CONNECTING THE NORTHERN ANDES AND THE ATLANTIC. THE ROLE OF INLAND PORTS IN NEW GRANADA'S INTERREGIONAL TRADE (1770-1809)

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyses the role of Mompox in New Granada's interregional trade during the late colonial period. It focuses on the value, structure and destination of exports of domestic goods from Mompox to markets on the Atlantic and the Andes. By unearthing unexplored sources, this paper provides evidence that will help to understand, indirectly, some issues such as the nature and timing of economic growth, the degree of regional specialisation and, above all, the role of inland ports in the economic geography of the viceroyalty. The paper contends, first, that the region experienced a boom–bust cycle during the late colonial period. The export of domestic goods doubled between 1770 and 1800 but subsequently collapsed during the 1802-1809 years. Second, evidence suggests that the region experienced a process of market deepening and widening. Trade flows, then, played a larger role in shaping the economic history of the region than previously thought.

Keywords: inland ports, interregional trade, markets, New Granada, Spanish Empire, commodities

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RESUMEN

El trabajo analiza el papel de Mompox en los sistemas de intercambio neogranadinos durante el período colonial tardío. Estudia el volumen, la estructura y el destino de las exportaciones de bienes domésticos desde Mompox a mercados en el Atlántico y en los Andes. A través de nuevas fuentes, el texto proporciona evidencia que ayudará a abordar problemas como la naturaleza y dinámica del crecimiento económico, el grado de especialización regional y, ante todo, el rol de los puertos interiores en la geografía económica del virreinato. El artículo sostiene, primero, que la región experimentó un ciclo de auge y caída durante el período colonial tardío. Las exportaciones de bienes domésticos se doblaron entre 1770 y 1800 y se retrajeron fuertemente luego de 1802. Segundo, sugiere que la región experimentó un proceso de expansión y penetración mercantil. Los flujos mercantiles desempeñaron un papel más importante en la historia económica de la región de lo que se sostenía hasta el momento.

Palabras clave: Puertos interiores, comercio interregional, mercados, Nueva Granada, Imperio Español, mercancías

1. INTRODUCTION

In the diaries of his extensive, well-known journeys across the Viceroyalty of New Granada, Alexander von Humboldt (1982 [1801-1802]) wrote down several remarks on the economy of the region that, after a proper process of specification, can be used as testable hypothesis for the analysis of colonial economic history[1]. In Humboldt's view, the economy of New Granada had experienced an important process of economic change despite the allegedly predatory policies of Spanish rule. Demographic growth, export diversification and the opening of new trade routes were aptly documented by the Prussian polymath.

Scholars have quantitatively shown that Humboldt's perception of New Granada's economic expansion was correct (McFarlane 1993; Kalmanovitz 2010; Meisel 2011; Torres 2013). The viceroyalty, in fact, was the largest gold producer of the Spanish Empire and, given the decline of gold production in Brazil and West Africa, it briefly became the world's largest gold producer during the late 18th-century (Torres 2018). Through

[1] Created in 1739, the Viceroyalty of the New Kingdom of Granada encompassed the territories of present-day Colombia, Ecuador, Panamá and Venezuela. By the late 1770s, the Captaincy of Venezuela was granted with executive and judicial autonomy. Yet, the western portion of the Captaincy kept vital economic connections with the Viceroyalty. For simplicity, we will use the terms «New Granada» and «the Kingdom» to refer to preset-day Colombia.

backward and forward linkages, gold mining sustained strong, far-flung trade flows that have been measured by recent quantitative studies (Muñoz and Torres 2013; Torres 2015, 2018; Granados and Pinto 2019). In a similar vein and given the bimetallic nature of the monetary system, New Granada's merchants engaged in an active exchange of doubloons (gold coins) for Peruvian and Mexican silver that created further fuel for growth (Torres 2013, 2015). In other words, gold mining oiled the wheels of north Andean trade in unexpected ways. During this period, in addition, the region experienced an important export diversification that helped to further integrate the region into the world economy (McFarlane 1993; Meisel 2002, 2011). Changes in the international conditions of demand and supply allowed merchants to export cocoa, cotton, quinine and livestock to world markets.

