexico City to supply its growing urban market, and in the early seventeenth century, Querétaro was a source of meat for the miners in Zacatecas, for rural Celaya and León and for the merchants in Guadalajara.

But as more people arrived the economy of the region grew more diverse. By mid-seventeenth century grain crops had gained importance, and Querétaro's wheat was also being sold as far as in Zacatecas. Later, in the eighteenth century, Querétaro was known not only for its wheat and livestock production, but also for its tobacco factory, and principally for its production of wool and its textile industry. By 1759 Querétaro was already the main producer of wool in New Spain, producing more than Mexico City, Puebla and Cholula, Tlaxcala, San Miguel el Grande, Salvatierra and Valladolid. By the end of the eighteenth century, Querétaro was also the main supplier of textiles for the army.

Nevertheless, Mexico City was by far the most important market and source of capital for Querétaro. At first, the local merchants financed the cattle breeders. But as the size of their operations grew, they had to turn to Mexico City for the working capital they needed. By 1620, Querétaro had already become a mature market intimately related to that of Mexico City, and merchants from New Spain's capital established companies with those of Querétaro, but the latter were considered employees rather than partners. Some merchants from Mexico City did not even operate directly with their Querétaro "partners". Instead, they gave their instructions to a local agent. The Mexico City merchants considered Querétaro only as a link of a much more complex network that covered both of New Spain's main economic axes. Although these companies resulted in a flow of money going from Mexico City to the province, it was always under control of the Mexico City merchants.

Unlike Guadalajara—which by the end of the colonial period was financially autonomous—and Oaxaca—which had broken its ties to Mexico City and had turned to Veracruz for financing by the early nineteenth century—Querétaro depended completely on Mexico City when independence arrived. During the last decades of the sixteenth century the sources of money for the landowners in Querétaro were practically balanced between people from the province and those from Mexico City. Already by 1620 the Mexico City merchants were the main source of capital for Querétaro and also were very much involved in supplying its market, as well as in buying land around the city.

Querétaro at some point dominated commerce in the Bajío, but it never broke its financial links with Mexico City. Unlike Guadalajara and Oaxaca, not even when the Bourbon Reforms allowed for free trade after 1778, could Querétaro stand on its own. In fact, meaningfully, the only local real competitor for Mexico City's merchants was the Convent of Santa Clara de Jesús, which also financed the fabric production and at some point became the most important landowner of the province. By the end of the eighteenth century the Convent was an insignificant landowner, but it still had a lot of rural influence because of its investments in loans and mortgages.

Querétaro was, therefore, throughout the colonial period, under the influence of the *consulado* of Mexico City. Unlike Guadalajara and Oaxaca, Querétaro could not thrive without its economic links with the viceregal capital; but like them, it could not thrive either without the Church's riches.

Regions, fueros and political integration

The three regions described above show how different the provinces of the Spanish dominions in America were in terms of their economic integration. Guadalajara is an example of the almost autonomous province that started to build its own network of economic interests among its neighboring provinces, and that was economically opposed to Mexico City. Oaxaca illustrates the case of a province that could not prosper by itself, but that had overcome its economic dependence from the viceregal seat and had woven a much more important net of financial bonds with other provinces—especially Veracruz. Unlike them, Querétaro is the perfect example of a province that remained throughout the colonial period completely dependent of the center and part of the economic network dominated by the *consulado* in Mexico City. Nevertheless all three formed part of the Mexican Federation in 1824.

Federalism, as Hamnett says, was the constitutional alternative to redefine the relation—political *and* economical—that already existed between the provinces and the central power.⁶⁴ But other factors should be taken into account. On the one hand, the Church played a central role in the process of political integration: in all three provinces the Church was economically very important, besides the fact that it was much more “national” than the rest of Mexico's political institutions. If the central government was to secure the political unity of the nation, it had to gain first the loyalty of the church to use it as a counterbalance *vis-à-vis* the real power of the regions and their demands for sovereignty. On the other hand, by attaining also the loyalty of the army the central government assured the acquiescence of local *caudillos* and authorities to what had been “negotiated” in the National Congress.⁶⁵ In both cases, the *fueros* were the quintessential factors.

