The Jesuit Expulsion: A Double-Edged Sword for State Authority in New Spain*

Francisco Garfias† and Emily A. Sellars‡

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Abstract

We examine the short- and longer-term consequences of the expulsion of the Jesuit order from New Spain in 1767. The Jesuits had been critical partners of the Spanish Crown in the expansion and stabilization of colonial rule, but royal officials eventually became suspicious of the order's economic and political power and their ability to resist imperial authority. Though authorities believed that expelling the Jesuits would bolster the power, resources, and authority of the colonial state, we show that it had ambiguous short-term and more unfavorable longer-term consequences on these outcomes. The expropriation of Jesuit assets provided a resource boost for the Crown, but the benefit was partially offset by the additional burdens of replacing Jesuit institutions and pacifying unrest caused by the expulsion. The legacy of 1767 proved more damaging over the longer term as affected areas saw more insurgent activity during Mexico's War of Independence (1810–1821). This case highlights both the benefits and hidden dangers of relying on religious intermediaries to extend political control.

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†Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Duke University. e: f.garfias@duke.edu

‡Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Yale University. e: emily.sellars@yale.edu

1. Introduction

The relationship between religious authority and state power is complicated and often uneasy. Religion has sometimes been a useful tool for state building, allowing political authorities to co-opt the resources and legitimacy of religious institutions to extend their power and influence. On the other hand, independent organized religion can pose a unique threat to political rulers by providing an alternative source of authority that can be used to mobilize societal actors to challenge the state from within. As the history of European state building illustrates, the balance between these two forces can be difficult to calibrate. Religious institutions often served as key intermediaries between the state and society, but they also stood in the way of later state-building efforts, sometimes through violence (e.g. Tilly 1992; Cantoni, Dittmar, and Yuchtman 2018; Fabbe 2019; Grzymala-Busse 2023).

These tensions are especially evident when examining the centuries-long relationship between the Spanish Empire and the Society of Jesus, the Jesuit order of the Catholic Church. The Jesuits became critical partners in the expansion of Spanish colonial rule across the Americas through financing missions, educational institutions, churches, and even investment in the local economy. Over time, however, the independent power of the Jesuits to evade political oversight and taxation came to be seen as a dire threat to state authority. This conflict culminated in 1767 when Charles III announced the immediate expulsion of all Jesuit clergy from the Empire, an order that would be implemented with surprising exhaustiveness across the Americas within a few short years.

In this paper, we examine the short- and longer-term consequences of the Jesuit expulsion in colonial Mexico (New Spain), a region in which the order had amassed considerable power and influence. Using a combination of qualitative and quantitative data, we provide evidence that the expulsion had ambiguous short-term and more unfavorable longer-term consequences for colonial rule. Spanish authorities gained power and resources through the expropriation of Jesuit property and the secularization of Jesuit educational and mission activities. At the same time, the expulsion sparked a wave of unrest and forced the Crown to find alternative strategies

for governance, education, and pacification in the absence of Jesuit mediation. The seemingly successful implementation of the expulsion order demonstrated the Crown's resolve and capacity to execute difficult reforms, paving the way for a subsequent wave of Bourbon state-building efforts. Over the longer term, however, grievances over the expulsion among the creole elite exacerbated growing tensions with the Crown, contributing to the outbreak of the War of Independence and the eventual collapse of Spanish rule.

Our findings on the Jesuit expulsion speak to a more general pattern in state building. Central rulers often rely on intermediaries – both religious organizations like the Jesuits, as well as economic elites, local notables, or traditional authorities – to administer populations, control territory, and provide legitimacy. State-building reforms that seek to consolidate more revenue and authority in the center often come at the expense of these intermediaries and their allies (Levi 1988; Gerring et al. 2011). In alienating important domestic interests, state building can lead to political backlash, both immediately and later on when political ties are tested during spells of state vulnerability (Garfias and Sellars 2021; 2022). Like many other political reforms, the Jesuit expulsion sparked unrest in its immediate aftermath. Though authorities succeeded and repressing these initial revolts, the expulsion activated longer-lasting grievances among the Jesuit-educated elite, which, more consequentially, contributed to the escalation of conflict during a broader political crisis decades later.

By focusing on the interplay between state building and religious authority, this paper contributes to a recent reexamination of the many roles that the Catholic Church played in the emergence and development of the modern state (e.g., Cantoni, Dittmar, and Yuchtman 2018; Grzymala-Busse 2020; Møller and Doucette 2022; Figueroa 2023; Grzymala-Busse 2023). More specifically, we build on a growing literature on Jesuit political and economic activities, particularly in colonial Spanish America (e.g., Waldinger 2017; Valencia Caicedo 2019; Tutino 2021; Alston, Duggan, and Ramos Pastrana 2022; Arias and Flores-Peregrina 2024).[1] Our work also relates to a much

[1] Some related work focuses on the legacies of mission activity in Africa and Asia (e.g., Gallego and Woodberry

broader literature on the often complex connection between religious authorities and the state in other contexts, which draws attention to many of the same ambiguities highlighted here (e.g. North, Wallis, and Weingast 2009; Chaney 2013; Rubin 2017; Fabbe 2019; Broman 2020; Skaperdas and Vaidya 2020; Heldring, Robinson, and Vollmer 2021).

Finally, our results add to a growing literature in historical political economy that focuses on colonial rule in the Americas (e.g., Grafe and Irigoin 2012; Diaz-Cayeros and Jha 2016; Guardado 2018; Garfias and Sellars 2020; Franco-Vivanco 2021; Garfias and Sellars 2021; Diaz-Cayeros, Espinosa-Balbuena, and Jha 2022; Guardado 2022; Salgado 2022; Arroyo-Abad and Maurer 2024; Gailmard 2024; Figueroa and Tuñón n.d.; Garfias and Sellars n.d.). Most specifically, this work builds on recent scholarship on the Bourbon Reforms, a transformative wave of reforms that included the Jesuit expulsion as part of what Brading (1971) characterized as a "revolution in government" reshaping the colonial state (e.g., Arias 2013; Garfias 2019; Garfias and Sellars 2022; Ellingsen 2023; Chiovelli et al. 2024).

2. Religious Intermediaries and the State

As the Spanish Empire extended its political influence across the Western Hemisphere, it was confronted with a classic set of governance challenges. Royal authorities in Iberia could not project power across this distant, unknown, and expansive territory on their own. They had to rely heavily on the cooperation of local intermediaries – including conquistadors, economic elites, Indigenous authorities, and Catholic missionaries, among others – to consolidate political control and administer territory on their behalf. As in other colonial and frontier contexts, these local intermediaries were better positioned to take on the day-to-day tasks of governance given their presence and status in the colony (e.g., García Martínez 2011; Gerring et al. 2011; Garfias and Sellars 2021; n.d.). Those intermediaries who commanded respect or authority independently of the Spanish state could further assist by lending their independent political legitimacy to the project of imperial expansion, as did some aligned members of the Indigenous nobility, for example (e.g., Gibson 1964; Hassig 1985).

2010; Nunn 2010; Bai and Kung 2015; Fenske 2015; Wantchekon, Klašnja, and Novta 2015; Cagé and Rueda 2016; Bergeron 2020; Okoye 2021).

Religious authorities and institutions were particularly useful partners in the process of state expansion and consolidation. From the scale of local clergy up to supranational organizations (e.g., the Catholic hierarchy centered in the Vatican), religious actors are often uniquely well suited to act as intermediaries between state actors and society. Many religious authorities enjoy a certain independent legitimacy among the local population, which can be leveraged to foster belief in or compliance with state institutions and activities (e.g., North, Wallis, and Weingast 2009; Rubin 2017). Beyond these cultural or symbolic advantages, there may be direct material benefits to farming out administrative tasks to religious actors or institutions who can fund their activities via non-state sources of financing, whether tithes from the local population or transfers from higher-level religious organizations. The constellation of pre-existing institutions associated with organized religion can also be altered, co-opted, or copied in the process of state building to take on new administrative tasks, such as local record-keeping, education, or taxation (e.g., Fabbe 2019; Grzymala-Busse 2023).

Entrepreneurial state builders have formed strategic alliances with religious authorities across many places and times, from medieval Europe to post-Ottoman Turkey (e.g., Tilly 1992; Fabbe 2019; Grzymala-Busse 2023). However, as these and other examples illustrate, there is an underlying risk to such alliances as well. The interests of state and religious authorities are not always aligned. When conflicts between these groups arise, the same features that make religious actors uniquely valuable partners to the state can make them uniquely threatening rivals. Religious authorities often retain a great deal of leverage in their dealings with the state due to their independent legitimacy, status, and resources. If pushed, they can weaponize this leverage to block or undermine new political efforts that they oppose. Because of their external ties (e.g., the Vatican or religious leaders abroad) and local influence, the opposition of religious authorities can pose a threat to state power, both directly and indirectly (e.g., Chaney 2013; Møller and Doucette 2022).

There is therefore an important tension or "incongruity" (Faguet TBD) inherent in institutional partnerships between the state and religious authorities. Such partnerships can serve to extend and

enhance state power, particularly in contexts of otherwise weak state capacity. However, they also limit the autonomy of the state to defy the will of religious authorities going forward. When the interests of religious and state authorities diverge, longstanding institutional arrangements can prove difficult to renegotiate or roll back because of the independent power, status, and legitimacy of religious intermediaries.

As we describe in the following sections, the Spanish Crown's long-term partnership with the Jesuit order in New Spain illustrates this dilemma well. The Jesuits were important partners in the growth and consolidation of the Spanish colonial state, but their political interests did not always align with those of the Crown. After more than a century of limited success in rolling back the order's status and influence, Charles III abruptly expelled the Jesuits from the Empire in 1767. Far from resolving the institutional incongruities of Jesuit intermediation, the expulsion had ambiguous consequences for state power, creating some benefits for the Crown while also exposing it to new political risks that, in time, proved consequential.

3. The Jesuits in New Spain

The Society of Jesus, or the Jesuit Order, is a religious order of the Catholic Church founded around the height of the Counter-Reformation during the 16th century. Jesuit missionaries first arrived to New Spain in the early 1570s, about 50 years after the fall of Tenochtitlan and the formal establishment of a Spanish colonial administration, quickly becoming important social, economic, and political actors.