Humboldt noted, however, that this process of economic change was shaped by unique features that distinguished the region from other areas of the Spanish Empire. Among these features, New Granada was endowed with an extensive network of inland waterways that connected the economies of the Andean heartland with those of the Atlantic. The Magdalena river and its tributaries allowed the downstream movement of bulky products from the Andean slopes to markets along the lowlands and the Atlantic. Humboldt not only documented the dynamics of river trade but also stated that it experienced an important change during the last decades of the 18th century. Before the 1780s, textiles and foodstuffs produced in the eastern highlands reached the river through the inland port of Honda where they were shipped downstream to lowland markets. In the late-18th century, however, regional exports were increasingly channelled through new routes that connected inland producers with the downstream inland port of Mompox. In Humboldt's view, Bogotá merchants increasingly financed trade on this route to bypass Honda and to take advantage of the export boom of cash crops. In his words «the rapid growth of Mompox and the surge in Bogotá's trade has severely affected Honda» (1782 [1801-1802], p. 35). Mompox thrived not only because of the surge in interregional trade but also because it was the entrepôt for import distribution towards the interior from Cartagena and, particularly, from Santa Marta and Riohacha. The latter two, according to Humboldt, were the gates through which smuggled goods were imported from Jamaica and Curaçao. Domestic and international trade flows in Mompox «were even bigger than those of Cartagena» (1782 [1801-1802], p. 35).

Humboldt was not the only contemporary who documented trade patterns in the region. Pedro Fermín de Vargas, a well-known political economist, asserted in 1789 that the opening of new routes that connected Socorro, Girón and other eastern agricultural and manufacturing regions with Mompox, has allowed producers to reduce the power market of

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Honda merchants, an outcome that he roundly celebrated (1986 [1789]). José Ignacio de Pombo, a Cartagena merchant and a close informant of Humboldt, went beyond others in estimating trade flows between Cartagena province and the interior of the viceroyalty. He stated that «we pay 1'000.000 silver pesos to the provinces in the interior for the cocoa, tobacco, wheat flour, meat and other foodstuffs that we consume and receive from them» (2012 [1810], p. 356). If correct, this figure suggests that the consumption of interregional imports accounted for roughly 25 per cent of regional per capita GDP[2]. In other words, interregional trade flows between coastal New Granada and the Andean heartland were bigger than expected and river trade played a vital role in the size and nature of those flows.

Scholars have neglected the role of inland waterways in interregional trade. They have echoed the complaints of some contemporaries about the expensive and difficult nature of river transportation (McFarlane 1993; Colmenares 1997; Safford and Palacios 2001; Herrera 2002; Bohorquez and Palacio 2008). It is not surprising, then, that there is no available statistical evidence on the volume, direction and mechanics of river trade. Likewise, the market structure of transportation services and the economics of inland ports remain the realm of anecdotical evidence. This pattern is the corollary of a dominant historiographical perspective that states that the rugged nature of north Andean geography and the continuous external drain of species precluded the development of strong trade networks across the viceroyalty[3]. Social and economic historians of Caribbean New Granada have echoed this perspective. Herrera (2002), for instance, states that most of the population of the provinces of Santa Marta and Cartagena comprised a poor, self-sufficient peasantry for whom market production was peripheral. The lack of species, on the other hand, made barter a ubiquitous mechanism of exchange. Therefore, markets were small and isolation from broader trade streams were the norm. According to Herrera, this peasantry was the very target of the Bourbon drive to transform spatial ordering in order to exert political and fiscal control.

Sánchez (2011, 2015), has stood Herrera's argument on its head, so to speak. Instead of a ubiquitous self-sufficient population trying to resist political control, Sánchez identified a market-oriented set of small holders, tenants and sharecroppers harnessing the legal tools of Bourbon rule to enforce property rights over land. An analysis of probate inventories and censuses of several villages across the region allowed Sánchez to show how peasants were part of marketing networks that supplied Santa Marta, Cartagena and Mompox. In a similar vein, Vladimir

[2] To obtain this measure, we have employed GDP and population figures from Meisel (2011) and Kalmanovitz (2010).