In order to assess the process by which political integration between these different economic regions was attained, the period 1821-1824 has to be broken down in three parts. The first one corresponds to the months between September 1821 and March 1823, in which the *Plan de Iguala* was the uniting thread. The second one includes the months in which some of the provinces disclosed their

⁶⁴ I should stress here again that it is yet to be researched how federalism -if it in fact did- maintained the centripetal forces present in Mexico's colonial heritage. If that was the case, there is no doubt that it must have been a process that varied widely from region to region and, like I pointed out above, no generalization about that process can be made from what we now know.

⁶⁵ Again, the army's role is analyzed in the next section.

separatist inclinations and, in fact, conformed and declared independent governments from Mexico City (roughly from Iturbide's abdication in March 1823 until June of that same year, when Congress declared itself in favor of the federal system). Finally, the third one corresponds to the months in which the Federation was formed. In each one of these three periods the issue of political integration has to be considered in a different way. Different degrees of economic integration can account for the distinct attitudes of the provinces toward the question of political integration and for their demands for federalism. Yet the religious and military *fueros* have to be taken into account to explain why the provinces stayed together under Iturbide's empire and also under the Federation.

The Plan de Iguala: union under the three guaranties

Iturbide issued his *Plan de Iguala* on February 24, 1821.⁶⁶ Only five months after that, his Army of the Three Guaranties controlled all the important strategic sites in Mexico except the capital and the ports of Veracruz and Acapulco.⁶⁷ Under the *Plan* independence was finally achieved, but what needs to be emphasized here is that, as Timothy Anna has pointed out,

[t]he process of Iguala failed to produce nationalism, and in this it does not differ from the independence movements in Spanish America in general (...) [T]he failure of the autonomy process to produce a nationalist sentiment is surely related to Iturbide's ultimate failure to obtain agreement on the creation of a centralized state system.⁶⁸

If Iturbide failed to create a successful centralized state, what prevented the nation from falling apart in the absence of a nationalist sentiment? Lucas Alamán gave an answer to this question more than a century ago. As Alamán clearly saw, the *Plan de Iguala* only recognized that political autonomy from Spain was something that most of the provinces had for long wanted, that was inevitable, and that the only way to achieve it without giving rise to a process of disintegration was to secure the support of the two most important corporations: the Church and the army.⁶⁹ For Alamán, as for Iturbide, the three guaranties offered in *Iguala* were the only way to hinder a process of disintegration of the country. In his exposition of the *Plan* to other

⁶⁶ Anna, *The Mexican Empire...*, p. 4.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 38-39.

⁶⁹ That independence was something that most of the provinces wanted is argued also by Zavala in his *Ensayo histórico...*, vol. 1, p. 73. But in his analysis of the *Plan de Iguala*, Alamán argues eloquently how the three guaranties secured the support of the Church, the army and the provinces. See Alamán, *Historia...*, vol. 5, pp. 98-131.

generals at Iguala, on 1 and 2 March 1821, Iturbide said explicitly how he feared that process, and how the only way to prevent it was to follow his *Plan*.⁷⁰

This is self-evident in the text of the *Plan*.⁷¹ The first guaranty, religion, assured the support of the clergy by declaring that only the Catholic Religion would be tolerated (article 1), and by keeping the religious *fuero* (article 14). The second guaranty, independence, secured the support of the provinces that had wanted political autonomy and greater participation in their own affairs (article 2). And the third guaranty, union, hoped to gain the loyalty of the Spanish soldiers in the army by protecting their positions in it and the properties of all Spaniards as long as they acclaimed the independence also (articles 12, 13, 15-18).