Christian conversion had been an important justification of the Spanish colonial project from its outset, especially as applied to areas like New Spain with sizable Indigenous populations. More broadly, the Catholic faith was central to the political culture and functioning of the Spanish Empire. Ecclesiastical institutions formed one of the five coequal branches of the colonial government – the others being civil, judicial, military, and fiscal (*hacienda*) – highlighting the tight link between church and state in this context. The Church's powers extended well beyond regulating religious life. The Church maintained a parallel judicial system (in addition to the Inquisition), and religious

authorities often negotiated explicitly with the Crown on issues related to civil governance and taxation (see e.g., Gerhard 1993*a*, p. 10–22). Religious authorities held positions of power in civil government as well. As Gerhard (1993*a*) notes, ten bishops and archbishops would become viceroys of New Spain (p. 17).

Ecclesiastical institutions in New Spain were further subdivided into the diocesan (or "secular") and regular religious establishments. The former was made up of the diocesan clergy, headed by bishops and, as of the 1540s, an archbishop seated in Mexico City. The latter was made up of clergy from the regular religious orders – in the early years of the colony, these were principally Franciscans, Augustinians, and Dominicans – each of which had separate hierarchies and (often overlapping) provincial divisions. Upon their arrival to the Americas, the Jesuits became important players in the regular ecclesiastical establishment alongside these traditional mendicant orders. To understand the eventual importance of Jesuit culture and institutions to the political economy of colonial Mexico, it is worth highlighting a few channels through which their influence was felt.

3.1 Jesuit Institutions

A first important channel of Jesuit influence was in education. The first Jesuits to arrive in Mexico City in 1572 came to establish a college to provide education to wealthy elites in the capital. Over the next several decades, the Jesuits would found a series of schools and colleges (*colegios*), not just in Mexico City but in provincial capitals and commercial centers across the territory, including Guadalajara, Puebla, Oaxaca, Querétaro, San Luis Potosí, and Zacatecas (e.g., Osorio Romero 1979; Tutino 2021, p. 20–1). These colleges often mixed religious education with training in classical subjects like science and philosophy, some eventually receiving university status and offering training in specific faculties like medicine and law (Tanck Jewel 2006, p. 433). The network of Jesuit colleges grew to play a dominant role in educating the creole elite of New Spain up until the time of the expulsion in 1767 (e.g., Knight 2002, p. 281–3). As time went on, these elites became a major source of funding for the Church and began to push for the creation of additional Jesuit colleges and churches in economic centers like Guanajuato (Tutino 2021, p. 25–6). The

Jesuits also funded many primary schools, for both Spanish-speaking and Indigenous populations, extending their educational influence to other segments of society as well (Tanck Jewel 2006).

A related but distinct role played by the Jesuits in New Spain, and across the Americas, was as missionaries to a largely Indigenous population. As relative latecomers to the continent, the Jesuits arrived after the "spiritual conquest" of central Mexico had largely been completed and as the northward push of Spanish influence was well underway. The Jesuits grew to carve out a dominant sphere of influence in the northwest frontier of New Spain (Nueva Vizcaya, Sinaloa, Sonora, and the Californias) and in Nayarit (Gerhard 1993*b*, p. 19–23). This geography was not accidental. These were remote areas along and across the Western Sierra Madre mountains where the imposition of Spanish rule had been challenging.

For the Jesuits, the remoteness was an asset rather than a liability. This was not just because of a religious commitment to serving the underserved, but because the distance shielded them from interference by royal officials and rival religious groups, allowing them more autonomy to carry out their activities (Merino and Newson 1995, p. 134). These activities included not just the Catholic conversion of the Indigenous population but also the (often forcible) reorganization of local communities, the provision of technical training, and investment in local agricultural production (e.g., Knight 2002, p. 132–3; Bayne 2022, p. 64). Closer to the colonial center, Jesuits also created urban "missions" to serve the local workforce in places like Guanajuato, often at the behest of local elites who sought to exert a "civilizing" influence over a population that was perceived as "unruly" and "lacking Christian commitments" (Tutino 2021, p. 26).

A last critical channel of Jesuit influence was economic. To pay for their educational, religious, and missionary activities, the Jesuits required funding. Elite benefactors were an important income source, but the expanding network of colleges and missions required a more stable stream of resources than might be provided by charity alone. The solution to this problem came through investing in the incipient commercial economy of New Spain, particularly through the acquisition and management of large, for-profit agricultural estates (*haciendas*). Though their superiors in

Europe expressed misgivings about this strategy at first (Tutino 2021, p. 21), Mexico's Jesuits gradually amassed huge tracts of valuable land in central and northern Mexico and used large numbers of workers, including both Indigenous laborers and enslaved Africans (e.g., Brading 1994; Tutino 2021). The Jesuits were not the only religious order to invest in commercial agriculture – the Franciscans, for example, obtained and managed numerous estates across the north – but the Jesuits gained a reputation for being unusually astute investors and managers of their properties (Riley 1973; Knight 2002, p. 75–7, p. 133). The economic impact in the colony was considerable. As Tutino (2021) describes, Jesuit agricultural production worked to critically support the mining economy, making Jesuits "key participants" in Mexico's silver boom of the early eighteenth century (p. 25).

3.2 Jesuits as Political Actors and Intermediaries

Through these and other activities, the Jesuits grew to occupy a central place in colonial society. As religious authorities in a Catholic empire, the Jesuits enjoyed a certain independent legitimacy in their dealings with local administrators and royal officials. In addition to this symbolic status, the Jesuits became important economic players in their own right in both agriculture and finance. As we discuss in the next section, this special status did not insulate the Jesuits from periodic conflicts with the Crown, particularly over questions related to taxation and imperial jurisdiction. However, perhaps the most important source of political influence that the Jesuits possessed, and the feature of their influence that would prove hardest for officials to overcome in the wake of the expulsion, was their social embeddedness as intermediaries between the Crown and different segments of colonial society.

When it came to elites, the Jesuits became the dominant providers of education in much of the colony, often at little to no direct cost to the Crown. The symbolic importance of Jesuit education lent the order a certain legitimacy that could be leveraged to secure support for the colonial state more generally or, as we discuss later, to undermine support for the state after the expulsion (e.g., Brading 1994). The tight link between creole elites and the Jesuit order extended beyond education.

Creole elites became major funders and organizers of Jesuit church building, charity activities, and missionary activities (e.g., Tutino 2021). More broadly, Jesuits became known as "vocal champions of the creole elite" when they came into tension with *peninsulares* (Spanish-born elites) and the Crown, standing up against growing "European ethnocentrism" in colonial society (Knight 2002, p. 281–2). Even after tensions with the Crown began to build in the eighteenth century, officials recognized the political importance of the Jesuits' cultural linkage with the creole elite in sustaining political order, a concern that would come up in high-level discussions over the implementation of the expulsion decree (e.g., Brading 1994, p. 4).

Jesuits acted as partners in maintaining political order among commoners as well. As mentioned earlier, the incorporation and pacification of workers was a central justification of the network of urban Jesuit "missions" funded by elites in economic centers like Guanajuato (Tutino 2021, p. 26). In rural areas, Jesuit haciendas functioned not just as economic enterprises but as multipurpose institutions that also provided religious education, training, and social services to resident and non-resident workers. As Tutino (2021) describes, the Jesuits did not always live up to their religious ideals in their work as estate managers, perhaps most obviously when it came to their reliance on slavery. Even so, Jesuit writings at the time reflect an interest in balancing their material and spiritual responsibilities. An eighteenth-century document entitled *Instructions for Jesuit brothers managing estates* emphasizes the importance of making sure that estate workers were clothed and fed, lived in accordance with Christian morality, attended church, behaved well, avoided drunkenness, and eschewed violence (Tutino 2021, p. 29–32). Jesuit estate managers would enforce these standards through regular oversight and punishment of violations, but they also relied on the voluntary compliance of the population given the order's position and legitimacy.

The Jesuits' role as intermediaries between the local population and the Crown was perhaps most overt with respect to the Indigenous groups of the northwest frontier. Because of their willingness to live in remote territories and their purported "superiority in native languages" relative to other religious orders, the Jesuits were particularly important agents of the Crown in these frontier zones

(Merino and Newson 1995; Kessell 2002, p. 130). Civil authorities were seldom present or effective purveyors of order in these areas, and so "the church was the state, its ministers acting as judges and as representatives of the monarchy" (Brading 1994, p. 7).

By contracting with the Jesuits to act as their stand-in, colonial officials could project power into distant territories and among populations that might have otherwise been hostile. One illustration of how this arrangement could work is the long-term relationship between the Jesuits and the Yaqui in the territory of Sonora. Following years of conflict with Spanish forces, the Yaqui invited Jesuit missionaries into their territory in the early seventeenth century. Jesuit missionaries built churches and schools, invested in the local economy, and worked to organize the population into settlements, "exercis[ing] a near-monopoly of colonial power" in the region (Knight 2002, p. 131–2). This coincided with a century of peace between the Yaqui and the Spanish, a peace that would be punctured only when direct Spanish incursion increased in the eighteenth century, instigating a massive rebellion (Knight 2002, p. 133).

It is important not to overstate the sincerity or depth of the connection between Jesuit missionaries and the Indigenous population. This was a complicated and often coercive relationship, and some groups, like the Tepehuanes or Rarámuri/Tarahumara, violently and successfully resisted Jesuit efforts to make inroads for decades (Kessell 2002; Knight 2002, p. 133–5). The connection between the Jesuits and mission populations frequently entailed coercion as well as protection, and the Jesuits could leverage their control over these populations to extend their own political and economic power as the comparative case of Paraguay, for example, illustrates (Saeger 1972; López 1976; Merino and Newson 1995). Setting aside the longstanding debates over Jesuit missionaries' true motivations, what is clear is that these missionaries' willingness to live among Indigenous populations and speak local languages made them valuable partners in extending the reach of Spanish rule. When and where they could operate, Jesuit missions were frequently the only meaningful connection between frontier populations and the colonial state.

3.3 The Costs and Benefits of Jesuit Mediation

Jesuit actors and institutions thus played an important role in the functioning of colonial rule in Mexico for reasons both direct and indirect. The Jesuits controlled substantial wealth and occupied an important social position in colonial society, but their influence was also felt via their strong formal and informal ties to elites and commoners in different parts of the territory and across different types of institutions. From the above discussion, one can understand why Spanish authorities came to rely so heavily on the Jesuits to extend and stabilize colonial rule. By inviting Jesuit clergy to mediate the connection between the colonial population and the Crown, authorities made it easier to pacify and incorporate local populations, provide makeshift administrative and religious institutions along the frontier, and generate surplus for the local economy. Moreover, by facilitating the Jesuits' educational and missionary activities, the Crown could reap the symbolic and material benefits of a closer connection with the Vatican, which was itself no small concern for a Catholic Empire.

