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Elite and Cadres in Bourbon Chile

JACQUES A. BARBIER*

IN RECENT YEARS historians have begun to question the traditional belief that colonial Latin American government was autocratic and centralized. In the process of this reevaluation features such as corruption, which had previously been treated as weaknesses of the political system, have come to be regarded as hidden strengths. Today theoretical articles emphasize that the "corruption" of the administration provided the local population with an opportunity for political influence. Colonial officials are presented, therefore, as having been responsive to local pressures, and having enjoyed considerable autonomy from central authorities.¹ Such arguments conclude that corruption was a safety valve for the empires. The creole who surreptitiously wielded influence, it is argued, was not likely to demand formal control of the government.

These theoretical discussions have been confirmed by regional studies. The predominant tendency has been to argue that the roots of corruption were to be found in an informal structure of primary interpersonal relations established between members of the elite and royal officials. While the formal structure of government placed the Indies in a classic colonial position by forcing administrators to be loyal to outside authorities, "the informal structure allowed colonial interest groups to treat magistrates as simply another source of power subject to alliance and cooptation."²

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1. For examples of this type of work see John L. Phelan, "Authority and Flexibility in the Spanish Imperial Bureaucracy" *Administrative Sciences Quarterly*, 5 (June 1960), 47-65; Frank Jay Moreno, "The Spanish Colonial System: a Functional Approach," *Western Political Quarterly*, 20 (June 1967), 308-320; Magali Sarfatti, *Spanish Bureaucratic-Patrimonialism in America* (Berkeley, 1966); S. N. Eisenstadt, *The Political Systems of Empire* (New York, 1963), pp. 222-272. Phelan has produced a significant modification of this last theoretical work in his book *The Kingdom of Quito in the Seventeenth Century* (Madison, 1967), pp. 320-337.

2. Stuart B. Schwartz, "Magistracy and Society in Colonial Brazil," *HAHR*, 50:4 (November 1970), 729-730. For other works demonstrating the existence of these colonial establishments see Phelan's *Kingdom of Quito*; Leon G. Campbell, "A Colonial Establishment: Creole Domination of the Audiencia of Lima in

This situation, in which the administrative cadres were related in so many ways to the local elite that they could not provide impartial administration, is presumed by many authorities to have come to an end because of the reforms of Charles III and Pombal. One recent writer on the period, for example, describes the Bourbon dynasty as carrying out a revolution in government that destroyed "that small colonial establishment which had hitherto governed . . ."³

We cannot know if such a result was characteristic. With few exceptions political histories do not exist for the colonial period. We know a great deal about laws and institutions but next to nothing of the petty, often sordid, intergroup struggles that determined who was truly in command in each of the colonies. Lacking such basic work regional differences in political patterns cannot be known. Yet it is precisely such knowledge which is needed to evaluate the impact of the Bourbon reforms. An examination of their impact on elite influence in various areas is particularly vital because of the recent tendency to see such influence as the preserver of the empire.

There is reason to believe that the results of such an examination would vary from one region of the Indies to another.⁴ Indeed, if the general effect of the Bourbon reforms was to force the creole elite permanently out of positions of political power, if they prevented it from creating primary interpersonal relations between itself and the administrative cadres, then the Chilean case was aberrant in the extreme. An examination of marital patterns demonstrates that in Chile the period of Bourbon reforms was characterized by an increasingly high degree of interrelation between the elite and the administrative

the Late Eighteenth Century," *HAHR*, 52:1 (February 1972) 1-25; and D. A. Brading, *Miners and Merchants in Bourbon Mexico* (New York, 1971).

3. Brading, *Miners and Merchants*, pp. 34-35.

4. The evidence on this matter is somewhat contradictory. Brading argues for a destruction of the colonial establishment in Mexico. J. R. Fisher in *Government and Society in Colonial Peru: the Intendant System, 1784-1814* (London, 1970) and "The Intendant System and the Cabildos of Peru, 1784-1810," *HAHR*, 49:3 (August 1969), 430-453, finds the creoles took advantage of the increased power of the cabildos. Ralph Lee Woodward Jr. in his article "Economic and Social Origins of the Guatemalan Political Parties," *HAHR*, 45:3 (August 1965), 544-566, sees struggle for power between creole groups continuing within the context of the new institutions. In Guatemala reform may have only provided the local elite with new political vehicles. Mark A. Burkholder in an article on Peru "From Creole to Peninsular: the Transformation of the Audiencia of Lima," in this issue of *HAHR*, concludes that the creoles lost one of their chief bastions of power due to the reforms. The present article is drawn from a larger work, made possible by a grant from the Doherty Fellowship Committee, which concludes that the reforms created new modes of political expression without significantly curbing creole influence in Chile.

cadres. At the same time, far from being forced out of office-holding, the elite benefited from the opportunities created by the phenomenal extension of the bureaucracy during this period, and came to value government posts and relations with officials more than ever before.⁵

No evaluation of the elite's ties or influence can be attempted without a clear idea of who belonged to it. For colonial Chile this is difficult to determine because a scholarly social history of the group remains to be written.⁶ Although it would be difficult to make up a complete list of all elite families, there are a few who have long been recognized as belonging to the group. These are families whose heads held a title of nobility (*título de Castilla*) or an entailed estate (*mayorazgo*).⁷ The purchase of a title of nobility by the head of a family, or the establishment of an entail, is strong evidence of a lineage's high social status. A title was a particularly heavy expense, one that could not be borne save by the very rich. For a man who did not have impeccable credentials the price rose steeply, so that only the very wealthy, very noble, or very well connected could aspire to purchase one. An entail, on the other hand, was designed to safeguard for the head of a family the property on which ultimately the status of the lineage depended. Often established in prejudice of the material interests of most of the children of the founder, an entail can be taken as a demonstration that the status of the family was sufficiently high to warrant the sacrifice.⁸ In short, an individual responsible for securing a

5. For the increase in the Chilean bureaucracy during the reform period see Fernando Silva Vargas, "La visita de Areche en Chile y la subdelegación del regente Álvarez de Acevedo," *Historia* (Santiago), 6 (1967), 153-191.