The results were exactly what Iturbide had expected. The high members of the clergy swiftly turned supporters of the *Plan*, not only because it eradicated the fears that the decrees of the Spanish *Cortes* had produced among them, but because it protected the Church's properties that, as was shown above, were worthy of consideration.⁷² Likewise, most of the generals —loyalists and rebels— affiliated to the Army of the Three Guaranties and brought the provinces under their control over to independence.⁷³ In Guadalajara, Pedro Celestino Negrete declared the independence of *Nueva Galicia* on June 23, 1821.⁷⁴ Querétaro was brought to it seven days after that, next to the capitulation of San Juan del Río forced by Luis Quintanar and Anastasio Bustamante and that of the capital of the province forced by Iturbide himself.⁷⁵ Antonio León occupied Oaxaca, and proclaimed the independence of the province on July 30, 1821.⁷⁶ Iturbide entered triumphantly in Mexico City on September 27, 1821, and the *Suprema Junta Provisional Gubernativa* was installed the next day.⁷⁷ As the *Plan de Iguala* had established the *Junta* prepared the way for the first Mexican Congress, which met on February 24, 1822.⁷⁸

⁷⁰ See the *actas* that were issued after the reunions at Iguala in Felipe Tena Ramírez. *Leyes Fundamentales de México, 1808-1957* (México, Editorial Porrúa, 1957), pp. 109-113. See also Iturbide, *Sus Memorias...*, pp. 8-12.

⁷¹ The text of the *Plan* can be consulted in Tena Ramírez, *Leyes...*, pp. 113-116.

⁷² For a detailed account of the effects that the decrees of the *Cortes* had on the relation between Church and State see James M. Breedlove. "Effect of the Cortes, 1810-1822, on Church Reform in Spain and Mexico", in Nettie Lee Benson (ed.). *Mexico and the Spanish Cortes, 1810-1822: Eight Essays* (Austin, University of Texas Press, 1966), pp. 113-133. See also Alamán, *Historia...*, vol. 5, pp. 126-127, where part of the letter from Iturbide to Bishop Cabañas of Guadalajara is reproduced.

⁷³ See Anna, *The Mexican Empire...*, p. 10, where he describes how this process took place. Anna also argues that the military became, after Iguala, Iturbide's main constituency. *Ibid.*, p. 43.

⁷⁴ Alamán describes how that was achieved and how the religious *fuero* played a central role. Alamán, *Historia...*, vol. 5, pp. 207-212.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 217-233.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 261-265. Unlike the case of Guadalajara, in Oaxaca and Querétaro the loyalty of the army was the most important factor for achieving independence.

⁷⁷ See *Actas Constitucionales...*, vol. 1, p. 6-11.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 349-350.

The importance of attaining the army's loyalty to maintain political integration right after independence was further proven when the provinces in Central America considered Iturbide's *Plan* and Guatemala decided to join Mexico. In El Salvador and Nicaragua, where annexation by either Mexico or Guatemala was widely feared, local authorities in San Salvador and León, respectively, proclaimed their independence from both Spain and Guatemala. In Honduras independence was also declared, but some cities wanted to join Guatemala, while others favored the incorporation to Mexico. The situation of Central America was resolved when Iturbide sent a small Mexican army under Vicente Filisola, who in January 1823 subdued El Salvador by force and accomplished the annexation of all the provinces to the Mexican Empire.⁷⁹

Furthermore, when the first National Congress was called for, the importance for the central government of having the support of the army and the Church was again implicitly emphasized. The edict said that the provinces with the right to send more than three deputies had to elect first a member of the army, an ecclesiastic from the secular clergy and a magistrate or lawyer.⁸⁰ Later, in his memoirs, when discussing the dissolution of Congress on October 30, 1822, Iturbide wrote about how it was not a meaningful representation of the nation. He said that there was no proportionality at all between provinces, that many of the deputies were absolutely ignorant of what their provinces needed, and that indirect election had made the deputies represent the *ayuntamientos*, rather than "the people". It is meaningful that he did not complain of having to deal with a Congress that represented corporations, rather than individuals.⁸¹

Initially, Iturbide preserved the political integration successfully, but the demands for self-government in the regions did not cease, and he was unable to keep up with the pace of change in the regions.⁸² But the fact is that the *Acta de Casa Mata* produced the defections of both, the provinces and the army: *Casa Mata* reversed the process that *Iguala* had achieved.⁸³

⁷⁹ Anna, *The Mexican Empire...*, pp. 44-46. See also Alamán, *Historia...*, vol. 5, pp. 344-348; and Bocanegra, *Memorias...*, vol. 1, pp. 19-31.

⁸⁰ Anna, *The Mexican Empire...*, p. 52.