However, this imperial strategy was not without risk. The Jesuits occupied a unique position because of their political and social status. Jesuit clergy in principle answered to a different, and arguably higher, authority than the monarch himself: their Jesuit superiors in Europe and the Vatican. If and when they came in conflict with civil authorities, Jesuit clergy could invoke these external connections to push back on imperial efforts to curtail their influence. Perhaps even more ominously, the Jesuits also commanded a great deal of independent legitimacy and respect from *within* the colonial state because of their role as intermediaries. Over time, the very characteristics that made the Jesuits useful allies in the Spanish colonial project made them uniquely threatening as potential subversives, especially as the philosophy and structure of Spanish rule began to change in the second half of the eighteenth century. At that point, the underlying fragility and "incongruities" of the alliance between Jesuits and the colonial state became apparent (Faguet TBD).

4. The Jesuit Expulsion

The rapid and near-complete expulsion of the Jesuits from the Spanish Empire in 1767 remains one of the more mysterious events in imperial history. Charles III's announcement of the expulsion came unexpectedly. The precise justification was left vague, with the king citing "urgent, just and compelling causes" that would remain concealed in the "royal breast" for eternity (qtd. in Brading 1994, p. 3). In truth, while the severity of the expulsion order, and the speed with which it was carried out in the Americas, came as a surprise to many, tensions had been building between the Jesuits and the Crown long before 1767. This episode was also far from the first instance of direct conflict between church and state involving the Jesuit order. To understand the political consequences of the expulsion, it is important to review these underlying conflicts.

4.1 External Determinants

Some reasons for the expulsion had little to do with New Spain, the Americas, or colonial rule. In the years leading up to 1767, the Jesuit order had found itself under increasing suspicion across Europe. At the time of Charles III's decision, the Jesuits had already been expelled from France and Portugal for "reasons of state" (qtd. Brading 1994, p. 10). Austria and Hungary would soon follow suit. Within a decade, Pope Clement XIV would issue a papal brief from Rome suppressing the order continent-wide.

There were doctrinal conflicts behind the suppression of the order – perhaps the most famous of which was the growing cleavage with "Jansenism" in eighteenth-century France – but the reasons behind the decision were also unmistakably political (Brading e.g., 1994, p. 10–12; Van Kley 2018). The Jesuits had been active in politics, at times using their symbolic position and connection to Rome to resist or challenge royal authority. They became seen as a potential enemy living within the state, an impression that was not always without foundation. In Iberia, the Jesuits had backed the rebellion by the Duke of Braganza against the Spanish Crown in 1640, beginning a conflict that eventually led to the dissolution of the Iberian Union (Brading 1994, p. 9). Tensions with the Crown had only grown over the eighteenth century as the Bourbon Crown sought to curtail the influence of

regular religious orders, often in the face of Jesuit resistance (Brading 1994, p. 11–12).

The immediate impetus behind Charles III's decision is sometimes cited as the Esquilache (or "Hat-and-Cloak") Riots in Madrid in 1766, when an angry mob took to the streets in response to reforms discouraging the wearing of traditional Castilian clothes. Rioters eventually entered the royal palace, forcing the king to take refuge and eventually to remove the Marquis of Esquilache, the author of the hated reforms, as Secretary of the Treasury. A *fiscal* of the Council of Castile, Pedro de Campomanes, wrote a lengthy report blaming the Jesuits for serving as the secret organizing force behind this incident, denouncing the order as "the enemy of the Sovereign Power, depending on a despotic government resident in a foreign country," in reference to the Vatican and Rome (qtd. Brading 1994, p. 9; see also Stein and Stein 2003, Ch 4; St. Clair Segurado 2005; Van Kley 2018). Campomanes was far from alone in his suspicions. In 1766, the Count de la Villanueva, also on the Council of Castile, wrote a scathing report condemning the Jesuits' legal battle with the Crown over the collection of tithes, remarking with scorn that "a subject litigates with his king, a Jesuit with his lord, Ferdinand VI [Charles III's predecessor]" (qtd. Brading 1994, p. 14). Though mystery remains over Charles III's decision, considerable pressure for the expulsion appears to have come from within the Castilian elite.[2]

The extension of the expulsion order to New Spain is often seen as a direct outgrowth of events in Europe. John Tutino, for example, writes that "political reasons little connected to New Spain" were behind the expulsion (2021, p. 28), while Alan Knight casts the decision to enforce the expulsion order across Mexico as a "misguidedly doctrinaire application of *peninsular* policies to colonial problems" (2002, p. 266, emphasis in the original). That said, events in the Americas featured heavily in Iberian debates over the Jesuit question, including in the Campomanes report, which devoted disproportionate attention to Jesuit power in Spanish America (1994, p. 9–10). Moreover, as St. Clair Segurado (2005) notes, the expulsion itself could not have happened without support and cooperation within the colony.

[2]See also Stein and Stein (2003), who conclude that "the attack on the Jesuits absolved those whose complicity in the [riots] was prompted by opposition to Esquilache's reform program" within Iberia (p. 106).

4.2 Fiscal Conflicts

By the eighteenth century, the Jesuits controlled a substantial amount of wealth in New Spain, much of it lightly taxed. Their property included a networks of missions, colleges, churches, and schools, as well as numerous large and seemingly highly profitable estates across central and northern Mexico. There was a long history of tension with the Crown and local authorities in Mexico over the taxation of Jesuit property and agricultural production.

Going back to the sixteenth century, the Jesuits had successfully obtained a series of papal bulls exempting them from paying the standard tithe of ten percent to the Crown. When the Crown moved to revoke this privilege in the early seventeenth century, Jesuits in the Americas resisted and legally challenged the basis for the decision. In the 1640s, these tensions spilled over into a massive conflict with the Bishop of Puebla, Juan de Palafox y Mendoza, who sought to levy taxes on Jesuit production, only to be forced out of office after the viceroy sided with the Jesuits and threatened to have the bishop arrested (Brading 1994, p. 12). This series of events was later emphasized by Campomanes in his report on the political danger of Jesuit influence.

The Council of Indies formally resolved in favor of the Crown in 1655 after decades of litigation, but the Jesuits continued to resist payment, arguing that it was beyond the authority of the Crown to collect any such tax (Brading 1994, p. 13–4). The Jesuits finally recognized the Crown's right to collect taxes on their property nearly a century later in 1750, reaching an arrangement as part of a larger settlement that also included meaningful concessions back to the order (Brading 1994, p. 14). The 1750 settlement allowed for the taxation of production on Jesuits estates, but it reduced the tax rate from the standard one-tenth to one-thirtieth of the assessed value. In what was arguably an even bigger concession, authorities agreed to shield the reports of managers and overseers on Jesuit estates from official scrutiny, allowing for greater tax avoidance (Brading 1994, p. 14). The 1750 settlement was perceived to be so favorable to the order that there were accusations that Jesuit leaders had colluded to unduly influence Ferdinand VI through his father-confessor, the Jesuit Francisco de Rávago (Brading 1994, p. 14; St. Clair Segurado 2005, p. 15–16).

Because Jesuits' property remained lightly taxed and poorly monitored, the Crown remained somewhat in the dark over the actual value of their estates, colleges, and missions. Historians today continue to debate the actual value of Jesuit holdings as of 1767, though there is some consensus that the Crown probably overestimated this value, perhaps significantly, in the run up to the expulsion (e.g., Brading 1994, p. 14; St. Clair Segurado 2005, p. 11, 23–5). The lack of transparency over Jesuit holdings allowed rumors to propagate about the vast "riches" controlled by the order, which further fed anti-Jesuit sentiment and served as a motivation for the later seizure of Jesuits' assets (St. Clair Segurado 2005, p. 6, 8–9, 13).

4.3 Political Conflicts

The conflicts between the Jesuits and the colonial state went beyond taxation. As in Europe, there had been a gradual trend toward rolling back the autonomy and privileges of the regular religious orders in New Spain in favor of diocesan clergy (e.g., Gerhard 1993*a*, p. 19–22). This was not just for fiscal reasons but also political ones. The regular orders existed under a separate political hierarchy than diocesan clergy and answered to a separate set of authorities: their superiors in Europe, not the archbishop. This distinction could create tensions with the Crown and the diocesan religious establishment.

A key question underlying conflicts between the Jesuits and royal officials in the Americas was whether local authorities had any actual jurisdiction over the order. Though the Jesuits eventually conceded that the Crown held "full dominion" to tax their estates, they refused to recognize the authority of the Council of Indies or American bishops, opting to settle the issue directly with the king and his ministers in Madrid (Brading 1994, p. 14). To resolve another set of conflicts over autonomy, the Jesuits went above the Crown to secure a papal brief in 1766 reinforcing Jesuit missionaries' rights to read books banned by the Inquisition, issue marriage dispensations, and declare local Indigenous populations as "neophytes" that could be kept on missions (and thus outside the king's direct jurisdiction) indefinitely. This brief undercut the authority of local bishops, the Inquisition, and the civil administration to constrain the Jesuits' activities, so much so that

Charles III ordered the Council of Indies to ban the document from circulation (Brading 1994, p. 15). The Minister of Indies complained over "the disparity with which that Court [in Rome] treats our bishops of the Indies as compared to the Jesuits, since what to the former it concedes with so much difficulty, to the latter it dispenses with unparalleled freedom" (qtd. in Brading 1994, p. 15).

The power the Jesuits could command outside the colonial state was troubling to the Crown, but what was perhaps more alarming was the power that Jesuit clergy had to resist the state from within. The Jesuits forged close connections with different segments of the population in New Spain through their work as educators, missionaries, clergy, and even employers. As mentioned earlier, these connections had been quite useful to the state, allowing the Jesuits to act as intermediaries between the Crown and distant populations. When the Jesuits found themselves at odds with the state, however, they could leverage these connections to undermine the Crown. The conflict between the Jesuits and Bishop Palafox provides an illustration. When Palafox attempted to curtail the influence of the order and levy taxes on Jesuit properties in the 1640s, he found himself opposed not just by the Jesuit clergy but a wide swath of other colonial interests, eventually including even the viceroy. In the end, his proposed reforms were unsuccessful, and Palafox was forced out of his position and back to Spain (Simmons 1966, Brading 1994, p. 9). The backlash to another set of ill-fated reforms provides another example. Following a series of unpopular efforts to tighten the Crown's economic control over creole elites, a riot broke out in Mexico City in 1624. The Jesuits joined the crowd against the viceroy, eventually contributing to the latter's escape and removal (Knight 2002, p. 171).