6. The most famous work on the Chilean elite is that of Alberto Edwards, *La fronda aristocrática* (Santiago, 1928), which is more journalistic than historical. It speaks of the eighteenth century as a period during which the old families of *conquistadores* and *encomenderos* were replaced and absorbed by new families of merchants and entrepreneurs. Unfortunately, insightful as it is, the work of Edwards does not provide a formula by which one can decide who belonged to this bourgeois aristocracy.

7. The importance of titles and entails to the elite of Santiago was pointed out by Domingo Amunátegui Solar in his work *La sociedad chilena del siglo xviii: mayorazgos i títulos de Castilla* (3 vols.; Santiago, 1901-1904), I, xii-xxi. In other areas of the Indies different criteria of elite membership might have to be adopted.

8. Entails were founded by giving in usufruct to one heir property representing the *tercio* and *quinto* of the estates of the founders. The individual enjoying this special status was normally the first-born son. While such a division of property could result even without the creation of an entail if one of the heirs were given a *mejora* of the above portions, the injustice of the division of property was often accentuated if an entail was formed. Often the founder forced other children into entering regular orders and renouncing their portion so that the entail might be larger. The effects were particularly baneful for the grandchildren of the founder.

TABLE I. CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF TITLES, ENTAILS, AND MAJOR VÍNCULOS IN SANTIAGO SOCIETY WITH FAMILY NAMES OF HOLDERS

Date	Creation	Family
1684	M. de la Pica	Irarrázaval
1685	C. de Sierra Bella	Mesa
1693	Torres entail	Mesa
1702	M. de la Cañada Hermosa	Marín de Poveda, Ruiz de Azúa
1703	Cerda entail	Cerda
1728	Irarrázaval entail	Irarrázaval
1728	M. de Villapalma	Calvo de Encalada
1736	Larraín entail	Larraín
1744	Aguirre entail	Aguirre
1748	Azúa entail	Ruiz de Azúa
1752	Toro Mazote entail	Caldera
1755	M. de Montepío	Aguirre
1755	M. de Casa Real	García Huidobro
1756	García Huidobro entail	García Huidobro
1763	C. de Quinta Alegre	Alcalde
1763	Valdés entail	Valdés
1768	Lecaros entail	Lecaros, Larraín
1770	C. de la Conquista	Toro Zambrano
1778	Balmaceda entail	Fernández de Balmaceda
1779	Rojas entail	Rojas
1780	Larraín y Rojas entail	Rojas de Larraín, Larraín
1783	Ruiz Tagle entail	Ruiz Tagle
1785	Prado entail	Prado
1887	M. de Larraín	Larraín
1789	Toro Zambrano entail	Toro Zambrano
1789	Aguila y Rojas entail	Herrera
1791	Alcalde <i>vínculo</i>	Alcalde

title or entail for his family was classifying it as belonging in the highest social stratum.

This study is restricted to the central administration of Chile, therefore this discussion limits itself to considering those titles and entails which were created or secured by individuals who had a close connection to the city of Santiago, and who founded families which became established there. In all there were 27 creations, making up 18 distinct combinations.⁹

These titles and entails came into existence between 1684 and 1791. However, they were not evenly distributed over the entire period. Around 1755 there is a definite increase in the tempo of creations. In

9. The information in Table I is from Amunátegui Solar, *La sociedad chilena*. Following the practice of that author I treat the Alcalde *vínculo* as a *mayorazgo* because of its large size and disregard others of that class on the grounds that they were neither entails in law nor large enough to have the same social result as an entail. Titles which did not become established in the Santiago area are not included in this treatment nor are titles and entails that were established after 1796. Family names given in Table I are only for the holders in the period between 1755 and 1796.

fact the frequency of foundations after 1755 is twice that of the period preceding that date. The year 1755 is important in the social history of Chile because it marks the start of a period of inflation of honors. For titles this is quite clear. They cluster in the period after that date because it was only after 1755 that the crown allowed Chileans to buy them on advantageous terms.¹⁰ For entails the phenomenon is not so clear. There are two separate clusters of entail foundations, one of four in the period between 1744 and 1756, and another of eight between 1778 and 1791. The other six creations were widely scattered. Although entails seem to become more frequent after 1744, an examination of the matter in detail reveals the primacy of the date 1755.

The Aguirre entail, founded in 1744, came eight years after the foundation of the Larraín entail in 1736, and that in turn came eight years after the foundation of the Irarrázaval entail in 1728. The speed-up in foundations after 1744 is an illusion. The Toro Mazote entail, created in 1752, came only as a belated enforcement of the will of Andrés de Toro Mazote y Cifuentes, who died in 1706.¹¹ The creation of the Azúa entail again is not really new, since it was meant to benefit the future heirs of the Marquesado de la Cañada Hermosa. These were clearly already members of the elite. Lastly, the 1756 creation of the García Huidobro entail resulted from the acquisition of the title of Marqués de Casa Real by the head of that family in 1755. It was meant only to enable future heirs of the title to maintain themselves in dignity, and thus did not involve the entry of a new family into the elite. If only truly new creations ordered during this period are considered, there is a gap of eleven years between the distinctions secured by the Aguirre and García Huidobro families.

If we consider the creations between 1755 and 1770, on the other hand, we see a clear pattern of new families reaching distinction. Of the seven titles and entails created in this period, only one was a mere addition to the distinctions held by a family that already belonged to the elite. Considering the period between 1778 and 1791, out of nine creations only one, a title, was secured to distinguish further a family whose entail predated 1755. Another two entails were created to bolster the status of families acquiring titles in the 1755 to 1770 period. The remaining six were genuinely new.

10. As a financial expedient to aid in the creation of new towns, crown officials sent a set of blank *títulos de Castilla* to the presidency of Chile. Although some had been dispatched to Chile previously, it was only in 1755 that some of these were sold in the country itself. See Diego Barros Arana, *Historia jeneral de Chile* (16 vols.; Santiago, 1884-1902), VI, 198-199.

11. Amunátegui Solar, *La sociedad chilena*, I, 183-217.

In short, titles and entails became more frequent after 1755. The families belonging to the Chilean elite can therefore be divided into two groups: the old elite, which achieved these distinctions before a trend to secure them set in, and the new elite, which did so afterwards.