[3] For critical surveys of the relevant literature see Muñoz and Torres (2013) and Torres (2018).

Daza's analysis of the logbooks of the Santa Coa family who hold a polyvalent merchant house in Mompox between 1730 and 1780, shows how the inland port was at the centre of a far-flung trade network that reached markets such as Lima, Quito, Maracaibo and the mining belts of the Pacific littoral (Daza 2009). Cash crops, manufactures, foodstuffs and European imports were among the commodities traded by the Santa Coas across the Andes and the Atlantic. Daza, in addition, is rigorous in showing how the investments in fluvial transportation were a strategic part of Santa Coa's rise as the main merchant house of Mompox. De La Cruz (2017) has provided an outstanding description of mid-18th century river trade based upon the 1754 logbooks of the Royal Treasury of Mompox. She aptly outlined the geographical scope of markets as well as the commodities involved. Even though her sample is small, she provided pivotal insights on the importance of far-flung trade networks along the Magdalena River.

This paper, mostly empirical, engages in these debates by analysing the role of Mompox in interregional trade flows during the late colonial period. It focuses on the value, structure and destination of exports and re-exports of domestic goods from Mompox to markets on the Atlantic and the Andes. As Humboldt stated above, Mompox no doubt benefited from the late colonial economic expansion. The population of the port grew from 6,900 inhabitants in 1779 to 16,000 in 1808 (Aguilera and Meisel 2009; Daza 2016). The revenues of local royal treasure became one of the most important single sources of *situados* (fiscal remittances) that sustained the fortifications of Cartagena (Jara 1994). Yet, this paper is the first attempt to measure the magnitude and structure of Mompox's role as entrepôt during the late colonial period. A sequel paper will analyse the role of Mompox as consumption market and as entrepôt of European goods. By unearthing unexplored sources, this paper provides a provisional measurement and empirical evidence that will help to understand, indirectly, some issues such as the nature and timing of economic growth, the degree of regional specialisation and, above all, the role of inland ports in the economic geography of the viceroyalty.

The paper contends, first, that Mompox experienced an important expansion as Humboldt and other contemporaries observed. Even though it is impossible to test Humboldt's contention that this growth was achieved at Honda's expense, behind Mompox's success was a process of trade diversification that involved both domestic and international markets. In the early 1770s Mompox's economy was highly dependent on cocoa and livestock exports to Cartagena. The village was basically a load centre with small participation in supply chains and added value activities. By the 1790s, however, trade patterns had dramatically changed. Cartagena's hegemony as Mompox's main outlet eroded. Alternative ports on the Atlantic, mining regions in Antioquia and emerging markets in the

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interior of Santa Marta province became important outlets for Mompox merchants. This market diversification was accompanied by export diversification. Even though cash crops such as cocoa and sugar experienced an upsurge during the 1790s, their relative participation in Mompox exports declined in favour of a broad set of consumer goods that were increasingly distributed across the new markets. The trade in textiles, manufactures and value-added agricultural goods suggests that the region was experiencing a process of market deepening (an increase in the volume, number and quality of commodities exchanged) and widening (an increase in geographical size of the market).

Second, the paper confirms that Mompox was a vital entrepôt for the goods that were transported downstream from the agricultural and manufacturing regions in the Andes to nodes in the Atlantic. Even though future research should be done on the ports of Ocaña, Girón and Honda to measure the value of the volume of this trade, Pombo's and Humboldt's observations on the importance of downstream flows should be taken seriously. A huge array of cash crops, textiles and, surprisingly, bulky products nurtured Atlantic–Andean networks. Even though upstream flows constituted a small fraction of river trade, they reveal notwithstanding patterns that deserve further research.

Finally, the paper argues that at some point between 1801 and 1804 a contraction ensued. If correct, the data will support the thesis of recent scholars who see the last decade of colonial rule as one of economic contraction (Torres 2013, 2018). The collapse of mining markets and the contraction of exports due to the Atlantic Wars explain this downturn. Yet, the paper also employs price data to calculate supply elasticities and to see how inflationary pressures explain the cycle of expansion and contraction of trade in the port.