⁸¹ Iturbide, *Sus Memorias...*, pp. 15-17. Under the basis for the convocation of the first Congress, the number of deputies that each province had the right to elect was related to the *partidos*. The *partidos* were territorial divisions within the provinces, so that representation based on them did not correspond at all with the population. For example, Durango, which had 34 *partidos* but very little population, ended up having 23 deputies in the first Congress; more than Guadalajara, which was a lot more populated but only had 28 *partidos* and, hence, only 17 deputies. See Anna, *The Mexican Empire...*, p. 52.

⁸² Anna, *The Mexican Empire...*, pp. 46-47.

⁸³ Alamán, *Historia...*, vol. 5, lib. II, cap. IX, *passim*.

Disintegration under Casa Mata

When José Antonio Echávarri and other army officers issued the *Acta de Casa Mata* on February 1, 1823, the attitude of the provinces varied toward it. Yet, it is very clear that the open conflicts between the central government and the provinces arouse only after the rebel generals and the commissioners sent by the provincial deputations to Puebla—following the *Acta*—, refused to recognize Congress—which was reinstated on March 7, 1823 by Iturbide—⁸⁴ as a constituent body.⁸⁵ The conflicts were related with the two main articles of the *Acta*. Article 1 stated that since sovereignty resided essentially in the nation, Congress would meet as soon as possible. Article 2 established that the convocation for a new Congress would be done under the same basis as for the first one.⁸⁶

On the one hand, the provinces wanted Congress to meet immediately, but just to draft the convocation for a new one, and under similar basis to what the Cadiz Constitution of 1812 had established (that is to say, under the basis of population, and not under the basis of *partidos* or corporations). From Puebla, a group of the commissioners of the provincial deputations (in which Guadalajara, Oaxaca and Querétaro were represented) wrote on April 18, 1823 to the reinstated deputies in Mexico City, saying that

a Congress whose members were elected without liberty, and among only certain classes (...) in which the national representation is monstrously fixed in the number of *partidos* rather than in the population, as justice demands to gather in it the concurrence of all the citizens for the formation of the laws, [cannot meet] the only basic principle of the representative systems of government.⁸⁷

It is possible that the generals who issued the *Acta de Casa Mata* intended with articles 1 and 2 to gain the support of the Church and the army, just as Iturbide had done. After all, Echávarri had been one of the two closest generals to Iturbide during his reign (the other one was Pedro Celestino Negrete). However, the provinces needed to brake the power of the “national” army in order to confront Iturbide’s authority in a more promising battle.

⁸⁴ See *Actas Constitucionales...*, vol. 5, pp. 1-8.

⁸⁵ See Benson, “The Plan of Casa Mata”, *passim*.

⁸⁶ The original text of the *Acta de Casa Mata* is reproduced in Barragán, *Introducción...*, pp. 115-116.

⁸⁷ “... un congreso cuyos miembros fueron elegidos sin la libertad que es debida, como nombrados en número limitado de clases determinadas (...) en el que la representación nacional está monstruosamente fijada en el número de partidos y no en la población, como lo exijía la justicia para reconcentrar en él la concurrence de todos los ciudadanos á la formación de las leyes, [no puede cumplir con el] único principio elemental de los gobiernos representativos”. Part of the letter from the commissioners to Congress is reproduced in Barragán, *Introducción...*, p. 125.

On the other hand, although there was some debate over the issue, the deputies of the reinstated Congress concluded that there was no need to call for a new one, and continued their debates just where they had left them four months before.⁸⁸ This is not to say that the deputies were not conscious of the process of disintegration that had begun to take place. For one thing, they demanded that all the correspondence between the rebel officers and the government, and that of the provinces to the generals in Puebla be submitted to them, so that they could proceed according to the “will of the nation”.⁸⁹ Besides, some of the deputies explicitly said that “the *patria* was in danger”, and that the “separated provinces” wanted another Congress.⁹⁰