Looking at the men who were responsible for securing these distinctions for their families, it is clear that the two groups had different origins. The first title created for a resident of Chile, that of Marqués de la Pica, was given to a direct descendant of a President of the Audiencia of Chile, Melchor Bravo de Saravia. The first Marqués de la Pica had succeeded to family entails and *señoríos* in Spain, and held an *encomienda* and vast estates in Chile. He served for several years in military posts (rising to *sargento mayor general* and *maestre de campo general*), and married one of his daughters to a Chilean President, Francisco de Meneses. These official connections recur in many other of the first group of creations. The Irrázaval entail was founded by the head of a family whose senior branch in Spain had risen to the grandeanship through military service. Founded by a companion of Ercilla, this was one of the more distinguished families in the country. More directly connected with royal service were the titles of Conde de Sierra Bella, granted to a President of Charcas, Marqués de la Cañada Hermosa, granted to a President of Chile, and the entail of Azúa, founded by an Archbishop of Bogotá to benefit his brother, a member of the Audiencia of Chile.¹²

Other founders of old elite lineages, while they engaged in trade, enjoyed official connections like those mentioned above. The entail tied to the title of Sierra Bella, for instance, was founded by a merchant who held the post of treasurer of the *Santa Cruzada*. His political influence served to increase and preserve his wealth. The same proved true in the case of Diego de Encalada y Orozco, first Marqués de Villapalma, who although he engaged in trade also secured two Peruvian *corregimientos* and the command of the Chilean cavalry. The cases of the entails founded for the Larraín and Aguirre families show similar characteristics. That of Larraín was founded by a Spanish merchant who bought the post of President of Quito, while the Aguirre entail was the creation of a merchant who was the administrator of the Chilean tobacco monopoly.¹³

It is striking that out of the creations and foundations made before

12. *Ibid.*, I, 18-34, 130-155, 183-217, 231-329, 343-360; III, 153-180. The Cerda entail was founded by a lawyer who did not hold a permanent post in the administration. He was active in politics, however. The Toro Mazote entail was founded by a member of a family of first settlers.

13. *Ibid.*, I, 1-58, 289-433; II, 1-22; III, 343-378.

1755, three were by presidents of audiencias and four by other high officials. A total of nine out of eleven had administrative antecedents. Of the eleven, at least five engaged in commerce, including two of the presidents of audiencias, and only three could trace their ancestry in Chile back to the sixteenth century. In short, they were relatively new men, connected to official circles, and often characterized by an interest in trade. This surely indicates that the process of replenishment of the Chilean elite was a long established one.

Looking at the creations and foundations made after 1755 (and ignoring those that served only to adorn already existing ones), one finds a different situation. Of the eleven individuals responsible for them, seven were merchants, one was a priest, another the daughter of a merchant, yet another a landowner belonging to a family long established in Chile, and the last a Spanish-born *oidor*. Except for the *oidor*, the only one of these subjects who held royal office was Francisco García Huidobro, first Marqués de Casa Real, who was allowed to establish the royal mint of Santiago as a private speculation and consequently held the title of Treasurer of the establishment.¹⁴ Of the ten families involved, five were recently arrived from Spain, two recently arrived from Peru, two descended from obscure soldiers who reached Chile around 1600, and one descended from a treasury official who arrived at about the same time.¹⁵

There is a definite tendency for this later group to come from more obscure stock and to engage in trade in a more prominent way. More to the point, however, the founders of these titles and entails lacked the high level of political involvement of the earlier group. The founders of titles and entails before 1755 were either administrators who became local notables, or merchants who became administrators and then local notables in turn. Only two out of eleven are exceptions to this pattern. In the foundations and creations made after 1755, only two out of eleven follow the same route. It might seem therefore that this method of rising into high colonial society lost importance during the course of the eighteenth century. Since the entry of administrators into the elite is part of a pattern of interdependence which made crown officials sensitive to colonial desires, it might appear that at least this part of the structure of informal control broke down during the period.

An analysis of the marital patterns of both old and new aristocrats puts this development in proper relief. In this analysis, the only individuals considered are those who received titles or founded entails, their

14. *Ibid.*, II, 72-116.

15. *Ibid.*, I, 379-401, 432-437; II, 72-129, 187-210, 243-259, 279-296, 309-344, 373-389, 405-414; III, 7-49, 273-285.

brothers and sisters, their heirs and heirs apparent, and the brothers and sisters of these successors. All collateral branches have been disregarded on the grounds that they may have suffered an erosion of status because of their genealogical distance from the head of the family. In all, there were 182 people falling within these categories and known to have married before 1808. They entered into a total of 201 marriages which (excluding duplications due to in-group marriages) involved a total of 347 separate individuals.¹⁶

These 347 people are not a sample. They are the total number of those appearing in genealogies who meet the qualifications set. As such, they constitute a population and therefore can be treated statistically, although our interest, of course, is less with quantitative than with qualitative factors. Of particular interest are the types of marriages the members of the group entered into. The overall pattern of marriages is in keeping with the background of the old elite. Out of 201 marriages, 22% took place within the elite, 8% with members of families whose titled head lived outside of Chile, and 27% with royal officials and their relatives. A clear majority of the marriages, 115 out of 201, were either within the status group or into official circles.¹⁷

Breaking down the figures further, there seems to have been a growing cohesion over the years between the older and newer group of aristocrats. Thus, while before 1755 the old elite chose mates from the new elite only 3% of the time, after 1755 they did so 12% of the time.

A more serious indication of this change is the growing similarity between the marital patterns. Before 1755 18% of the marriages of the

16. The data on which all of the following statistical work is based is taken from genealogies. The work of Amunátegui Solar was taken as the base for determining entail founders, holders, and their relations in the first degree. Modifications and additions to the resulting list have been made from the truly superior genealogy of Juan Luis Espejo, *Nobiliario de la antigua capitania general de Chile* (Santiago, 1967). The work was first published in two volumes in 1917 and was based in part on private collections which are no longer in existence. Chile is endowed with a rich genealogical literature, one far too voluminous to cite extensively. When other sources were lacking I consulted the not always reliable works of Enrique Torres Saldamando, *Los títulos de Castilla en las familias de Chile* (Santiago, 1894), and Luis de Roa y Urzúa, *El reino de Chile* (Valladolid, 1945), as well as the masterful one of Guillermo Lohmann Villena, *Los americanos en las órdenes nobiliarias* (Madrid, 1947). I also looked at family histories to confirm the information found in these works of collective genealogy. While other Chilean collective genealogies were consulted they did not prove useful either because of notorious weaknesses, because the information in them was not in my time period, or simply because they were redundant.