The paper proceeds as follows. The next section discusses the political economy of the transit tax that is employed as a proxy of trade flows. The paper then analyses the trends in the value and volume of flows in the port and provides an examination of exports by region. Next, the paper studies the movements of the main export commodities and their markets. It ends with conclusions.

2. THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF AN «UNFATHOMABLE» TAX

In 1789, the lawyers and agents (*procuradores*) of both the city council (*cabildo*) and the trade council (*diputación de comercio*) of Mompox unleashed a long, aggressive legal battle in the courts of Santafé de Bogotá, the capital of the viceroyalty. Their target was the newly created customs house (*aduana*) of Mompox that allegedly had increased the fiscal burden and had arbitrarily changed fiscal practices up to then observed in

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the village[4]. The establishment of customs houses across the viceroyalty was one of the most important policies of the Bourbon drive to increase fiscal revenues. The *aduanas* were to centralise the collection of several taxes on trade that had hitherto been collected by either tax farmers or by the treasury officials who also collected other levies.

The *aduanas* left behind a rich, well-known documentation that has been the main input to undertake quantitative studies on trade patterns across the Spanish Empire (Assadourian 1982; Tandeter *et al*. 1994; Ibarra 2007; Jumar 2014; Torres 2018). Yet, the use of such sources demands caution since the nature of trade taxes and account practices varied sharply even in nearby regions (Sánchez-Santiró 2013). The *alcabalas*, for instance, was in theory an ad valorem sales and turnover tax payable on goods, slaves, real property and some services[5]. Yet, in some regions and cities the tax embodied a fixed tariff (*arancel*) established through negotiations between the *cabildos*, *diputaciones* and the royal treasuries. In the same vein, goods exempted in some regions created liability in others. Bookkeeping practices demand caution as well. Some historians have limited themselves to processing the *sumarios generales* (annual and monthly summaries) of some taxes to craft time series of economic flows. Yet, only through a systematic, amalgamated comparison of the different logbooks of the *aduanas*, it is possible to discern if the *sumarios generales* were measuring the level and direction of trade flows.

It is in this context, then, that the legal issues that followed the establishment of the Mompox *aduana* will allow us to further understand the information we unearthed from the extant logbooks. Before the establishment of the *aduana* in 1788, trade taxes were collected by treasury officials who were also in charge of other levies. Given the role of Mompox in domestic and international trade flows, the local royal treasury was clearly understaffed. The creation of the *aduana*, then, sought to improve tax collection by appointing specialised officials and by giving them the legal tools to fulfil their duties. Esteban Pupo, the energetic first administrator of the customs house, centralised tax categories and deployed deputies in different points across the port and the river[6].

The *aduana* collected taxes that were known as *Ramos Unidos* (consolidated taxes). The *Ramos Unidos* encompassed the *alcabalas* on which we have already provided some insights, the *pulperías* or *composiciones* that were taxes on storeowners and small-scale retailers and the *sisa* that was

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[4] The battle is kept in three main files in the Archivo General de la Nación, Colonial Section (hereafter, AGN-C): Aduanas, t. 10, f. 255-278, Alcabalas, t. 1, f. 35-174 and Alcabalas, t. 9, f. 1-118.

[5] In New Granada, the deployment of customs houses was accompanied by an ill-fated attempt to increase the tax rate of sales taxes (*alcabalas*) from 2 to 4 per cent. In 1780, a huge revolt (the *comuneros* revolt), halted the tax increase. See Torres (2018).

[6] Daza (2016) provides a brief, yet interesting biographical analysis of Pupo's career.

a highly unpopular tax on meat and pork consumption. The *Ramos Unidos* also included a miscellaneous, lesser-known set of taxes among them the *Derecho de Proyecto* or transit tax which is going to be the main input of this paper. In their litigation, the merchants and councilmen followed a twofold strategy. First, to impugn the legal tools and privileges of the newly appointed custom officials[7]; second, to unleash a *de facto* boycott on every single tax charged in the *aduana*[8]. On both fronts, Mompox merchants took advantage of the well-known jurisdictional fragmentation that characterised the fiscal system of the Spanish Empire. As some scholars have argued, this fragmentation shielded the system from absolutist policies but created long, huge coordination problems which were to increase transaction costs in fiscal collection and trade flows (Grafe 2012; Grafe and Irigoin 2012).