It was these two factors together – Jesuits' ability to appeal to authority outside the colonial state and their ability to command social power within it – that made the Jesuits particularly threatening. There were growing worries that the Jesuits could use their position to undermine Spanish authority or strike deals with imperial rivals in places like northwest Mexico, where Jesuit missionaries held a virtual monopoly on political power (e.g., St. Clair Segurado 2005, p. 4–5). As in Iberia, these tensions became especially prominent as the Bourbon Crown sought to expand its political control over the course of the eighteenth century. As Brading (1994) summarizes, "by reason of their

corporate independence, their extensive jurisdiction, their great riches and frequent laxity...[the Church] presented a major obstacle to the plans of the Bourbon ministers to augment the power of the colonial state" (p. 7). Pressure for the Jesuit expulsion may have originated in Europe, but the swift application of the order to the Americas was not incidental.

4.4 Implementation of the Expulsion

Though tensions had been building for some time, Charles III's expulsion order came as a shock. At the time, Jesuit institutions were operating without any clear expectation of imminent seizure. In fact, leading up to 1767, the Jesuits had completed several new colleges, missions, and churches across Mexico thanks to a recent silver boom, including the famous Templo de la Compañía in Guanajuato in 1765 (Brading 1994; Tutino 2021). As Charles III's order came down through the colony, these activities were halted virtually overnight, and Jesuit clergy were forced to return to the continent. This was extraordinarily disruptive. The forcible removal of clergy gave rise to some famous set pieces of the expulsion in popular culture, including the images of elderly Jesuit teachers being forced to pack up their belongings under duress, expelled clergy asking to pray to Our Lady of Guadalupe in Tepeyac on their way to board ships in Veracruz, and Jesuit missionaries asking to hold one last mass before departing California (Brading 1994, p. 3–4; Kessell 2002, p. 261).

Local officials implementing the expulsion knew that they would face backlash. Upon hearing of the expulsion plan, the viceroy warned the Minister of the Indies to expect resistance from the colonial elite as "all the clergy and lawyers, since they belong entirely to them [the Jesuits] are also the most resentful" (qtd. Brading 1994, p. 4). Officials timed the takeover of the main house of the Company of Jesus in Mexico City to coincide with the Feast of St. John the Baptist to reduce the possibility of immediate resistance (Kessell 2002, p. 260). Concern over elite subterfuge proved well-founded when a major conspiracy of high-placed elites in Mexico City unsuccessfully sought to undermine the authority of inspector general José de Gálvez to implement the expulsion order (Brading 1994, p. 4–5). As we describe in the next section, the order also sparked a damaging wave of popular unrest along the northern frontier and across central Mexico.

The expulsion posed a risk to the Crown, but it also created an opportunity. After more than a century of conflicts over tithes and taxation, the Jesuits' network of properties and estates could be fully expropriated and sold. Longstanding disputes over the jurisdiction of Jesuit missions in the frontier could be settled overnight. The closure of Jesuit colleges could bring an immediate stop to looming educational reforms that the Crown increasingly viewed as dangerous (e.g., Tanck Jewel 2006, p. 435). In the next sections, we consider how these risks and opportunities resolved in the decades after.

5. The Consequences of the Expulsion of the Jesuits

5.1 Material Windfall for the Spanish Crown

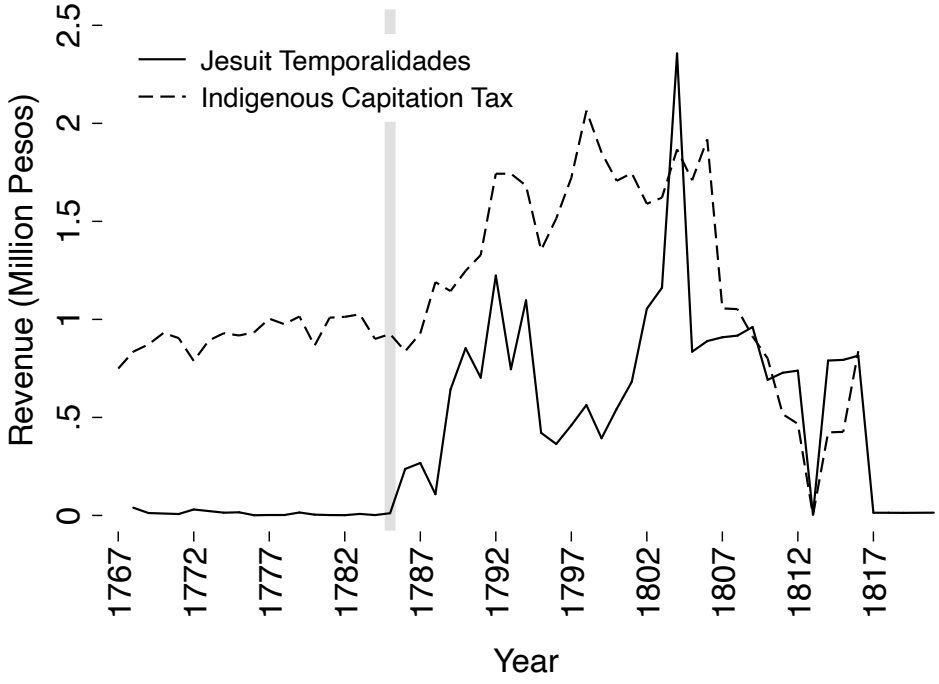
Following the Jesuit expulsion, the Crown seized the order's assets. Having expected to unearth vast riches – Campomanes had characterized Jesuit wealth in New Spain as "exorbitant" (qtd. St. Clair Segurado 2005, p. 6) – officials were disappointed to find both that Jesuits' holdings were somewhat more modest and that this wealth was mostly held in the form of real estate and other durable assets rather than in a large stockpile of silver as had been rumored (St. Clair Segurado 2005, p. 23–5). Gálvez, the inspector general who led the implementation of the expulsion order, was so convinced that the Jesuits were hiding treasure that he ordered officials to dredge the cesspool of the order's main house in Mexico City, an effort that yielded little but "an unbearable smell in the house and raging dispositions on the part of commissioners," as one Jesuit priest reported (qtd. Kessell 2002, p. 260).

Though slow to materialize and lower than expected, royal revenues from seized Jesuit properties eventually grew, reaching substantial levels by the turn of the 19th century. The revenues and direct costs from the expulsion were organized under a separate fiscal branch known as *temporalidades*. To organize the transfer and sale of expropriated Jesuit properties, the Crown created and staffed a new bureaucracy. A first set of officials was hastily put in charge of implementing the expulsion order and expropriating Jesuit assets. Many of these same officials were tasked with ensuring the continuation of religious services and instruction in Jesuit schools, as well as inventorying,

classifying, and appraising seized Jesuit assets (Recéndez Guerrero 2000; Martínez Tornero 2008; Abascal Sherwell Raull 2024). In 1769, regional boards staffed by top officials were established to oversee the sale and transfer of properties, along with a number of subordinate boards to help with implementation. In New Spain, the superior board included the viceroy, the head of the Audiencia, and the archbishop, signaling its political importance (Martínez Tornero 2008, p. 553).

A portion of the newly acquired revenue was set aside to pay these officials and their staff (de Fonseca and de Urrutia 1853, V p. 111). Many formerly Jesuit schools continued to receive financial support from the agricultural estates that had been seized from the Jesuits and were now managed by the Crown. The *temporalidades* also covered expenses related to the repression of unrest in the aftermath of the expulsion (de Fonseca and de Urrutia 1853, V p. 114).

Figure 1: Revenue from Jesuit Properties



The figure plots the revenue from expropriated Jesuit properties (*temporalidades*) entered into New Spain's 18 Royal Treasuries between 1767 and 1821. The total is incomplete during the first years after the 1767 expulsion due to the parallel administration of funds. Jesuit *temporalidades* were formally incorporated into the Royal Treasury in 1784, the year marked in grey. Revenue from the indigenous capitation tax, the *tributo*, is also presented as a comparison to illustrate the magnitude of revenue from seized Jesuit properties. Data from TePaske and Klein (1982, 1990).

Despite this bureaucratic investment, revenues from the sale of Jesuit properties were slow to

materialize. Figure 1 plots the yearly revenue across all Royal Treasuries in New Spain that was recorded as part of the *temporalidades* branch. This likely represents an incomplete account of the resources that the Crown derived from Jesuit assets prior to 1784 as the *temporalidades* had been managed through a distinct accounting system separate from the main tax administration until that year (de Fonseca and de Urrutia 1853, V pp. 157–158). The data also do not capture any other strategies the Crown used to generate funds from the expropriation, such as through securing loans against accumulated assets. In 1783, the value of such loans reached 2.7 million pesos, a significant amount (Marichal 2007, pp. 153–154).

As the figure illustrates, the revenue recorded as part of the *temporalidades* branch of the tax administration did not become significant until well into the 1780s. The accounting issues mentioned earlier contributed to this delay, and the sizable expenses of the expulsion reduced the net funds reaching the Treasury for some time. There were also significant delays in categorizing, organizing, and selling Jesuit assets. For example, as of 1784, only 3 of 21 Jesuit schools had fully accounted for and transferred their ecclesiastical decorations to other orders (de Fonseca and de Urrutia 1853, V p. 178). The Crown did not order the sale of many of these decorations until the 1780s (Recéndez Guerrero 2000, p. 118; Martínez Tornero 2008, p. 556). Some valuable Jesuit properties, such as missions, were never sold but simply transferred to other regular orders or diocesan clergy, in part to guarantee the continuity of religious services and to reassure the Church that the expulsion had been narrowly directed at the Jesuits (Recéndez Guerrero 2000, p. 106).

The sale of the Jesuits' agricultural estates proceeded especially slowly, not only because the high value of these assets severely reduced the pool of potential buyers, but also because the process was at times deliberately delayed by officials to facilitate rent-seeking (Abascal Sherwell Raull 2024, pp. 1572–1573). In the wealthy silver-producing region of Zacatecas, for example, two of the three Jesuit haciendas were purchased by one of New Spain's magnates, Pedro Romero de Terreros, more than a decade after the expulsion in 1781, and his death shortly thereafter further delayed payment as his estate underwent settlement. Auctions of Jesuits' other holdings in Zacatecas, including urban

properties, did not begin until 1785, eighteen years after the expulsion order. As late as 1802, a significant portion of expropriated Jesuit properties remained unsold (Recéndez Guerrero 2000, p. 126).