17. Appendix I. Included in all the computations for the tables and appendices were the marriages of the founders and holders of entails and titles and their relatives within the first degree.

TABLE II. MARITAL PATTERNS OF THE CHILEAN ELITE BEFORE 1808^a

Period	To Old Elite	To New Elite	To Officials	To "First Family"	To Other Titled	To Others
Before 1755	13.5%	10.4%	14.5%	20.8%	9.4%	31.5%
After 1755	5.7%	15.2%	33.2%	4.8%	6.7%	29.5%
Both Periods	9.5%	12.9%	20.9%	12.2%	8.0%	30.3%

^aBecause the figures are averaged to the nearest tenth of one percent in this and succeeding tables their sum is not always 100%.

TABLE III. MARITAL PATTERNS OF THE CHILEAN ELITE BEFORE 1755

Group	To Old Elite	To New Elite	To Officials	To "First Family"	To Other Titled	To Others
Old Elite	17.9%	3.0%	19.4%	20.9%	13.5%	25.4%
New Elite	3.4%	27.6%	3.4%	20.7%	0.0%	44.8%

old elite took place within the group, 14% with families whose titled heads resided outside of Chile, 21% into families of Chilean conquistadores and first settlers (here termed "first families"), and 19% with families of officials. They married with the new elite only 3% of the time and with others 25% of the time. Of the new elite marriages during the same period, 28% took place within the group, 3% with officials and relatives of officials, 21% within "first families," only 3% to old elite families, and 45% with others. Whereas the older group tended to secure government officials and their relatives as marital partners before 1755, the newer group did not. The newer group chose partners with no inheritable status 45% of the time, as opposed to only 25% in the older group. Further, the two groups did not tend to marry into each other. Clearly they were separate social groups before this date.

After 1755 these differences tended to disappear. While from that date the old elite no longer chose mates from within itself, 12% came from the newer group, 5% from families whose titled head resided outside of Chile, 5% from "first families," no less than 49% from officials and their relatives, and 29% from other families. After 1755 the new elite married 9% of the time with the older group, 17% with itself, 8% into families whose titled head resided abroad, 5% with members of "first families," 31% with officials and their relatives, and 30% with others.¹⁸

18. Appendix II.

TABLE IV. MARITAL PATTERNS OF THE CHILEAN ELITE AFTER 1755

Group	To Old Elite	To New Elite	To Officials	To "First Family"	To Other Titled	To Others
Old Elite	0.0%	12.2%	48.8%	4.9%	4.8%	29.3%
New Elite	9.4%	17.2%	31.3%	4.7%	7.9%	29.7%

Before 1755 the two groups of aristocrats had different marital patterns. This ceased to be the case thereafter. Indeed, during the last part of the eighteenth century they shared a common pattern characterized by clannishness and a high rate of intermarriage with the families of members of the bureaucracy. This development signals the entry of the new group into the true elite of the province. It married into the old line families and adopted their criteria as to what were desirable marriages, even as previously it had imitated old elite behavior by buying land, founding entails, and seeking titles. Significantly, as it rose the new elite began to seek marital relations with administrative personnel, and neglected marital opportunities with wealthy, newly established merchants.¹⁹ So pronounced was the tendency to restrict marriages to the few families in the elite and those of equivalent status, or to officials and their relatives, that in the post-1755 period such marriages accounted for 66% of all those entered into by the group. Officials and their relatives by themselves were chosen 38% of the time.²⁰ Before 1755 officials and relatives had made up only 19% of the marital partners of the old elite and less than 15% of the mates of both groups.²¹

In short, far from decreasing, marital ties between the elite and officials increased during the years of the Bourbon reforms. With this increase there was a concomitant rise in the opportunities for an official to be swayed in his actions by the interests of his relations. The ironic aspect of the situation is that it came about in large part because of the reform effort itself. Many new posts were created in Chile during the late eighteenth century, and a goodly number of the new officials married locally. Such families as Cerda, Azúa, and Toro married their daughters to men holding posts which would not have existed but for the administrative reforms.²²

19. Juan Ricardo Couyoumdjian, "Los magnatos chilenos del siglo xviii," *Revista Chilena de Historia y Geografía*, no. 136 (1968), 315-322.

20. Appendix I.

21. Appendix II.

22. A daughter of the *mayorazgo* Cerda married Ramón del Pedregal, who was *administrador general* of the Santiago customs house. Rita Azúa profited directly

Even the enforcement by José de Gálvez of the regulation prohibiting *oidores* to marry within the area of their jurisdiction served to create opportunities for the elite. The Marqués de Villapalma by himself married no less than four of his daughters to members of the Audiencia of Chile. This could only take place because of the policy of transferring such men after their marriage, for otherwise so many men would not have held office in Santiago. Of course an anticipated marriage could have as much influence on a *fiscal* or *oidor* as a consummated one, and in view of the large dowries involved (which did not change hands until after the marriage), perhaps more. The vendetta of two of the future sons-in-law of the Marqués with the corregidor Zañartu of Santiago, a man despised by the creoles, is very suggestive.²³ The policy of transfer was implemented for Chile only during the *visitas* of Areche and Escobedo. By 1787 *oidor* Urriola was arranging to marry a niece of the Marquesa de Montepío, and Urriola was not transferred.²⁴ It is doubtful that implementation of the old prohibition or its abandonment changed very much.