In the case of Mompox and coastal New Granada, the jurisdictional issues were even more important for two motives. First, for reasons to be determined by scholars, the region experienced a precocious urbanisation which was accompanied by political privileges certainly unknown in interior of the viceroyalty (Meisel 2002; Aguilera and Meisel 2009). When Pupo tried to uniformise and improve the revenue collection in the subaltern branches (*administraciones subalternas*) he found himself in a tight spot. As he put it, «the freedoms [*libertades*] which some villages of my jurisdiction enjoy makes but impossible to assert the nature and the real value of the royal revenues»[9]. Cities, villages and urban settings such as Simití, Ayapel and Remedios refused to pay the *alcabala* and the *proyecto* as was charged in Mompox on the grounds that they enjoyed old privileges as mining regions[10]. Most surprisingly, the subaltern branches refused to send their accounts to the customs house. They sent their logbooks directly to the Royal Treasure, bypassing Pupo's audits[11].

The monetary system was another matter. The jurisdiction of the Mompox's *aduana* encompassed both «lands of gold» (*tierras de oro*) and «lands of silver» (*tierras de plata*). In the former, the money supply was composed not only of silver and gold coins but also of gold dust (Torres 2019). Given the bimetallic nature of the money supply, merchants cleverly paid their taxes in the towns in which they could arbitrage not only in terms of silver-gold market ratios but also in terms of the price of gold

[7] AGN-C, Aduanas, t. 10, f. 119-133 and Alcabalas, t. 22, f. 561-580.

[8] For the boycott on the *alcabala* on imported goods see AGN-C, Aduanas, t. 10, f. 134-181 and 786-793. For the boycott on the *sisa* see AGN-C, t. 10, f. 390-431 and 866-877. On the resistance to the *Proyecto*, see below.

[9] AGN-C, Real Hacienda, t. 63, f. 941-988.

[10] AGN-C, Aduanas, t. 2, f. 356-358 and Alcabalas, t. 25, f. 293-300.

[11] AGN-C, Alcabalas, t. 9, f. 60-64. See also the logbooks in Appendix 1.

dust vis-a-vis gold and silver coins (this relative price was known as *rendición* in the contemporary jargon) (Torres 2013)[12].

The second aspect that complicated jurisdictional issues in the region was that the Magdalena River was chosen as the border between the provinces of Cartagena and Santa Marta. As part of the former, authorities in Mompox were unable to act in the eastern flank of the river. This meant higher transaction costs in tax collection. Pupo pointed out that merchants avoided taxation by transacting business in the eastern flank of the river[13]. To make things worse, the deployment of customs houses in the Santa Marta province was slow and never took root as in Cartagena. According to Mompox authorities, tax farmers rarely worked in conjunction to uniformise fiscal practices and to avoid evasion[14]. Even though eventually the viceroy extended the Mompox customs house's jurisdiction over the eastern shore, complains endured well up to the end of colonial rule[15].

The discussions around the *Derecho de Proyecto* provide a unique source to study the nature of trade flows along the Magdalena River. The merchants' goal was not to eliminate or even to reduce the rate of the *Proyecto* since «we know that the royal treasury is in huge penury». They only wanted the authorities to «clarify and explain the sense and nature of the very ancient decrees that have ruled the *proyecto* up to now and if the behavior of the custom house's administrator [Pupo] is in according to them»[16].

When the officials of the *tribunal de cuentas* (court of accounts) received the merchants' petition, their short answer to the viceroy and the royal attorney (*fiscal*) was very suggestive: «this is an unfathomable tax (*un derecho indescifrable*)». In fact, «the very different names under which this tax is known in the ports of this Kingdom and the very old decrees (*reales ordenes y cedulas*) which rule it, makes the understanding of this duty a difficult task»[17]. As though they were historians, officials headed to the archives to locate the relevant legislation. They confirmed that in some ports the tax adopted the form of an ad valorem duty whose rate ranged from 3 to 10 per cent. In other markets, the tax was a fixed tariff upon a given set of goods whose rates dated back to the 1720s.