Over time, the Crown began to put more pressure on officials to resolve these issues. These efforts picked up following the end of the Anglo-Spanish War in 1783, when the Crown sought to cover its expenses by tapping into this source of wealth. An edict in 1784 ordered the liquidation of all Jesuit assets (Abascal Sherwell Raull 2024, pp. 1571–1572), and another in 1786 directed officials to reduce the valuation of Jesuit goods to facilitate their auction (de Fonseca and de Urrutia 1853, V p. 165).

As the figure shows, *temporalidades* revenue recorded in the Treasury began to increase in the late 1780s and remained substantial for the next several decades. After 1790, revenue from Jesuit properties accounts for about 1.4 percent of total treasury revenue, surpassing 3 percent in some years. Though this figure is smaller than New Spain's major sources of revenue like silver mining (15 percent) or the *alcabala* tax (4.5 percent), it is of comparable magnitude to the *tributo*, the Indigenous capitation tax (2.1 percent), which is represented in the figure for scale.[3]

Some of these funds had to be used to cover expenses related to the expulsion, The Crown provided a sizable pension to the exiled Jesuits, for example. However, the revenue generated from *temporalidades* in New Spain alone significantly exceeded the costs incurred from the expulsion across the entire hemisphere, leaving a considerable surplus for the Crown.[4]

[3] As the figure reflects, there was a significant increase in recorded capitation tax revenue over this period as well. We do not believe that this increase was driven by the Jesuit expulsion. More likely explanations include both demographic expansion as well as a series of major fiscal and administrative reforms that strengthened overall tax collection and improved imperial record-keeping during this period (e.g., Brading 1994; Garfias and Sellars 2022; Chiovelli et al. 2024). Though the secularization of Jesuit missions in principle made former residents of mission communities newly subject to the tax, this change affected only a small number of individuals, and effective tax collection remained limited in most of these frontier areas (seeSection 5.3).

[4] In 1783, the Crown instructed that the *temporalidades* in the Americas remit 11,255,380 reales to pay for expulsion-related expenses between 1767 and 1783 and 2,500,000 reales annually thereafter (Martínez Tornero 2013, pp. 302). Using the nominal exchange rates in García Martínez (1968) to convert these figures into silver pesos, this corresponds to less than 60 percent of the total (and incomplete) revenue from *temporalidades* recorded by the Royal Treasury in New Spain between 1767 and 1821.

In short, though there were challenges in managing the transfer and sale of Jesuit properties, and while some of the Jesuits' wealth was lost to other religious orders and to private actors through corruption, the Crown ultimately saw substantial material benefits from the Jesuit expulsion and expropriation. However, the windfall was delayed and did not meet the exaggerated expectations of vast Jesuit riches. As noted earlier, officials had misunderstood the size and form of Jesuit holdings in part because the order had so effectively evaded oversight and taxation before 1767 (St. Clair Segurado 2005).

5.2 Social Unrest in New Spain

A second important consequence of the expulsion was social unrest. Following the publication of the expulsion decree in 1767, a series of large revolts roiled New Spain, mostly concentrated in regions to the north of Mexico City where the Jesuit order had wielded significant influence. In addition to the material consequences, this unrest risked sparking a much larger political crisis.

In some areas, the backlash seems to have been triggered by the expulsion itself. In San Luis de la Paz, for example, where the Jesuits held two nearby estates and a school, the secretive implementation of the expulsion order was accidentally discovered when residents confused the Crown agent charged with executing the order with an undercover priest seeking to take over the town's church. This led to the mobilization of thousands of people – most of the town's population – to resist the secularization of their parish and its transfer to the diocesan clergy. The rioters were able to block the expulsion for a few days until a militia was raised to enforce the decree (Castro Gutiérrez 1996, p. 115–120).

In other cases, the announcement of the expulsion served to reignite and intensify preexisting conflicts. In addition to providing a new focal point to coordinate revolt, it reactivated local grievances over taxation, militia service, and the imposition of new royal monopolies. Starting the previous summer, a series of riots had spread across the Bajío in response to falling wages and increasing tax and militia burdens (Tutino 2011, p. 235–7). In and around the economic centers of Guanajuato and San Luis Potosí, where the Jesuits had operated numerous rural estates and

urban schools, a renewed wave of unrest had started a few weeks before the proclamation of the expulsion, sparked by new regulations on weapons, vagrancy, and manadatory conscriptions for newly established militias. These disturbances intensified significantly following the announcement of the expulsion (Castro Gutiérrez 1996; Benavides Martínez 2016; Florek 2008; Tutino 2011, p. 239–248).

In San Luis Potosí, rioters turned their anger against Spanish-born elites more generally, connecting the suppression of the Jesuits to broader grievances over other Bourbon state-building efforts (Tutino 2011, p. 240). Here and elsewhere, most of those who took part in the uprising were mining workers and commoners, though some members of the local elite were involved as well. In Guanajuato, Castro Gutiérrez (1996) observes that prominent elites refused to assist local political authorities in raising militias to suppress the rebellion. Several notables were later implicated for openly supporting the uprising, and some mining managers even armed and instructed their workers directly to align with the rebels and defend the Jesuits (p. 156–157). Though most elites eventually ended up collaborating with the Crown to suppress the rebellion, elite grievances over the expulsion contributed to considerable uncertainty over whether the crisis might spread further (e.g., Tutino 2011, p. 247).

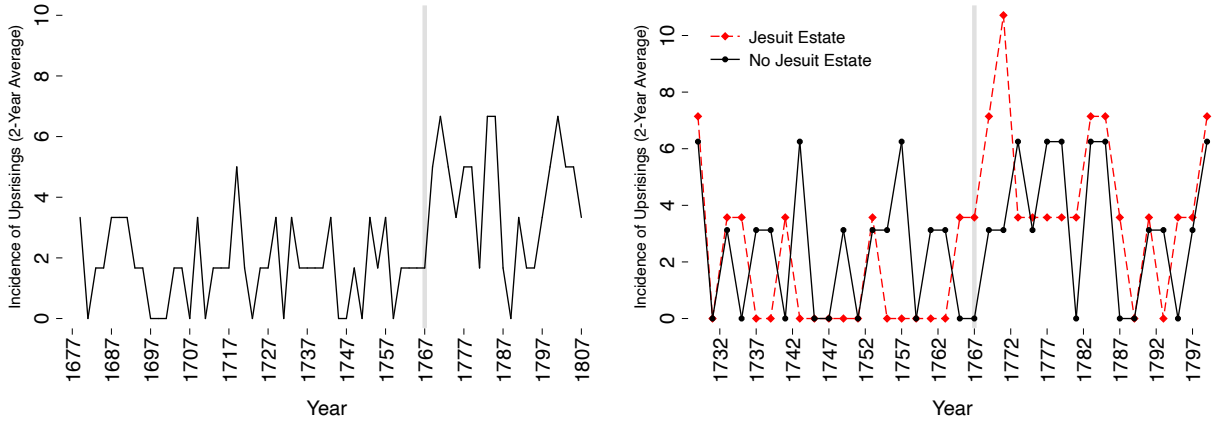
The extent of social unrest following the expulsion was highly uneven across the territory. In Mexico City and Puebla, where the Jesuits had a substantial presence and where unrest would have been highly disruptive to the political leadership, the Crown concentrated its available troops and successfully deterred any uprising following the order (Castro Gutiérrez 1996, p. 181). Much of the unrest that did occur as a result of the expulsion was on a considerably smaller scale than the sweeping revolts that affected the mining centers of the Bajío. There was a noticeable uptick in the number of localized rural uprisings in Central and Southern Mexico during this time as well (see Figure 2).

Most rural uprisings in colonial Mexico were small, often confined to a single community, and they were generally brought under control within a few days. The typical triggering factors

highlighted in archival sources include the imposition or enforcement of taxes, labor drafts, land conflicts and other local political disputes, quarantine requirements, and internal factionalism (Taylor 1979). Religious factors often contributed as well. Relatively minor events, such as refurbishing the town chapel, refusing to preach in the native language, or moving the priest's place of residence, could spark revolts (Taylor 1979, p. 137).

The expulsion of the Jesuits would have been disruptive to the economic, political, and religious equilibrium of many Indigenous and mestizo communities, particularly in areas of strong Jesuit presence. To quantitatively examine how the Jesuit expulsion influenced smaller-scale uprisings, we digitize data from Taylor (1979), who compiled a list of village rebellions using archival sources for 30 districts (*alcaldías mayores*) in central Mexico and Oaxaca from 1680 to 1810. We match the data to 1786 administrative units to incorporate other geographic and political covariates in our analysis (see below). We plot the total incidence of uprisings over time in the left panel of Figure 2.

Figure 2: Uprisings in Central Mexico, 1680–1808



(a) All Central Mexico

(b) Districts With/Without Jesuit Estates

The figure on the **left** plots the proportion of districts that experienced an uprising in central Mexico between 1680 and 1808. The figure on the **right** compares the proportion of of uprisings in district with and without Jesuit estates. The year of the Jesuit expulsion (1767) is marked in grey.

As the figure illustrates, there is a noticeable increase in rural uprisings following the Jesuit expulsion in 1767 (marked in gray), from an average incidence of roughly 1.6 percent in the decade before to 4.3 percent in the decade following the expulsion. Though the temporal increase in

rebellion appears suggestive, this was a period of other disruptive changes across New Spain. The formation of new militias in the 1760s, for instance, contributed to elite and popular grievances (e.g., Archer 1987). During the general inspection by José de Gálvez, which set the stage for the Bourbon reforms, authorities implemented several unpopular administrative and regulatory changes, including the increased enforcement of existing legislation, the reorganization of customs offices, the establishment of a tobacco monopoly, and an edict that facilitated debt peonage (e.g., de Fonseca and de Urrutia 1853; Zavala 1944; Smith 1948; Jáuregui 1999). As noted earlier, these and related factors had contributed to growing unrest before the Jesuit expulsion order in some areas, notably the Bajío.