Clearly ties with the administration remained much desired by the elite of Chile during the late eighteenth century. The reforms did not effectively prevent marital ties from being consummated. Another example of the aristocracy's covetousness of official connections comes with the incidences of outright entry of members of the elite into royal service. Although kept very busy by his business interests, the Conde de la Conquista held for a time the post of Superintendent of the Santiago mint. Others who entered the administration were the third Conde de Quinta Alegre, who made a career in the same bureau; the Marqués de Montepío, who ran the tobacco monopoly; the Conde de Sierra Bella, who became an *oidor* of Lima; and the Marqués de Casa

from the *visita* by marrying its *contador* in Chile, Pedro Dionisio Gálvez. This individual later rose to the post of *contador decano* of the *Tribunal Mayor de Cuentas* of Peru (see Amunátegui Solar, *La sociedad chilena*, III, 188). The Conde de la Conquista married all of his daughters to royal servants. Mariana de Toro married first José Antonio de Armaza, inspector in the customs house of Santiago, and second Marcos Alonso de Camero, director of the tobacco monopoly; María Inés married a line military officer as did her sister María Josefa; and María Mercedes married the superintendent of the Santiago mint, Carlos Vigil de Miranda (see *ibid.*, III, 43-49).

23. *Fiscal* of the Council of the Indies, May, 1778, Santiago de Chile, Manuscritos y Copias de D. José Toribio Medina, vol. 196, pp. 217-262; and *fiscales* of Chile to José de Gálvez, November 18, 1777, vol. 196, pp. 352-354 (henceforth cited as SM). Some of these judges were moved to the Audiencia of Lima where they came into contact with their Peruvian relatives and business partners or those of their fathers-in-law. This merely changed the locus of the problem without altering its substance.

24. Anonymous letter, December 7, 1793, SM, vol. 211, pp. 307-320.

Real, who gave up ownership of the Santiago mint in return for hereditary possession of the post of *alguacil mayor* and chancellor of the Audiencia.²⁵ Besides such civil posts, almost all members of the aristocracy who were not clerics entered into the militia forces once these were given a regular organization.

The most important result of the reforms, insofar as their effect on the attitudes of the elite is concerned, may indeed have been to change subtly its feelings about royal service. Before the changes instituted during the terms of Julián de Arriaga and José de Gálvez as Minister of the Indies, high ranking positions available to residents of Chile were restricted to a few financial and judicial posts. Other high ranking offices would have required a social status, intimacy with court life, and broad administrative experience which could not have been achieved in remote Chile. Even in the case of judicial positions, which some members of the elite did secure, it was at a disadvantage. Having a secure social and economic position, few of its members saw any advantage in following the career of a *letrado*, particularly since before the creation of the University of San Felipe it required years of study in Lima, and in most cases a subsequent trip to the Peninsula to secure a post. The administrative positions open to Chileans were by and large not lucrative, and those that were valuable required an absence from Santiago for the term of office. Many were unwilling to leave their affairs in the hands of agents for very long. Thus the Conde de la Conquista refused the governments of both La Serena and Chilóé because his business kept him at home, and repeatedly during the eighteenth century Chileans refused offers of Peruvian *corregimientos*.²⁶

Although it is clear that members of Chilean elite sought government posts, it is equally evident that they did not covet all posts. Indeed, before the reforms honorifics were more prized. Thus hereditary

25. *Título* of Superintendent of the mint to the Conde de la Conquista, Chile, Archivo Nacional, Archivo de la Real Audiencia, vol. 2139, piece 11 (henceforth cited as RA). Letter of Ambrosio O'Higgins to the Ministry of Finance and Commerce of August 16, 1794, Chile, Archivo Nacional, Archivo de la Capitanía General, vol. 786, letter 243 (henceforth cited as CG). The name of the Marqués de Montepío occurs repeatedly as administrator of the *estanco*. See *fanzas* of September 9, 1760 and June 19, 1764 in Chile, Archivo Nacional, Archivo de los Escribanos de Santiago, vol. 574, pp. 88 v.-89 and 145 v.-146. (henceforth cited as ES). The previous administrator, José Ignacio Herquiñigo, had been the husband of Rosa de Aguirre of the Marqués' family. See document dated July 3, 1764 in ES, vol. 576, pp. 42-44. See also Amunátegui Solar, *La sociedad chilena*, III, 285-300. For the García Huidobro family see final act of foundation of their entail, September 20, 1782 in ES, vol. 847, pp. 265 v.-266.

26. Royal Order of August 4, 1780, SM, vol. 293, no. 8901. For a biographical sketch of the career of the Conde de la Conquista see Jaime Eyzaguirre, *El conde de la Conquista* (Santiago, 1951).

or renunciabile offices with little practical power or emoluments had been avidly sought, along with encomiendas, titles of nobility, and knighthoods in the military orders. The only notable exceptions were cabildo posts, which left one open to disagreeable experiences. The creation of new posts of general political and fiscal administration in Santiago, however, meant that there were high posts available in the city which did not require legal training or relegating the interests of one's family to others. These were immediately sought by the local aristocracy. The creole Manuel de Salas, writing to his friend José Antonio de Rojas in Madrid to secure a title of nobility, gave him this advice:

Your father has done me the favor of showing me your letters and told me something of your personal aspirations. Because I have the advantage of seeing things from closer up, today I will take the liberty of warning you (and your father says the same) that a title is not the object you should seek . . . but rather one of the honorific and lifetime employments to which one who is not conversant with the law can aspire, as for instance the *Contaduría Mayor*, the Superintendency of the mint, or the Direction of the tobacco monopoly, or another of the subordinate offices. . .²⁷

Indeed, this attitude seems to have been widespread. The head of the senior branch of the house of Larraín requested an office of importance in Santiago as a reward for his services and those of his ancestors, and only failing this was he willing to accept a title. It is a fact that after the sale of the last of the four titles sent to the President of Chile in 1755 (all of which were sold at very reasonable terms), there was little demand for any more.²⁸

The high valuation which came to be placed on government posts during the late eighteenth century indicates that securing such an office may have been as sure a way for a Chilean to enter the elite as buying a *título de Castilla*. This in turn helps to explain why administrators did not tend to secure titles after 1755. By virtue of their offices alone they belonged to the elite. Although a couple of them did hold *títulos*

27. Letter of Manuel de Salas to José Antonio de Rojas, October 4, 1774, in Chile, Archivo Nacional, Fondo Varios, vol. 118, pp. 60-61 (henceforth cited as FV).