The *Proyecto* was a transit tax charged on goods which were transported from the New Granadian Andes through inland waterways to the lowlands and the Atlantic coastal ports. Since Habsburg times, the authorities had known that a huge, dynamic trade took place between the two regions[18].

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[12] See AGN-C, Aduanas, t. 10, f. 135-139 and f. 409-431; Alcabalas, t. 1, f, 163-170.
[13] AGN-C, Aduanas, t. 10, f. 106-133.
[14] AGN-C, Aduanas, t. 10, f. 119-123 and Alcabalas, t. 37, f. 1-37.
[15] AGN-C, Alcabalas, t. 5, f. 767-786.
[16] AGN-C, Alcabalas, t. 1, f. 50-50v.
[17] AGN-C, Alcabalas, t. 9, f. 80-90.
[18] For Habsburg's taxes on river trade see Colmenares (1997). See also Moreno-Álvarez (2017).

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Thanks to the extensive network of inland water ways, bulky products such as corn, garlic, wheat and coarse textiles were shipped downstream kilometres away to the north. Naturally, the crown saw this trade as a possible source of revenue. In the early 1720s, the authorities in Madrid drafted a «project» (thereby the name *Proyecto*) to deploy defenses and convoys in the southern Caribbean. The funding was to come from taxing river trade. The royal decree that formalised the tax was generous in explaining the way in which the resources were to be invested but was very brief in explaining the tax. Thus, only three lines were dedicated to the matter: «As for the duties that should be collected on the bullion and goods that come down from the Kingdom to Cartagena and other points in the coast, it should be observed the rate of 1% on gold and 3% on silver and goods»[19].

After the decree was sanctioned, authorities in inland ports interpreted the regulation in different ways. Given this outcome, authorities in Bogotá decided to craft a standard tariff in 1724. This tariff was updated in 1730 by Bartolomé Tienda de Cuervo who crafted several reforms that would lead to the creation of the Viceroyalty in 1739 (Lance 1993). The Tienda's tariff was more complete than the one crafted in 1724. Yet, on some goods, the tariff reached up to 15 per cent of their current nominal price. As expected, most of the Tienda's tariff was adjusted locally[20].

In Mompox, a standard 3 per cent ad valorem was adopted. Before 1788, the mechanics of the tax collection in the port was straightforward. The tax was charged on all goods shipped out from the port that fulfilled two features: (1) those commodities on which their owners had not paid the *Proyecto* in another port and (2) those commodities on which the tax had been already paid but their owners sold them again to other merchants[21]. As such, the tax targeted commodities produced in Mompox's hinterland, commodities produced in regions in which there was no authority to collect it, and those commodities redistributed by Mompox merchants to middlemen in other regions. The source, then, is useful to measure the role of the port in channelling a small, yet suggestive portion of trade flows that connected far-flung regions of the viceroyalty. Given that it was an ad valorem tax, it also allows us to measure price levels, elasticities and the size of trade flows in silver pesos.

It was Pupo's ill-fated attempt to alter the mechanics of the *Proyecto* what ultimately forced merchants to undertake their judicial campaign. First, Pupo tried to include livestock among the commodities subject to

[19] AGN-C, Alcabalas, t. 1, f. 55-63v.

[20] This recount builds upon AGN-C, Alcabalas, t. 1, f. 80-110 and Alcabalas, t. 9, f. 80-100.

[21] AGN-C, Aduanas, t. 10, f. 255-278, 857-874 and 929-940; Alcabalas, t. 1, f. 110-135. See also Appendix 1.

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the *Proyecto*[22]. Second, Pupo stated that given that both the *proyecto* and the *alcabala* were paid primarily in upstream ports, the Royal treasury was losing revenues since «prices are higher downstream than upstream (*provincias de arriba*) and therefore taxes should be paid in the target market (*mercado de destino*) and not in the markets nearby producers»[23].