To more systematically examine whether the Jesuit expulsion influenced rural unrest, we compare the trajectory of revolt in areas with and without a Jesuit estate prior to 1767 (*hacienda*). As noted earlier, the ownership and management of large agricultural estates was a particularly important channel of Jesuit influence in rural areas. As a dominant employer, the Jesuits could shape not just the local economy but also the social, religious, and political life of the communities surrounding estates (e.g., Tutino 2021).

To construct the dataset, we compile and digitize data on all Jesuit estates – haciendas, ranches, large grain farms, and sugar plantations – known to have been expropriated as part of the expulsion decree. Of the 112 estates reported in de Fonseca and de Urrutia (1853), we are able to match 110 to their corresponding colonial district. We merge this dataset with the data on rural uprisings from Taylor (1979) described earlier. After merging, 14 out of the 30 districts in the uprisings sample include at least one Jesuit estate. In the right panel of Figure 2, we show that the surge in uprisings following the 1767 expulsion was more pronounced in districts with at least one Jesuit estate than in those without any estates, particularly in the years immediately following the expulsion.

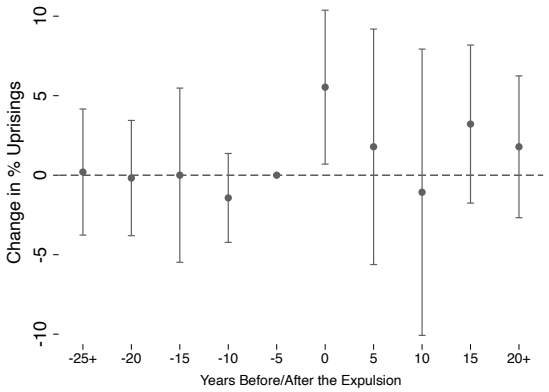
In Table 1, we present difference-in-differences estimates of the effect of the expulsion on rural uprisings, comparing the trajectory of rebellion in districts with and without a Jesuit estate as of

Table 1: The Expulsion of the Jesuits and Uprisings in Central Mexico

	Rural Uprisings (1680–1808)	
	(1)	(2)
Jesuit Estate × Post Expulsion	0.026**	0.034**
	(0.013)	(0.015)
	{0.012}	{0.014}
	[0.048]	[0.075]
Palmer Drought Severity Index	No	Yes
Controls × Year FE	No	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes
District FE	Yes	Yes
Pre-Expulsion Within-District Mean of DV	0.016	0.015
Pre-Expulsion Within-District SD of DV	0.093	0.089
R sq.	0.056	0.259
Observations	3840	3712
Number of districts	30	29

OLS estimates of equation $Uprising_{i,t} = \beta Jesuit\ Estate_i \times post\ 1767_t + \Theta_t X_i + \Pi U_{i,t} + \lambda_t + \gamma_i + \varepsilon_{it}$, where $Uprising_{i,t}$ indicates whether there was any reported uprising in district i in year t; $Jesuit\ Estate_i$ is an indicator for any Jesuit estate in the district; $post\ 1767_t$ is an indicator for the post-expulsion period; λ_t and γ_i represent year and district fixed effects; $U_{i,t}$ are time-varying controls, including the average and standard deviation of the district's Palmer Drought Severity Index (a measure of within-district climatic variation); X_i, is a vector of time-invariant covariates interacted with each year indicator, including latitude, longitude, log elevation, log surface area, log distance to Mexico City, and maize suitability; and $\varepsilon_{i,t}$ is an error term. The unit of analysis is the district-year. Standard errors (clustered at the district level) in parentheses. Standard errors that allow for serial correlation within districts and spatial correlation between districts within 250 km from each other in curly brackets. Wild-cluster bootstrap p-values are in brackets.

Figure 3: Event Study of the Expulsion of the Jesuits



The figure displays the point estimates and 95% confidence intervals of period-by-Jesuit estate interactions from a dynamic panel regression that includes district and period fixed effects. The initial lead is equal to 1 for every 5-year period prior to 25 years before the expulsion, and the final lag is equal to 1 for every 5-year period beginning 20 years after the expulsion. The omitted baseline category corresponds to the 5-year period immediately preceding the expulsion. The confidence intervals are based on standard errors that allow for serial correlation within districts and spatial correlation between districts within 250 km. See the Online Appendix A.1 for additional details and specifications.

1767. The estimates are consistent across specifications, both when excluding and including a vector of time-interacted and time-varying geographic and political covariates (columns 1 and 2 respectively). The results indicate that districts with a Jesuit estate experienced a 3 percentage point increase in the probability of unrest following the expulsion, as compared to districts without an estate. It is important to note that the overall probability of rebellion in this sample is small. The estimated effect in fact represents a substantial relative increase, representing roughly double the pre-expulsion average incidence of rebellion (1.6 percent) and one-third of the within-district standard deviation in pre-expulsion unrest.

We further investigate the differential trends in rebellion in areas with and without a Jesuit estate using an event-study analysis. Figure 3 presents the point estimates and 95 percent confidence

intervals (based on standard errors that are robust to serial correlation within districts and spatial correlation between districts) of an event study of the 1767 expulsion, omitting the indicator for the five-year period immediately preceding the expulsion as the baseline. This evidence suggests that the effect on unrest was particularly pronounced in the five-year period immediately following the expulsion proclamation. Pre-expulsion trends in rebellion appear similar in areas with and without a direct Jesuit presence, lending some credibility to the parallel trends assumption in this context. We note, however, that the event-study results should be interpreted with caution given the small number of districts in this sample and the fact that rebellion is a relatively rare event in our data. In Online Appendix A.1, we probe the robustness of these findings under alternative assumptions and show that, while the estimated effect of the rebellion on unrest remains positive in the short term, estimates are not always statistically distinguishable from zero, and results using a smaller temporal bandwidth around 1767 are generally inconclusive.[5]

Taken as a whole, both qualitative accounts and available quantitative evidence suggests that there was indeed a meaningful increase in unrest in areas affected by the Jesuit expulsion. In addition to the well-known revolts of the Bajío, the years after the expulsion saw a rise in localized rural conflicts in central and southern Mexico, concentrated in districts with Jesuit estates. The unrest following the expulsion generated new and significant political and economic costs for the Crown. As we discuss in the next section, it paradoxically also presented some new opportunities for the expansion of imperial control.

5.3 Political Authority of the Crown

Political unrest following the Jesuit expulsion proved damaging, but also temporary. Though undoubtedly explosive, the immediate backlash to the expulsion was ultimately contained to a few regions and quickly brought under control, thanks in part to the Crown's expanding military power and the private militias of cooperating elites (e.g., Taylor 1979, p. 122; Brading 1994, p. 5; Tutino

[5]Given the limited number of reported rebellions in the dataset and our fixed-effects empirical strategy, it is not possible to reliably estimate these event-study models on annual data. See Online Appendix A.1.

2011, p. 237–244). Far from making concessions to defuse the crisis, officials responded with an unprecedented wave of severe repression.

Traditionally, the Crown had taken a somewhat conciliatory approach to containing unrest in Mexico. Officials seldom resorted to collective punishment of rebelling communities and often favored mercy even when it came to the purported leaders of uprisings (Taylor 1979, p. 120–122). In aftermath of the 1767 uprisings, by contrast, the Crown not only meted out severe punishments to participating individuals – including a wave of executions, lashings, and sentences to exile or forced labor – it also resorted to strategies of collective repression, up to and including the abolition of municipal governments and religious institutions in rebelling communities (Taylor 1979, p. 122; Brading 1994, p. 6; Tutino 2011, p. 148–156). Taylor (1979) characterizes the harsh approach as "the unbending response of a leading peninsular reformer [inspector-general José de Gálvez] who had little understanding of the delicate divide-and-rule policies that had governed the Mexican countryside for two centuries" (p. 122).

This heavy-handed approach could have backfired, but it did not, at least not right away. In his efforts to contain popular unrest, Gálvez, backed by a punitive expedition, found common cause with local elites. Under the looming threat of central coercion, many contributed resources and private militias to strengthen the Crown's repressive apparatus, even as they privately opposed the harsh terms of the expulsion (e.g., Brading 1994, p. 5; Tutino 2011, p. 248–256). Gálvez and the Crown proved able to withstand higher-level political defection as well. Several well-placed colonial officials in Mexico City had attempted to undermine Gálvez's authority in the wake of the Jesuit expulsion, in part by spreading rumors about his loyalty and morality, only to find themselves expelled back to Spain after the viceroy sided with the inspector-general and accused the dissidents of subversion against the Crown (Brading 1994, p. 4–5). As Tutino (2011) notes, when faced with unrest in the immediate aftermath of the expulsion, provincial elites could have joined popular resistance against the Crown in defense of their former teachers and clergy, but they largely chose to join the "alliance for repression" led by Gálvez instead (p. 255).

The political response to the uprisings ultimately provided an opportunity for the Crown to showcase its growing strength. By successfully managing the unrest caused or intensified by the expulsion, the Crown demonstrated its determination and capacity to implement reforms despite significant domestic resistance, a powerful signal to opposing interests. Bolstered by his early successes, Gálvez eventually turned his attention to broader reforms over taxation, regulation, and bureaucratic oversight. These included, among others, the centralization of tax enforcement, the suppression of office selling, new personnel policies favoring peninsular Spaniards over creoles, a territorial reorganization of the colony through the intendancy system, and the establishment of state monopolies on the sale of products like tobacco (e.g., Brading 1971; Pietschmann 1991). These changes, collectively referred to as the Bourbon Reforms, would radically remake colonial institutions, ushering in a period of unprecedented peninsular control and increased revenue collection for the Crown (Brading 1971; Garner 1987; Marichal 2007; Garfias 2019; Garfias and Sellars 2022; Chiovelli et al. 2024).

Though the Jesuit expulsion was not the first of the Bourbon reforms to be successfully implemented, historians have highlighted the crisis and response as an important watershed moment in the trajectory of colonial rule in Mexico, which would be less conciliatory and more coercive going forward (e.g., Knight 2002, p. 267; Brading 1994, p. 7; Tutino 2011, p. 255–6). Later structural reforms would come directly at the expense of other powerful domestic interests – including the Mexico City merchant guild, the rising creole economic elite, influential tax farmers, and the Church – but the political backlash was generally muted and easily contained. In the words of David Brading, the Jesuit expulsion and its aftermath demonstrated that "[h]enceforth Leviathan would brook no rivals in the exercise of state power" (Brading 1994, p. 16), and this deterred others from challenging royal authority.