The question of unity —or political integration— was never absent from the debates. Many deputies brought forward the issue all throughout the discussions between March 7 —when Congress was reinstated— and May 21 —when it finally accepted to draft a convocation for a new one.⁹¹ A careful analysis of those debates shows that the deputies only related political integration, explicitly, to the existence of both Congress and a constitution ratified by the provinces. Not once the possibility of establishing a federation was mentioned at that time. The provincial elites wanted to have complete liberty to debate about the system of government that the country should have after the collapse of the empire, but they never said explicitly in the debates that a federation was a possibility. They did relate political unity to political representation, but left open the possibility, for example, of a central republic as France had done. In fact, when debating over the executive power after Iturbide had left the government, a proposal was approved saying that, although it would consist of three members, the responsibility would fall on only one of them, so that the central power would not be weakened.⁹²

The reaction of the provinces toward the resolutions passed by Congress in those months —expressed by their provincial deputations— has been extensively analyzed by Nettie Lee Benson and by José Barragán Barragán.⁹³ Nonetheless, historians have consistently overlooked both the relations between the regional economies and their reactions toward Congress and the role of the *fueros*, at least in the cases of Guadalajara, Oaxaca and Querétaro.

⁸⁸ See, for example, the sessions between 11 and 13 March, and also the session of 7 April 1823. *Actas Constitucionales...*, vol. 5, pp. 18-53, 167-168.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 12-14.

⁹⁰ It is very meaningful that Deputy Muzquiz from the State of Mexico was the one that first used the term “separated” referring to the provinces that would not recognize Congress. Likewise, it is very significant that Deputy Carlos María de Bustamante from Oaxaca was the one that first said that the *patria* was in danger. *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

⁹¹ The issue was at least mentioned in the sessions of 11, 12, 13, 24, and 29 March, 29 April, and 2, 3 May. See *Actas Constitucionales...*, vol. 5, pp. 28, 32, 40, 46-48, 49, 68, 69, 91, 382, 404-405 and 415. See also Barragán, *Introducción...*, p. 134.

⁹² *Actas Constitucionales...*, vol. 5, p. 105.

⁹³ Benson, *The Provincial Deputation...*, pp. 61-129. Barragán, *Introducción...*, pp. 113-226.

Guadalajara was the first province to declare itself openly against the central government, which included, of course, the reinstalled Congress. The provincial deputation adhered to the *Acta de Casa Mata* and sent its commissioners to Puebla, where the rebel generals had gathered after issuing the *Acta in Casa Mata*, a town in neighboring Veracruz. In its *Manifiesto*,⁹⁴ the provincial deputation, in agreement with the military, said that Guadalajara, like the rest of the provinces, was absolutely “independent and free” after the fall of both the viceregal and the imperial governments. Consequently, the “state of Jalisco” was “sovereign within itself” and would not recognize other relationships with other states or provinces but “those of brotherhood and *confederation*”. It also declared that the Catholic would be its Religion with tolerance of no other. Interestingly enough, the provincial deputation of Guadalajara did distinguish explicitly between central and federal republics, saying that the people of Jalisco wanted nothing else but the latter. Finally, elections were held and a constitution drafted by the State Congress, which was enacted even before the national one was drafted.

Oaxaca also adhered to the *Acta de Casa Mata* and sent commissioners to Puebla. Like Guadalajara, the provincial deputation of Oaxaca declared that the province was sovereign within itself, independent from the central government in Mexico City, that the Catholic Religion was the only one to be tolerated, and that, from then on, Oaxaca would be a “federal republic” (sic).⁹⁵ But the local government took some further steps: first, the provincial deputation recalled its deputies from Mexico City; then, it sent a written communication to the reinstalled Congress complaining because it had been deprived of its powers.⁹⁶ As in Guadalajara, elections were held and a constitution drafted, but in this case it was enacted after the national constitution was ratified.

Querétaro adhered to the *Acta de Casa Mata*, but unlike Guadalajara and Oaxaca its provincial deputation issued a document in which the sovereignty of *the nation* was acclaimed by all civil, military and ecclesiastical authorities in the province. Furthermore, it stated that Iturbide’s government would not be recognized anymore, but that the province would continue in correspondence and harmony with the rest of the provinces.⁹⁷ When Congress was reinstalled, Querétaro sent a written

⁹⁴ *Manifiesto que hace la Diputación Provincial del Estado Libre de Jalisco: del derecho y conveniencia de su pronunciamiento en República Federada*. Parts of the text are reproduced in Barragán, *Introducción...*, pp. 147-163. Also, parts of the minutes of the meetings of the provincial deputation of Guadalajara are reproduced in Benson, *The Provincial Deputation...*, pp. 94-95. All quotes are taken from either one or the other.