28. Three letters from President Benavides to Agustín de Larraín dated December 18, 1781, November 6, 1782, and May 21, 1784, are most revealing on the kind of hard bargain the creoles wished to drive with the crown for a title of nobility. See CG, vol. 774, letters 99 and 157, and vol. 775, letter 157. The title of Marqués de Larraín was the last one sold in Chile.

de Castilla, such families as Rozas, Salas, Guzmán, Recabarren, Aldunate, and Santiago Concha did not need to crown their posts with a title. The acceptance as sons-in-law by titled and entail-holding Chileans clearly demonstrated their high status.

After the reforms, as before, administrators could establish families that entered the elite. As never before, members of the elite sought administrative positions, and more than before, the two groups intermarried. It would seem, under the circumstances, that informal relations between the two groups should have continued to provide opportunities for the elite to influence the administration.

Client-patron relationship and other patterns characteristic of relations between the two groups persisted through the reign of Charles III. Thus one finds José Antonio de Rojas, bitter as he was against the Spanish administration, paying court to Regent Álvarez de Acevedo, and becoming more bitter in the process. *Oidores* clearly continued to accept favors from residents of Chile. Before the reign of Charles III, *oidor* Juan Verdugo had used an intermediary in buying property, a custom developed to a fine art by *fiscal* José Perfecto de Salas in the early years of the reign. Shortly after the death of the King, Regent Moreno was furnishing his home with "borrowed" pieces from the brother-in-law of the *mayorazgo* Cerda, Ramón del Pedregal.²⁹

Such favors clearly opened the way for some special pleading. Thus when Francisco Borja de Araoz found himself in a conflict with President Benavides which was to come before the Audiencia, he asked his brother-in-law, Ignacio de la Carrera, to use his good offices. Carrera sent his sister Damiana to visit all the *oidores*, had the dossier in the case (illicitly) shown him by the *relator*, whom he held in his power, and used the information thus acquired to forearm his protector, Regent Álvarez de Acevedo. Such cases were quite common.³⁰

Despite the administrative reforms of the Bourbon period, the complaints against the close relations of Audiencia members with local kin groups did not cease. Thus the *contador mayor* of Chile, Silvestre García, in 1774 called attention to the many ties of *oidores* with the local power structure.

29. Letter of José Antonio de Rojas (fragment, n.d.) in FV, vol. 157, pp. 194-197 v. Contracted sale of a *chacra* by Juan Verdugo, February 6, 1755 in ES, vol. 669, p. 100 v.-103. Wife of Pedregal vs. estate of Regent Moreno, March 10, 1792 in RA, vol. 2430, pieces 11 and 13. For the long and corrupt career of *fiscal* José Perfecto de Salas see Ricardo Donoso, *Un letrado del siglo xviii: D. José Perfecto de Salas* (2 vols.; Buenos Aires, 1967).

30. Letter of Ignacio de la Carrera to Francisco de Borja de Araoz, March 2, 1781, in FV, vol. 237, no. 4571.

By their marriages here, infinite [numbers] of relatives, the connections and haciendas that they have, and by their maximum opposition to that which is . . . advantageous to royal finances, all is reduced to becoming a [victim] of their passion . . .³¹

This particular Audiencia was purged in its entirety in 1776; nevertheless, the above accusation was repeated twenty years later after the completion of the reforms of José de Gálvez. Despite the changes in personnel and organization, the *oidores* were still accused of protecting their relatives. Among those enjoying this favor were members of eleven related clans, including the dowager Marquesa de Montepío and the entail-holding Caldera family.³² There is ample reason to doubt that the changes made resulted in an increased independence of *oidores* from local ties.

Indeed, one need do no more than look at the Audiencia's personnel. On the accession of Charles III to the throne of Spain, in addition to its normal membership the Audiencia of Chile included three *oidores supernumerarios*. Because of this overstaffing, no new appointments to the Santiago bench were made for nearly twenty years. During this period, the Audiencia's membership was reduced through death and retirement, but the lack of new blood nevertheless created a high degree of continuity which made the *oidores* all the more formidable. This Audiencia establishment reached a peak of influence in the 1760s. Those who sat on the Santiago bench in this period had strong Chilean ties.

The *oidor decano* was Martín de Recabarren, a native of Cuba. He arrived in Chile in 1716 as *oidor interino*. Recabarren was married to the Peruvian-born Isabel Pardo de Figueroa, niece of the Marqués de Casafuerte, Viceroy of Mexico. His eldest son, José, became the fifth Conde de Villaseñor by inheritance through his mother. Among his daughters, Margarita married the Marqués de Villapalma, and Juana became wife of the son and heir of the Marqués de la Cañada Hermosa.³³

Juan de Balmaceda was a childless peninsular-born *oidor*. Like bishops, however such men were wont to have nephews, and Balmaceda had two. The first, Pedro Fernández Balmaceda, was a wealthy mer-

31. Secret letter of Silvestre García to Minister of the Indies Julián de Arriaga, January 31, 1774, in SM, vol. 195, pp. 312-313.

32. Anonymous letter of denunciation, December 7, 1793, in SM, vol. 211, pp. 317-320; anonymous letter of denunciation sent to Godoy, January 8, 1794, in SM, vol. 213, pp. 1-3.