Somewhat less successful was the Bourbon attempt to extend state power to the northwest frontier, a region that had been governed in large part through the Jesuits before 1767. The seizure of Jesuit missions in the northwest helped to accelerate a pre-existing trend toward diocesan clergy control in

places like Sinaloa and Nayarit (Gerhard 1993*b*, p. 22–3, p. 228). By disbanding Jesuit missions, Gálvez also expanded the administrative reach of the Crown as this implicitly reclassified mission populations as full "tribute-paying citizens" who would be in principle responsible for paying the Indigenous capitation tax (Kessell 2002, p. 267). As noted earlier, the classification of Indigenous groups in the northwest as "neophytes" outside of Crown control had been a major source of conflict between the Crown and Jesuits prior to the expulsion.

More generally, the Jesuit expulsion provided an opportunity for reformers to revisit the long-standing approach to governing the north via distant intermediaries. Gálvez and others saw an opportunity to fill the resulting power vacuum by replacing Jesuit missionaries with civil authorities under Crown control who could administer the territory directly (Kessell 2002, p. 260–271). Gálvez became personally invested in this effort, traveling to California to oversee the reallocation of mission land, the appointment of local tax officials, the creation of schools, and even the inventorying of supplies to be shipped up the coast from San Blas (Kessell 2002, p. 264).

The results of these efforts were mixed. Following the expulsion, a "political and military" government under Crown control was established in California for the first time (Gerhard 1993*b*, p. 292–3). Later, as minister of the Indies, Gálvez further created a new supreme authority to oversee the governance of the north, a *Comandancia General de las Provincias Internas*, and handpicked a political ally to serve in this position (Gerhard 1993*b*, p. 16; Kessell 2002, p. 270). However, Gálvez was forced to roll back and reverse some of his more ambitious state-building efforts. After the expulsion, longstanding conflicts against the Seris and other Indigenous groups worsened, and the Apaches took advantage of the diversion of military effort to expand attacks against newly arrived Spanish settlers and officials (Kessell 2002, p. 260–268). Left without their traditional intermediaries in the region, the Jesuits, the Crown was forced to bear the costs of containing these conflicts directly, with somewhat more limited success (Kessell 2002, p. 271; Knight 2002, p. 266).

The Crown resorted to familiar solutions to address these problems. After Gálvez's preferred hardline approach proved highly ineffective at controlling conflict in the north, he resorted to the

much older colonial strategy of pacification through trade, bargaining, and conciliation (Kessell 2002, p. 271). Gálvez was also forced to abandon his efforts to administer Jesuit missions directly under the Crown, eventually turning control over to a new set of intermediaries: Franciscan and (to a lesser extent) Dominican missionaries, who would take on new powers of their own (Gerhard 1993*b*, p. 21, p. 293–4; Kessell 2002, p. 266–7). The northwest frontier was thus never brought under solid control of the Bourbon Crown. As Kessell (2002) writes, "[d]espite threats by secular absolutists [...] missionaries stood out on New Spain's contested northern frontier as boldly in the late eighteenth century as they ever had" (p. 272). In contrast to the experience in central Mexico, the aftermath of the Jesuit expulsion drew attention to the limits of state power along the frontier.

5.4 The Unraveling of Imperial Control

In the end, however, the more severe threat to Spanish rule would originate in the center, not the far north. Though officials succeeded in controlling the immediate wave of unrest that followed the Jesuit expulsion, the adverse political legacies of this event proved to be longer-lasting. Though most local elites had sided with, or at least acquiesced to, Gálvez during the unrest of 1767, the Jesuit expulsion damaged the credibility of the Crown among this critical population for reasons that were symbolic as well as material.

As noted previously, the Jesuits had often been seen as politically aligned with the creole elite. Many elites in New Spain had been the students of Jesuit teachers, the benefactors of Jesuit institutions, and the relatives of exiled Jesuit clergy. Jesuit clergy had openly sided with local elites against the Crown in several notable political episodes, such as during the 1624 riots in Mexico City that ended with the removal of the viceroy. As a result of their social embeddedness, the Jesuits came to be seen as particularly "vocal and telling critics of European ethnocentrism [...] whose expulsion typified Spanish colonial tyranny" (Knight 2002, p. 281).

After 1767, some expelled Jesuit scholars and clergy, many of whom were Mexican by birth, became advocates of Mexican culture and interests while in exile. One notable example is the Mexican-born Jesuit historian Francisco Javier Clavijero, whose influential writing would extol the

Aztec civilization as "greatly superior to that which the Phoenicians and Carthaginians found in our Spain" and the Nahuatl language as "as euphonious a language as German or Polish" (qtd. Knight 2002, p. 281; see also Brading 1991, p. 450–62). In addition to bolstering a nascent patriotic sentiment, these writings served to reinforce the popular representation of the Jesuit expulsion as an example of peninsular overreach at the expense of creole – and more specifically *Mexican* – interests (e.g., Brading 1971; 1994; Knight 2002). Through these and other writings, Jesuit priests helped to establish an intellectual movement in exile that contributed to the foundation of a "Mexican" national identity.[6]

Though direct grievances surrounding the expulsion subsided with time, these longer-term political and cultural consequences would prove important. Political tensions with the creole elite persisted and periodically arose during conflicts with the Crown over other matters (e.g., Knight 2002, p. 280–1). The latent conflict became newly salient at the turn of the nineteenth century when a series of imperial crises severely tested creole elites' loyalties to the Crown.Facing a fiscal crisis in Spain, royal authorities attempted a series of highly unpopular reforms to raise revenue across the Empire. These efforts included the consolidation of royal bonds, leading to the expropriation of resources from educational, religious, and social institutions across the colony, harming both local elites and Indigenous populations. This effort also forced wealthy colonial elites to make loans and donations to the Crown to raise revenue (e.g., von Wobeser 2006; Marichal 2007).

The crisis deepened in 1808 after Napoleon invaded Spain, ousting the king from power and precipitating an attempted coup against the viceroy in Mexico City. That same year, a major drought sparked a subsistence crisis in the countryside, raising the threat of a larger political rupture. Pre-existing elite and popular grievances made it difficult for the Crown to weather these shocks and contributed to the crisis growing out of control. This wave of unrest culminated in the outbreak of the Hidalgo Revolt in 1810, which began Mexico's War of Independence, a series of related

[6]Alternatively, some Jesuit scholars later argued that, because of the Jesuits' role as gatekeepers of knowledge, their expulsion eliminated an important barrier to the spread of liberal ideas across colonial Mexico on the eve of independence (e.g., Zermeño Padilla 2015, p. 1472).

conflicts that led to the end of Spanish colonial rule after 300 years (e.g., Tutino 1988; 2011; Garfias and Sellars 2022).

Historians and commentators have long linked the expulsion of the Jesuits to the later movement for Mexican independence. Hubert Bancroft (1885), for example, suggests that "the expulsion in 1767 of the Jesuits, who had ingratiated themselves in the hearts of the lower orders, insulted the people in their dearest affections [...] [f]rom that time conspiracy arose and became widespread". (p. 17). Brian Hamnett (1978) similarly writes that "[v]iolent popular reaction combined with elite disapproval to turn the task of expulsion into a bitter affair, the memory of which lasted through to the revolution of 1810" (p. 266). The legacies of the Jesuit expulsion on the political consciousness and grievances of the creole elite during the conflict have been highlighted in other works, particularly during the early phase of the War of Independence in the Bajío region, where Jesuit influence had been strong (e.g., Knight 2002, p. 280–1; Tutino 2011, p. 248–256).

Tellingly, many local leaders during the War of Independence were educated members of the creole elite, including many parish priests Taylor (1996, p. 453). Most notably, Miguel Hidalgo – who led the first and largest of the insurrections that sparked the war – had studied under the Jesuits at the College of San Francisco Javier and had experienced the disruption of the expulsion first-hand. Another indication that the political legacies of 1767 were salient during the years of the conflict was that the reinstatement of the Jesuit order remained an active political interest of the creole elite. Within Iberia, the overwhelming majority of creole deputies from Spanish America (29 out of 30) voted in favor of restoring the Jesuits in the Cortes of Cádiz in 1812, though the measure was ultimately defeated by strong opposition from peninsular deputies (Hamnett 1978, p. 267; Zermeño Padilla 2015, p. 1470). Back in the Americas, the reinstatement of the Jesuits was among the policies approved, though never implemented, by the insurgent Congress of Chilpancingo in 1813. At this congress, the prominent insurgent leader José María Morelos is reported to have said "I sincerely love the Jesuits, and although I did not study with them, I understand that reinstating them is necessary" (qtd. Zermeño Padilla 2015, p. 1464, [authors' translation]).

Though there is broad recognition that the Jesuit expulsion played a role in the War of Independence, some debate remains over the extent and specific mechanisms of its influence. The connection between the Jesuit expulsion and the independence movement is made murkier by the Jesuits' shifting political circumstances in the years around the Independence. The order was briefly and partially reinstated in 1816 and aligned with the royalist camp until independence, dissolving again in 1821. This ambiguous turn of events created a strong incentive for the Jesuits' supporters to later emphasize the order's patriotic connections when lobbying for their reinstatment in the early decades of independence (e.g., Zermeño Padilla 2015, pp. 1505–8). These later representations likely shaped the historical memory surrounding the events of independence, though, as Zermeño Padilla (2015, pp. 1507–8) notes, the order's liberal detractors also recognized the Jesuits' bonds with the local population and their significance to colonial education even as they criticized this influence.[7]

Building on the sizable historical literature on this case, we take a closer look at the connection between the Jesuit expulsion and the outbreak of the War of Independence quantitatively, focusing on regional variation in the course of the conflict within Mexico. To do this, we use data from Ortiz Escamilla (2014) on insurgent activity during the war (1810–1821). Ortiz Escamilla uses archival sources to identify insurgent localities, along with an approximate date of insurgent activities and, when known, its local leaders. The main outcome variable we examine is the number of insurgency groups in a given district (i.e., the 1786 administrative unit).[8] We examine the conditional correlations between insurgent activity and two measures of exposure to Jesuit influence. The first measure is whether the district contained a Jesuit estate as of 1767 using the de Fonseca and de Urrutia (1853) data described earlier. The second is whether the district contained a Jesuit

[7]For example, José María Luis Mora, a prominent liberal politician and historian, wrote in his influential history of Mexico that the Jesuits "had known how to earn the veneration and respect of Mexicans through their decent and disciplined demeanor, their acts of charity, their tireless zeal in promoting the education of youth, the advancement of Christianity and civilization among the barbaric tribes of the savages, and many other public services of greater importance. These services, being easily recognized by all – unlike their drawbacks, which were apparent to only a few – won them the esteem of the people" (Mora, [1836] 1986, pp. 259–60, [authors' translation]).