⁹⁵ Parts of the primary source are reproduced in Barragán, *Introducción...*, pp. 140-142. See also, Benson, *The Provincial Deputation...*, pp. 98-100.

⁹⁶ *Actas Constitucionales...*, vol. 5, p. 350.

⁹⁷ Parts of the document are reproduced in Barragán, *Introducción...*, pp. 146-147. See also Benson, *The Provincial Deputation...*, pp. 111-112.

statement congratulating the “sovereign Congress”,⁹⁸ and the province deposited the supreme administrative power in the central Executive Power again.⁹⁹

Two things have to be pointed out. The first one is that, as Nettie Lee Benson has proven, the provincial deputations were created primarily as economic bodies, although, as it can readily be seen, they assumed political functions also.¹⁰⁰ The second one is that in all three cases the military and the ecclesiastical authorities were pretty much involved but, as it was suggested in the second part of this paper, Guadalajara and Oaxaca were radical federalists, while Querétaro was much more moderate. This should be no surprise if it is taken into account how the three regional economies worked. As was shown above Guadalajara and Oaxaca were virtually independent from the center in economic terms, while Querétaro remained attached to the economic network of the *consulado* in Mexico City.

Be that as it may, Congress had to yield to the demands of the provinces, and on May 21, 1823 agreed on calling for a new one. Moreover, on June 12, Congress issued what came to be known as the “vote in favor of the federal republic”.¹⁰¹

Union under the federation

The agreement by Congress to call for a new one was not enough to achieve political integration. Contrary to what historians have said, the issue was very much alive even after it was agreed that Mexico would be a federal republic. Still after the Constitution was promulgated on October 4, 1824, secessionist sentiments remained. Deputy Juan Cayetano Portugal from Guadalajara implied in one of his speeches in Congress that all links between “the center” and the provinces should be broken, so that every state could form a free and independent nation from the others.¹⁰²

So if federalism was not enough to hold the country together, what was? Like with the *Plan de Iguala* the answer has to be related to the *fueros*. Before the second National Congress was installed, a draft for the national constitution was presented by a group of deputies.¹⁰³ The draft was not considered, for it was presented on May 16, 1823, five days before Congress accepted to call for a new one. But meaningfully it gave to all citizens the right to liberty—or freedom of thought, speech, and press—, *at the same time* that it established that their first duty was to profess the Catholic Religion with tolerance of no other.

⁹⁸ *Actas Constitucionales...*, vol. 5, p. 282. (The quote is taken from page 252 of the source, but there is a mistake in the page numbering of the *Actas*.)

⁹⁹ Barragán, *Introducción...*, p. 147.

¹⁰⁰ Benson, “The Plan of Casa Mata”, p. 53.

¹⁰¹ *Voto por la forma de República Federada*, in Tena Ramírez, *Leyes...*, p. 152.

¹⁰² See *Actas Constitucionales...*, vol. 10, session of 2 June 1824, p. 2.

¹⁰³ *Plan de la Constitución Política de la Nación Mexicana*, in Tena Ramírez, *Leyes...*, pp. 147-152.

The *Acta Constitutiva de la Federación* —made by the second Congress and which preceded the 1824 Constitution— also established the Catholic Religion as the only one to be tolerated in the Mexican Federation.¹⁰⁴ And although the deputies talked frequently about a nation formed by individuals all equal before the Law,¹⁰⁵ not only the religious, but also the military *fueros* were ratified in the 1824 Constitution.¹⁰⁶ The preamble of the Constitution said that “federalism was the voice that could be heard in every corner of the continent”, and that “only tyrants could govern such a vast territory under the same laws [those of a central government]”. Yet, it also stated that “federalism is a very complicated system” and that the only way to “reach the same level as the happy republic of the north” was to “have faith in the promises, love to work, an educated youth, respect for others (...) obedience to the laws and authorities and a profound respect for our adorable religion”.¹⁰⁷