33. Espejo, *Nobiliario*, pp. 635 and 683-684.

chant and estate owner who held an entail founded by his uncle. He also founded one of his own. The other, Juan Francisco Ruíz Clavijo de Balmaceda, was safely esconced by his uncle in the administration of the tobacco monopoly. While not tied to native families, Balmaceda, through the entail he founded and the nephews he established in Chile, clearly had many material interests in common with them.³⁴

Oidor Gregorio Blanco de Laisequilla was in a similar situation. A *peninsular*, Blanco made up for his lack of children by having a prominent nephew, Joaquín de la Plaza. De la Plaza was a wealthy merchant and married a daughter of the Marqués de Casa Real.³⁵

The last *oidor de número*, José Clemente de Traslaviña, was a native of Peru. Unlike the others he seems to have had no son, nephew, or wife who tied him to the ruling elite. He was, however, distantly related to his colleague Melchor de Santiago Concha, and chose to live out his years in Chile after retiring.³⁶

Of the *oidores supernumerarios*, Juan Verdugo was a native of Chile. Verdugo married into the Valdivieso family, which settled in Chile from the Río de la Plata during mid-century. His daughter and sole heiress, Francisca de Paula, married the Chilean Ignacio de la Carrera and was the mother of the redoubtable Carrera brothers of the War of Independence.³⁷

Domingo Martínez de Aldunate was born in Santiago and had numerous brothers and sisters domiciled there, one of whom was dean of the cathedral chapter. Through his nephews and children, Aldunate was particularly well connected in Chilean society. His nephew, José Antonio Martínez de Aldunate y Garcé, was vicar general of the diocese of Santiago in the lifetime of his uncle, and rose to be Bishop of Huamanga and later of Santiago. Juan Miguel Martínez de Aldunate y Garcé (brother of the above) married an aunt of the Marqués de Larraín. Of his nieces one married a Marqués de Montepío, another the brother of the Conde de la Conquista, and a third the *regidor* Santa Cruz y Silva of the cabildo of Santiago. Of his own children, Josefa married the rich peninsular-born merchant Pedro Fernández Palazuelos, Manuel and Francisco married into the family of the Marqués de la Pica, Isabel into that of the Marqués de la Cañada Hermosa, and Rosa into the mercantile Errázuriz family. Another son,

34. *Ibid.*, pp. 142 and 144-146.

35. *Ibid.*, pp. 171 and 652-653.

36. Roa y Urzúa, *Reyno de Chile*, p. 882. See also Espejo, *Nobiliario*, p. 736.

37. Espejo, *Nobiliario*, pp. 216 and 834. See also Chile Archivo Nacional, Archivo de D. Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna, vol. 3, piece 2.

José Santiago, was to follow his father to a judgeship on the Audiencia of Santiago in 1796.³⁸

The last of the *oidores* was Melchor de Santiago Concha, a *limeño* born into a distinguished family of judges. His father, half-brother, and two brothers-in-law all served in the Audiencia of Lima. While an *oidor* in Charcas, Santiago Concha married a daughter of the Marqués de Rocafuerte, president of that audiencia. In 1775 he married his daughter Nicolasa to Nicolás de la Cerda, holder of the Cerda *mayorazgo*. His eldest son, José María (a native of Santiago), was to marry one of the children of this union, and became *oidor* of Chile in 1794.³⁹

The *fiscal* of Chile during this period was José Perfecto de Salas, a native of Buenos Aires. He had married María Josefa Corbalán, a member of one of the three dominant families of the province of Cuyo (at that time still subject to Chile). He protected and eventually married one daughter to the first holder of the Rojas *mayorazgo*. Through a series of client-patron relationships Salas became a dominant political figure in Santiago.⁴⁰

Of eight members of this Santiago Audiencia of 1759, only two were Spaniards. With the death of Recabarren and Blanco Laisequilla and the retirement of Balmaceda, the balance was further shifted to the benefit of creoles. At the time of the near rising against the tax reforms introduced by the interim *contador mayor* Gregorio González Blanco in 1776, the Audiencia was 100% creole. Every one of the five men had bought his post.⁴¹

Soon after the nomination of José de Gálvez as Minister of the Indies, this creole-run Audiencia was purged. In part this was the result of the conviction of the *Contaduría General de Indias* that the tribunal was the chief stumbling block to fiscal reform in Chile. In greater part the policy resulted from the negative personal experience of Gálvez with the audiencias of New Spain, and as such was only a small part of the general reform that he envisaged.⁴² During the

38. Arturo Fontecilla Larraín, "Los Aldunates de Chile," *Boletín de la Academia Chilena de la Historia*, no. 6 (1935), 303-317.

39. Espejo, *Nobiliario*, pp. 736-738. Santiago Concha was transferred to Chile. In Santiago, after a series of disputes as to his status, it was decided that he would serve as the most junior of the *oidores supernumerarios* although at full pay. See Royal Cédula of June 25, 1768, in CG, vol. 724 IV, pp. 76-76 v.

40. On the career and family of Salas see Donoso, *Un letrado del siglo xviii*. See also Jorge Comandran Ruiz, "Las tres casas reinantes de Cuyo," *Revista Chilena de Historia y Geografía*, no. 126 (1958), 77-127.

41. Silvestre García to Jultán de Arriaga, January 31, 1774, in SM, vol. 195, p. 312. See also Donoso, *Un letrado*, I, 46-47.

42. Nestor Meza Villalobos, *La conciencia política chilena durante la monarquía*

month of July 1776, *fiscal* José Perfecto de Salas was notified of his transfer as *oidor* to the *Audiencia de Contratación* in Cádiz, and the *oidores* Traslaviña, Verdugo, and Aldunate were transferred to Lima, the first as *oidor* and the other two as *alcaldes de crimen*. Combined with the later transfer of *oidor* Santiago Concha and the previous retirement of *oidor decano* Balmaceda, these changes removed the entire previous membership of the Santiago Audiencia.⁴³

The men who replaced these creole *oidores* were not tainted with local ties, and thus the purge temporarily achieved its ends. Soon these new appointees were transferred, however, and individuals with creole connections began to sit once more on the Santiago bench. As was already seen, there were four separate attempts by the Marqués de Villapalma to infiltrate the Santiago bench through his daughters' marriages. The dowager Marquesa de Montepío had more luck when she married a niece to *oidor* Luis de Urriola.

During the tenure of Gálvez himself, a number of creoles were named to the Audiencia. Urriola was Panamanian, *oidor* Tadeo Diez de Medina was a *charqueño*, as was *fiscal* Joaquín Pérez de Uriondo. By 1788, three out of six appointees were creoles. This creole representation was further strengthened by the nomination of a New Grenadine regent (Moreno y Escandón) to replace the Spanish-born Álvarez de Acevedo. Of course these creoles were all foreign to Chile. By 1794-1796 Chileans were again being appointed to the Santiago bench. Significantly, they came from the Aldunate and Santiago Concha families which had been purged in 1776. Because there was a tendency to promote *peninsulares* out of Chile and leave creoles in place, these soon gained great influence by reason of seniority. The system of promotions itself eventually brought one of the sons-in-law of

(Santiago, 1958), pp. 188-189; Barros Arana, *Historia jeneral*, VI, 377-378, note 37; Donoso, *Un letrado*, I, 424-435.

