

THE POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE JESUIT EXPULSION FROM NEW SPAIN

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RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY AND THE STATE

Religious actors & institutions as intermediaries between state and society

- Resources, legitimacy, physical presence
- Schools, churches, community programs, social organization

But: pose a threat to those in power

- Independent source of authority & legitimacy
- Material and social influence allows dissent to multiply

Efforts to curtail influence of religious authority can generate unanticipated consequences

- Indirect as well as direct consequences

EXAMPLE: THE SOCIETY OF JESUS

The Jesuit order of the Catholic Church

- Founded in 16th century during counter-reformation

History of state cooperation & subversion

- Schools, missions, social programs
- Political advocacy, contentious politics, conspiracy theories

History of state repression and expulsion

- e.g., El Salvador 1980s, Nicaragua 2023, **Spanish Empire 1767**



Nicaraguan government bans Jesuit order and says all its property will be confiscated



THIS PAPER

Examine the political consequences of the Jesuit expulsion of 1767 in New Spain

- Imperial finances, social unrest, & political authority
- Near and longer-term impact

Mixed blessing (at best) for the Crown

- Short-term: revenue boost, increase in apparent political power
- Longer-term: alienation of commoners & elites, contribution to collapse of the Spanish Empire



Templo de la Compañía, Guanajuato

THE JESUITS IN NEW SPAIN

Ecclesiastical institutions central to the functioning of the Empire

- Catholicism central to political legitimacy/ideology of colonial rule
- Secular (diocesan) and regular (religious orders) religious establishment

Jesuits as emerging partners of the Crown

- Arrive to New Spain in 1572
- Carve out spheres of geographic and substantive influence



Templo y Colegio Máximo de San Pedro y San Pablo, Mexico City

CHANNELS OF JESUIT INFLUENCE

Schools & education

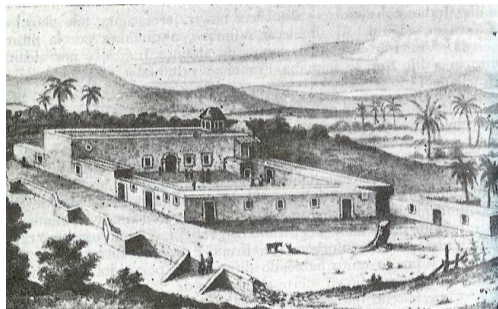
- Network of *colegios*, independent schools
- Provider of education to creole elite

Missions & frontier governance

- Management of missions (frontier & interior)
- Dominant colonial presence in NW frontier

Landholders & estate managers

- Acquire huge swaths of property & wealth
- Famous for estate management



Nuestra Señora de Loreto Conchó
Mission, Baja California

BENEFITS & COSTS OF JESUIT MEDIATION

Critical partners of the Crown

- Generate resources, help maintain order, provide legitimacy to state activities
- Granted special status (e.g., non-taxation) as a function of their role

Periodic conflicts over taxation, jurisdiction, political hierarchy

- Do the Jesuits answer to the Crown? Should Jesuit properties be subject to taxation?
How long should missions remain outside state control?

Attempts to curtail Jesuit autonomy & influence often unsuccessful

- Intervention of Pope, religious superiors
- Jesuits leverage threat of internal unrest/resistance (e.g., in 1624 riots)

THE EXPULSION OF 1767

Charles III announces immediate, complete expulsion of Jesuits from the Empire

- Follows wave of unrest in Madrid and earlier expulsions in Portugal/France

Implemented across New Spain

- Jesuit clergy/missionaries sent into exile
- Jesuit properties expropriated
- Jesuit missions disbanded/secularized

Officials anticipated resistance but saw benefits

- (Temporary?) increase in social conflict
- Benefit of increased resources/authority



Expulsion of the Jesuits, 1767

EXAMINE IMPACTS OF THE EXPULSION

- 1** On imperial finances
 - Windfall from expropriation, revenues from production
- 2** On social unrest
 - Backlash to expulsion & after
- 3** On political authority (short- and longer-term)

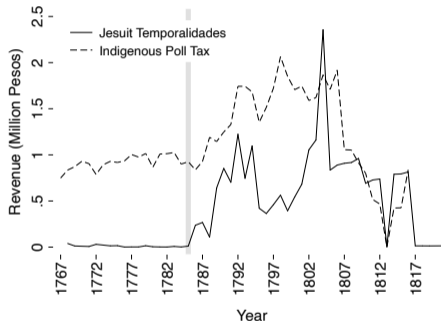
IMPACT 1: IMPERIAL FINANCES

Jesuit landholdings & assets expropriated

- Creation of new bureaucracy to manage assets & take over responsibilities (e.g., schooling)

Sizable windfall, but slow to materialize & lower than anticipated

- Conspiracy theories overstated value
- Sizable expenses of the expulsion
- By 1790, accounts for 1.4% of total revenue in treasury
- Caveat: Trickiness with accounting (see paper)



Revenue from Jesuit properties

IMPACT 2: SOCIAL UNREST

Followed by wave of revolts in north-central Mexico/Bajío

- Spurred by the expulsion (& other factors)