As Iturbide had understood before, having the loyalty of the army was crucial for maintaining the political integration of the country also. In the case of Guadalajara, two military expeditions had to be made in order to subdue the province. Only after that could the central government negotiate “in peace” with Oaxaca and Yucatán.¹⁰⁸ In the case of Querétaro, just after the *Acta Constitutiva* was published, Nicolás Bravo had to crush a military upheaval in the region.¹⁰⁹

As Lucas Alamán said many years later, “of all the Congresses that the nation have had, the Constituent Congress of 1824 was the one that proved to have more prudence and common sense, because it was formed by wise and moderate people”. It combined the old with the new: the *fueros* were preserved and federalism was established, though the latter would be the cause of numerous conflicts and of the impossibility of achieving political integration.¹¹⁰

Conclusion

This paper has challenged the traditional idea that political integration in Mexico was achieved by establishing a federal republic, or simply because the colonial heritage or a nationalist sentiment were present in all the provinces after

¹⁰⁴ *Acta Constitutiva de la Federación*, in Tena Ramírez, *Leyes...*, pp. 154-161.

¹⁰⁵ See for example *Actas Constitucionales...*, vol. 5, p. 414.

¹⁰⁶ *Constitución Federal de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos (1824)*, in Tena Ramírez, *Leyes...*, pp. 167-195. The Constitution also had an article establishing the Catholic Religion as the official one (article 3). The *fueros* are established in article 154.

¹⁰⁷ *El Congreso General Constituyente a los Habitantes de la Federación*, in Tena Ramírez, *Leyes Fundamentales...*, pp. 161-167.

¹⁰⁸ Vázquez, “El Federalismo...”, p. 27.

¹⁰⁹ Alamán, *Historia...*, vol. 5, p. 778.

¹¹⁰ As quoted and interpreted by Lourdes Quintanilla. *El Nacionalismo de Lucas Alamán* (México, Gobierno del Estado de Guanajuato, 1991), p. 70.

independence was accomplished. It has argued that economic and political integration were related, at least, in three provinces —Guadalajara, Oaxaca and Querétaro—, and that the religious and military *fueros* were a fundamental element of the process by which political integration was achieved. On the one hand, the religious *fuero* was transcendental to obtain the support of the Church, which not only had substantial economic interests in the provinces, but had a profound political influence also. This is proven by the fact that, although Congress declared null the *Plan de Iguala* on April 8, 1823, the decree explicitly said that the three guaranties —religion, independence and union— would be maintained.¹¹¹ Moreover, the religious *fuero* was sustained and ratified by every significant law, either provincial or national. On the other hand, the military *fuero* assured the support of a “national” army, so that the central government could impose a final “agreement” on the provinces. As Brian Hamnett has said, this process, by which the central power recovered *vis-à-vis* the provinces, has received very little commentaries.

In Guadalajara, although a particular historical identity of its own evolved from very early in the colonial period, and despite the fact that the boundaries of New Galicia were clearly established by about 1580 (its limits with Nueva Vizcaya and Nuevo León were recognized in 1562 and 1579, respectively), the province’s political integrity and semi-autonomy were constantly under attack from Mexico City from the very beginning.¹¹² This situation never changed. When independence was finally accomplished and Iturbide’s empire had collapsed, the central authorities—in spite of having ceded to the demands for federalism— in part subjugated Jalisco by the force of the arms.

In Oaxaca, the establishment of new merchant guilds in areas distant from Mexico City emphasized the forces of regionalism. The new economic networks that were built around the new *consulados* —which looked toward the peripheries of New Spain as opposed to the Mexico *consulado*’s position within the central plateau region—, and specifically, the support of the merchants of the *consulado* of Veracruz, gave the possibility to Oaxaca to traduce the forces of regionalism into demands for federalism. In that sense, the alliance of the forces between the Intendancy administrators (the “new bureaucrats”), and the beneficiaries of the reforms for free commerce (the “new merchants”), contributed to the formation of Mexican Creole Liberalism.¹¹³ That is why the Conservatives of the nineteenth century that opposed federalism argued that unity was based on the defense of the *fueros*. Their position represented an alliance between the ecclesiastical hierarchy, the army and the “old bureaucrats and merchants” of the Mexico City *consulado*.