43. Royal Orders of February 2, 1776, in CG, vol. 727, p. 74; and of March 22, 1776, in CG, vol. 722, pp. 90-91; Donoso, *Un letrado*, I, 435-439; see also instructions of Jáuregui in Royal Order of August 4, 1776 and *Reales Despachos* of Traslaviña, Verdugo, and Aldunate, all dated July 27, 1776, as in CG, vol. 727, p. 150; see also letter of Jáuregui to Gálvez of September 5, 1777 in DG, vol. 779, p. 82. The situation which was being remedied was to a degree accidental. Because of the financial problems of the crown during the reign of Ferdinand VI, a number of creoles were able to buy positions on the Audiencia. The overstaffing which resulted perpetuated the consequences of this momentary situation into 1776. After becoming aware of the deleterious effects of the policy, the crown endeavored to limit the local ties of the *oidores* and the number of native judges. To achieve these ends without blatant discrimination it adopted three separate policies: 1) the transfer of judges who married locally; 2) the regular promotion of judges by the *ascenso* system; 3) the appointment of a number of creoles to courts in Spain. These measures failed to produce the expected results.

the Marqués de Villapalma back to Chile as regent of the Audiencia.

The crown tried to limit the number of native judges in Chile by offering petitioners posts in Spain itself. Thus José Ignacio de Guzmán, whose father had rejected a post on the Audiencia of Santa Fé, had to accept one in the Chancellery of Granada.⁴⁴ Nonetheless, the crown allowed some Chileans to serve as judges in their native lands. Between 1796 and 1810 there were always at least two Chilean *oidores* on the court. This does not mean that the frequent appointment of Spaniards to the Audiencia was popular with native Chileans. On the contrary, aristocrats trained to value official connections to bolster their status must have been frustrated at being unable to monopolize offices and office-holders. However, their frustration says more about their aspirations than about their real power.

Indeed, it is important to distinguish between offices and influence. The inability to monopolize offices may have been an important factor in bringing about independence. Influence, however, was based on cooptation of the cadres rather than their displacement. There is no evidence that this process of cooptation was stymied by the Bourbon reforms. Although the degree of control of, if not participation in, the Audiencia decreased after 1776, and the tribunal itself lost power, the elite found ample consolation in penetrating the bureaucracy created by the *visitas*.

In Chile the elite married into families of officials and enticed the latter to reciprocate throughout the Bourbon period. Indeed, the increased size of the bureaucracy allowed elite families to increase their rate of marriage with the administrative cadres. The aristocrats of Santiago continued to enter the royal administration up to the time of independence. In 1810 Chileans serving in top positions in the city included the *oidores* José Santiago Martínez de Aldunate and José de Santiago Concha; the Superintendent of the mint, José Santiago Portales; the Administrator General of the customs house, Manuel Manso; and the Bishop, José Antonio Martínez de Aldunate.⁴⁵ This does not mean that a few creoles were not dissatisfied with their personal lack of success. Such men as Manuel de Salas and José Antonio de Rojas, who were to be important in the movement for independence, clearly were. It does mean that we must not overestimate the results of the reform movement. The practices which enabled the elite to coopt the cadres continued. Consequently, special influence by creoles on the administration remained an outstanding feature of political life.

44. Jaime Eyzaguirre, *Ideario y ruta de la emancipación chilena* (Santiago, 1969), p. 56, note 47.

45. *Ibid.*, p. 57.

The elite of Santiago became even more closely knit during the Bourbon period; it demonstrated a high degree of willingness to enter into marriage alliances with outsiders who had achieved high positions; and it expected to wield influence through informal means. Far from being a time of new politics, therefore, the late eighteenth century may well have been a golden age for the practice of the old.

At the same time it is clear that there are close analogies between the political behavior of this colonial elite and that of the group which governed the country in the national period. In their clannishness, in their willingness to absorb the powerful of whatever origins, in their greater regard for position than for wealth, in their search for office and relations with officials, the colonial elite set the style for independent Chile.

APPENDIX 1. MARITAL PATTERNS OF TITLED AND ENTAIL-HOLDING FAMILIES DIVIDED BY PERIODS^a

	Before 1755	After 1755	Both Periods
To Old Elite.....	13.5%	5.7%	9.5%
To New Elite.....	10.4%	15.2%	12.9%
To Other Titled (Chilean Branches).....	4.2%	4.8%	4.5%
To Other Titled (Non-Chileans).....	5.2%	1.9%	3.5%
To Resident Oidorial Families.....	1.0%	14.3%	8.0%
To Non-resident Oidorial Families.....	4.2%	4.8%	4.5%
To Other Officials.....	9.3%	19.2%	14.4%
To "First Family".....	20.8%	4.8%	12.4%
To Others.....	31.3%	29.5%	30.3%

^aBecause the figures in these appendices are averaged to the nearest tenth of one percent, their sum is not always 100%.

APPENDIX 2. MARITAL PATTERNS OF TITLED AND ENTAIL-HOLDING FAMILIES DIVIDED BY GROUPS AND PERIODS

	Before 1755		After 1755	
	Old Elite	New Elite	Old Elite	New Elite
To Old Elite.....	17.9%	3.4%	0.0%	9.4%
To New Elite.....	3.0%	27.6%	12.2%	17.2%
To Other Titled (Chilean Branches).....	6.0%	0.0%	2.4%	6.8%
To Other Titled (Non- Chileans).....	7.5%	0.0%	2.4%	1.6%
To Resident Oidorial Families.....	1.5%	0.0%	24.4%	7.8%
To Non-resident Oidorial Families.....	6.0%	0.0%	9.8%	1.6%
To Other Officials.....	11.9%	3.4%	14.6%	21.9%
To "First Family".....	20.9%	20.7%	4.9%	4.7%
To Others.....	25.4%	44.8%	29.3%	29.7%