[8]In Appendix Table A.4, we present results restricting attention to insurgent groups emerging prior to the Jesuit's brief return in 1816.

school as of 1767 using data from Osorio Romero (1979), which captures the local elite's exposure to Jesuit education.[9]

In some specifications, we incorporate a series of geographic control variables to condition on other known contributors to the conflict. These include the mean and standard deviation of drought conditions in 1808 as measured by the Palmer Drought Severity Index (Cook and Krusic 2004), potential agricultural maize suitability (from the FAO), log elevation and area of the district, log distance to Mexico, and the latitude and longitude of the district centroid.

Table 2: The Expulsion of the Jesuits and Insurgency During Mexico's Independence War, 1810–1821

	Number of Insurgent Groups, 1810–1821					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Jesuit Estate by 1767	1.378*	0.639			0.806	-0.099
	(0.761)	(0.769)			(0.501)	(0.599)
	{1.015}	{0.860}			{0.536}	{0.429}
Jesuit School by 1767			3.382*	3.967**	3.028*	4.005**
			(1.939)	(1.920)	(1.814)	(1.871)
			{2.252}	{2.064}	{2.042}	{1.989}
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Mean of DV	2.000	2.157	2.000	2.157	2.000	2.157
SD of DV	3.802	3.927	3.802	3.927	3.802	3.927
R sq.	0.027	0.199	0.070	0.280	0.078	0.280
Observations	195	178	195	178	195	178

OLS estimates of equation $Insurgency_i = \beta Jesuit_i + \Theta X_i + \varepsilon_i$, where $Insurgency_i$ is the number of insurgent groups between 1810 and 1821 in district i; $Jesuit_i$ is an indicator for any Jesuit estate and/or school in the district; X_i, is a vector of covariates including latitude, longitude, log elevation, log surface area, log distance to Mexico City, maize suitability, the average and standard deviation of the district's Palmer Drought Severity Index (a measure of within-district climatic variation) in 1808; and $\varepsilon_{i,t}$ is an error term. The unit of analysis is the district. Heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors in parentheses. Standard errors that allow for spatial correlation between districts within 250 km from each other in curly brackets.

The results are presented in Table 2. In the first two columns, we examine the association between insurgency and the presence of a Jesuit agricultural estate in 1767 with and without the vector of geographic controls. We then examine the association between the insurgency and the presence of Jesuit schools in columns 3 and 4 (with and without controls respectively). In columns 5 and 6, we

[9]We considered a third measure of Jesuit influence, whether an area was in a Jesuit missionary district in 1808, but there was no documented insurgent activity in this dataset anywhere along the northwest frontier.

examine both measures of Jesuit influence simultaneously. We report both heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors and standard errors that allow for spatial correlation of districts within 250 km.

Looking first at Jesuit estates, the coefficient estimates are generally positive, indicating that these areas experienced somewhat more insurgent activity during the conflict than other areas. However, the estimates are not statistically significant at conventional levels when incorporating the control variables or conditioning on the presence of Jesuit schools, which were often located nearby Tutino (e.g., 2021). The sign of the estimate also flips when using the saturated model with both controls and the schools measure in column 6.[10]

There is stronger evidence of a positive relationship between the number of insurgent groups and the presence of Jesuit schools. These coefficient estimates are positive, larger in magnitude, and statistically significant at conventional levels in all specifications. The estimates indicate that districts containing a Jesuit school as of 1767 saw on average 3–4 more insurgent groups during the conflict as compared to others. This magnitude is stable across specifications, corresponding to about three-quarters to a full standard deviation of the outcome variable.[11]

This cross-sectional evidence is broadly consistent with historical work on Mexico's War of Independence. Elite divisions and grievances – including the lingering legacies of the Jesuit expulsion – shaped the elite's willingness to support the Crown and suppress the insurgency. These fractures, in turn, influenced commoners' incentives to join the rebellion, driving the conflict's spread across the territory among Indigenous and mestizo communities (Tutino 1988; 2011; Garfias and Sellars 2022). As the qualitative literature also emphasizes, the connection between popular grievances over the Jesuit expulsion and insurgency was complicated, which might explain the null

[10] In Appendix Figure A.3, we plot the incidence of revolts around the onset of the Hidalgo Revolt, distinguishing between districts with and without pre-1767 Jesuit estates. Unsurprisingly, unrest increases overall after 1810. Moreover, this increase is somewhat larger in districts that previously held Jesuit-controlled estates.

[11] In Appendix Table A.3 we examine an alternative outcome, a binary indicator for whether any insurgent activity took place in the district. The results generally align with those in Table 2, with all but one estimate being positive, though the coefficients on Jesuit schools are not statistically significant. In Appendix Table A.2, we present estimates restricting attention to the districts for which we have data on localized uprisings (see Section 5.2). These estimates are positive and of a similar magnitude but have much larger standard errors given the small number of observations and are generally not statistically significant.

finding on Jesuit estates. The expulsion had an important effect on the political consciousness of non-elites and Indigenous groups as well, particularly through its impact on the Mexican church and popular Catholicism (Knight 2002, p. 268–269). However, there is less documentary evidence on how these factors contributed commoner participation in the insurgency, if at all.

One reason for this may be that less documentation exists on the motivations of commoners and Indigenous groups relative to the elite political leadership. Another might be that variation in commoner participation in the conflict is better explained by localized concerns or factors rather than national-level trends (e.g., Taylor 1988; Tutino 1988; Garfias and Sellars 2022). As we discuss earlier, the upheaval triggered by the expulsion in 1767 often provided an opportunity for commoners to mobilize over other, unrelated causes. As Tutino (2011) argues, even in places where rioters explicitly cited the treatment of Jesuits in mobilization, such as in San Luis de la Paz, the appropriation of this cause can be seen as a strategic attempt to bring elites on board with popular appeals over other matters (p. 247). While uncertainty surrounding the impending expropriation of Jesuit estates provided a structural opening for popular rebellion in 1767, it less clear that the much-earlier seizure of Jesuit properties would have a similar effect in 1810 given that many of these estates simply continued to operate under new ownership.

There are also reasons to believe any impact of the Jesuit expulsion on popular participation in the insurgency may not be captured by the cross-sectional evidence on the earlier presence of Jesuit estates. There are clear symbolic continuities between the post-1767 wave of uprisings across the Bajío and the Hidalgo revolt of 1810, for example, which originated in the same region (Tutino 1988; 2011). The expulsion also had important indirect effects on peasant mobilization through the stress that it placed on colonial institutions elsewhere. Tutino (1988), for example, cites the example of guerrilla conflict in the Sierra Gorda during and after the War of Independence. While there was little, if any, direct Jesuit presence in this region, local Franciscan missionaries (famously including Junipero Serra) were dispatched to the northwest frontier to fill the power vacuum left by the Jesuit expulsion, which then left the Crown ill-equipped to address later conflicts in the areas

that missionaries had vacated (p. 198–9). Other work has shown how the Crown's broader efforts to secularize missions and parishes – affecting not just the Jesuits but the other regular orders as well – contributed to undermining the legitimacy of colonial rule in regions like Chapala, Jalisco, creating fertile ground for later insurgent activity (Taylor 1988, p. 234).

Taken as a whole, the evidence in this section suggests an interesting and multifaceted connection between the Jesuit expulsion and the outbreak of the War of Independence. There was more insurgent activity in areas where Jesuit schools had been operational prior to 1767, and considerable qualitative evidence ties the Jesuit expulsion to patterns of mobilization and participation in the later crisis. The Jesuit expulsion – which had promised to bolster the political and economic control of the Crown at the expense of intermediaries – thus contributed to the collapse of Spanish rule.

6. Conclusion

This paper has examined the causes and consequences of the expulsion of the Jesuit order from New Spain in 1767. The Jesuits had been important allies and intermediaries of the Spanish Crown in the consolidation of colonial rule, but they also represented a threat to state power. As religious authorities, the Jesuits could claim legitimacy from a higher power than the king himself. They also controlled considerable resources and commanded a great deal of respect across different segments of colonial society as a function of their roles as educators, missionaries, and employers. The same characteristics that had made the Jesuits uniquely useful partners to the Crown eventually made them uniquely threatening to imperial interests.

Through the 1767 expulsion, the Crown solved some problems for itself while creating others. Any direct threat of Jesuit subversion disappeared virtually overnight as Jesuit missionaries, scholars, clergy, and estate operators were sent into exile. The seizure of Jesuits' assets eventually provided a financial windfall for the Crown, albeit a smaller one than had been imagined in anticipation. Long-running conflicts between Jesuit clergy and the Crown over taxation, political jurisdiction, and religious authority were rendered moot, providing an opportunity to extend state authority into new regions and issue areas. The successful implementation of the expulsion order and the Crown's

swift suppression of the brief unrest that followed signaled the state's resolve and may have helped deter resistance to the next wave of Bourbon reforms.

At the same time, the sudden expulsion represented a costly and risky political strategy. By expelling their erstwhile intermediaries, the Crown was forced to pick up the direct and indirect costs of educating elites, providing social services, and pacifying conflict, and they were not always well-equipped to handle these duties. The political upheaval of the expulsion further created an opening for a damaging, if short-lived, wave of social unrest. Even as the immediate crisis was contained, over the longer term, the popular and elite grievances over the expulsion would contribute to the outbreak of the War of Independence and the eventual collapse of Spanish rule. Though Spanish authorities had long feared the Jesuits' foreign influence, the colonial state was eventually defeated from within.

The centuries-long evolution of Jesuit influence in New Spain illustrates a general lesson about the benefits and costs of institutional partnerships between the state and religious intermediaries. By formally aligning with religious authorities and institutions as intermediaries, political rulers can borrow the ready-made legitimacy and resources associated with religion to extend the state's power. At the same time, there is an underlying "institutional incoherence" in these arrangements (Faguet TBD). When religious intermediaries later come into conflict with the state, they become especially dangerous opponents, not only because of their independent legitimacy or resources, but because of the new and deeper connections with society forged as a result of their work as intermediaries. This tension makes it difficult to roll back institutional dependence on religious intermediaries once established, limiting the autonomy of the state to extend its control without risking a larger rupture.

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