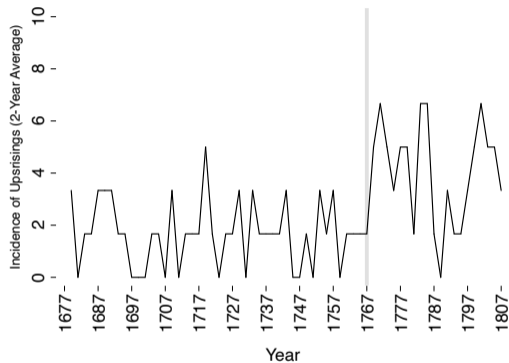
Challenge: lots of reforms/preceding wave of unrest

- Compare areas with/without Jesuit haciendas
- Areas with Jesuit presence should be more likely to revolt

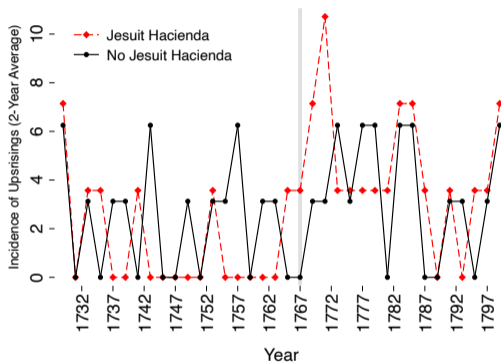
Difference-in-differences strategy:

- Use data on Jesuit hacienda presence (de Fonseca and de Urrutia 1853, also used in treasury analysis)
- Long-term time series on rebellion in 30 districts from 1680–1821 (Taylor 1979)

UPRISINGS IN CENTRAL MEXICO, 1680–1821



(a) Village Uprisings



(b) By Jesuit hacienda

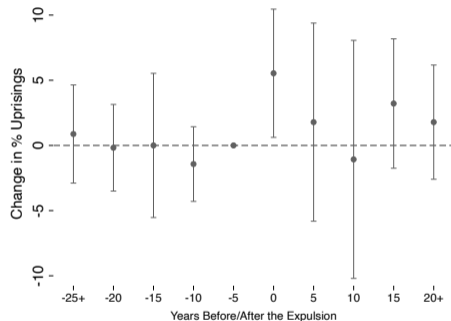
DIFFERENCE-IN-DIFFERENCES EVIDENCE

Jesuit districts see a notable rise in revolt after the expulsion

- Increase of 3 pp in probability of rebellion
- Event-study lends credibility to the parallel trends assumption

Expulsion contributed to unrest

- But: might this have been worth it?
- Unrest put down quickly & brutally, more ambitious reforms implemented



Event-study estimates

IMPACT 3: POLITICAL AUTHORITY

Elimination of Jesuits as political rivals
brings some advantages

- Seizure of assets, removal of authority

But the impacts mixed

- Clear increase in state power in center
- Limited success in “conquest” of the northwest
- Longer-term tensions proved costly...



José de Gálvez

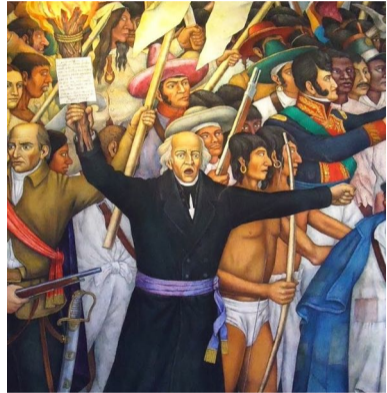
IMPACT 4: WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

Jesuit expulsion contributed to tensions with creole elite

- Loss of their teachers/clergy/investment
- Impact of Jesuit writings in exile

Examine the role of the expulsion in the War of Independence

- Compare insurgent activity in areas with/without Jesuit presence
- Data on insurgent activity (Ortiz Escamilla 2014), Jesuit colegios (Osorio Romero 1979), and Jesuit haciendas (de Fonseca and de Urrutia 1853)



Retablo de la Independencia

JESUIT EXPULSION & INSURGENCY

	Number of Insurgent Events, 1810–1821					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Jesuit Estate by 1767	1.378* (0.761) {1.015}	0.639 (0.769) {0.860}			0.806 (0.501) {0.536}	-0.099 (0.599) {0.429}
Jesuit School by 1767			3.382* (1.939) {2.252}	3.967** (1.920) {2.064}	3.028* (1.814) {2.042}	4.005** (1.871) {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	195.000	178.000	195.000	178.000	195.000	178.000

OLS estimations. The unit of analysis is the district. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Spatial standard errors in curly brackets.

CONCLUSIONS

Expulsion of the Jesuits solved some problems for the Crown while creating others

- Eliminated political/social/economic rivals
- Sent a signal that unrest would not be tolerated
- But lost the benefits of Jesuit mediation & generated persistent tensions with the creole elite

In the end, the indirect consequences the hardest to overcome

- Jesuits went willingly, assets seized successfully
- But the Crown could not effectively supplant Jesuit institutions & lost the longer-term political support of key social groups

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