Querétaro had some capacity to supply credit and had its own markets, created jobs and had links —mainly through marriage— with other regions. These permitted it to have a life of its own, but never an independent life from the rest of

¹¹¹ See *Actas Constitucionales...*, vol. 5, pp. 213-222. The debates were held during 7 and 8 April, but the decree was issued on the 8th.

¹¹² Van Young, *Hacienda and Market...*, pp. 22-23.

¹¹³ Hamnett, *Politics and Trade...*, p. 154.

Mexico.¹¹⁴ Because of that, Querétaro only demanded federalism in order to be recognized as an independent state, but was, like Mexico City, opposed to the most radical provinces. A meaningful fact is that Querétaro is the only province in the history of Mexico that has contested the right of Mexico City to be the capital of the country. This shows that not only Querétaro was not a secessionist province, but that it wanted to become “the center” once federalism was agreed upon.¹¹⁵

There remain many questions not answered. First of all, in no way does this paper try to give an explanation of how political integration was achieved in Mexico as a whole, because, in fact, not all provinces in the end stayed attached to the Mexican nation: Central America and Texas are good proofs of that. Secondly, from the evidence presented in this paper no generalization can be made to other provinces. Chiapas and Guatemala are two very interesting cases that have to be studied in depth to answer why the first one decided to join Mexico while the latter did not.

The case of Guatemala was amply debated in Congress, and not just one time.¹¹⁶ Guatemala had been an administratively independent kingdom from New Spain during the colonial period—just like Guadalajara—, so after the fall of Iturbide’s empire Congress decided to withdraw the Mexican troops from the provinces in Central America to let them decide in liberty whether they joined Mexico or not. Why was Guadalajara subdued then? Why did Guatemala secede and did not join the federation? Was it because unlike Guadalajara, Oaxaca and Querétaro, Central America did not have any economic links whatsoever with other Mexican regions? Why then did Chiapas, so close to Guatemala, join the federation? Furthermore, why did Central America become several different nations, unlike Mexico? All this questions do not have an easy answer, and further research has to be done in order to begin constructing one.

¹¹⁴ Super, *La Vida...*, p. 85.

¹¹⁵ See *Actas Constitucionales...*, vol. 10, sessions of 22 and 23 July 1824. See also, Bocanegra, *Memorias...*, vol. 1, p. 308. The committee in Congress in charge of studying the matter was composed by one deputy from Querétaro, one from Guanajuato, one from Coahuila-Texas, one from Mexico, two from Puebla, one from San Luis Potosí, one from Jalisco and one from Zacatecas. It is interesting that all were from the central and northern parts of the country; none was from the south. In any case, the deputy from Zacatecas was the one who proposed to move the capital from Mexico City, and also who was in charge of speaking for the committee in Congress. The one from Querétaro, with the instruction of the State Congress, proposed Querétaro to be the new capital. The proposal was discussed for two days and then was discarded, without taking a vote on it or the chance to go back to the committee.

¹¹⁶ See *Actas Constitucionales...*, vol. 5, pp. 130-132, 202, 259, 289 and 343-345. (Again, there is a mistake in the page numbering of the *Actas*.)

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A note on the sources

Some of the primary sources that were used in the making of this paper could not be consulted in their integrity because they are only partially reproduced by secondary sources. Because of that, where the text of the primary source is quoted, the cites give the exact location of the primary source in the secondary sources. Otherwise, the secondary source is cited alone.

In regard to the *Actas Constitucionales...*, there are ten volumes of Actas. The first volume is not a word by word transcription of the sessions, but the rest of them are. I used volumes 1 ,2 ,5 and 10. In volume 10, which covers from 1 June and 23 July 1824, the debates are incomplete. It should also be noted that the original volumes containing the debates corresponding to the months of November and December 1823, and those of January through March and August through December 1824, are still missing, according to José Barragán Barragán's introduction to volume 10.

The page numbering of the *Actas Constitucionales...*, in some cases, is not continuous throughout the volume, but instead is particular to each session. When the pages are numbered throughout the volume, the cites give the page and the volume numbers. Otherwise, the cites give the date of the session and the volume and page numbers of that particular Acta as published by UNAM.

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