Pupo's policies led merchants to request the «clarification» stated above. Even though preliminary reports from the Royal attorney (*fiscal real*) and other incumbent bureaucrats in Bogotá supported the policies, one aspect helped to reject them. The *Proyecto*, indeed, was highly unpopular among reformists in Bogotá. Some viceroys furiously attacked the tax[24]. Mompox merchants knew this very well. The *diputados* were adamant in the fact that if they were to pay the *Proyecto* on livestock, the sending of their herds to Cartagena and Santa Marta would be more expensive and the shortage of meat during blockades would be more severe. In a similar vein, they stated that both the *alcabalas* and the *proyecto* constituted in practice a sales tax of 5 per cent which was «the highest in the kingdom». Such a rate affected the downstream flow of domestic goods (*efectos de la tierra*) and «discouraged merchants from upstream provinces to send their supplies to the coast»[25]. By emphasising the role of Mompox in oiling the wheels of kingdom's ports on the Atlantic, the merchants had the upper hand in their dispute with Pupo.

After gathering information from merchants in upstream ports and examining closely the arguments of both Pupo and the *diputados*, the court of accounts advised the viceroy to keep the Proyecto's collection as it was operating before 1788. Surprisingly, it also advised the elimination of the *alcabala* since the *Proyecto* encompassed already the sales tax. In other words, the ad valorem rate of 3 per cent should be understood as a combined transit and sales tax. The viceroy supported both points and enacted them in 1794[26]. The legal battle, for the time being, was over. The outcome was straightforward: *alcabalas* disappeared from the records of the *aduana* and the *Proyecto* kept its pre-1788 form.

This paper, then, harnesses the rich, little-explored records of the Mompox *aduanas*. We have processed 26 daily logbooks of the *proyecto* between 1770 and 1809. These logbooks contain information on the merchants shipping out the goods, the amount and value of the goods shipped, the unit price of the goods and their destination. We have unearthed

[22] AGN-C, Alcabalas, t. 9, f. 1-24 and 77-95.

[23] AGN-C, Alcabalas, t. 1, f. 35-40.

[24] See the comments of Viceroy Ezpeleta (1789 [1796], p. 108) and those of the Viceroy Mendinueta (1789 [1803]).

[25] AGN-C, Alcabalas, t. 1, f. 49-54.

[26] AGN-C, Alcabalas, t. 1, f. 114-125. The *alcabalas* systematically disappeared from the logbooks in 1794.

roughly 40,000 registers. As stated above, the *proyecto* was also charged on those goods that had been not paid in their ports of origin and were consumed in Mompox. In order to establish the magnitude and direction of the goods that were redistributed by Mompox merchants, it is necessary to discount these entrances. These entrances, in conjunction with the *alcabalas* records (up to 1792) are useful to identify the regions from which Mompox funnelled the goods to be re-exported. Even though several goods were exempted from the *alcabala* and therefore are not included in the records, we are at least able to track the imports of consumer goods that accounted for an important share of the aggregate market.

Commodity exemptions had far less effect upon the *Proyecto*. Even basic foodstuffs such as corn and salt meat were taxed. Yet, three important goods were tax-exempt: livestock, cotton and wheat flour[27]. In the same vein, *aguardiente* (a sugarcane brandy) and tobacco are not included in our data since their distribution was a crown monopoly[28]. It is important to remark that merchants also paid their taxes in ports located either on the eastern flank of the river or in subaltern branches of the *aduana*. Future research should process the records of all these ports and branches to obtain the aggregate size of trade flows in the region. In sum, our data provide a lower bound of the magnitude and scope of the role Mompox as an entrepôt. Let us see what we can do with the data at hand.

3. MEASURING TRADE FLOWS

Let us begin with a preliminary, aggregate approach to trade flows in the port. Figure 1 shows the movement of the value of Mompox exports and re-exports of domestic goods during the years 1770-1809. As noteworthy as the substantial growth until 1793 was the sharp break in 1794, interrupted by a huge resurgence up to 1802 and decline after that year until 1809. The value of exports grew from 25,000 silver pesos in the early 1770s to 75,000 silver pesos in 1795 and roughly to 60,000 silver pesos in 1800. The 1794 break was the result of merchant's boycott to the a*duana*[29]. Beyond this short-term shock, to what extent was the increased value of exports a matter of fiscal efficiency rather than a real expansion of trade flows?

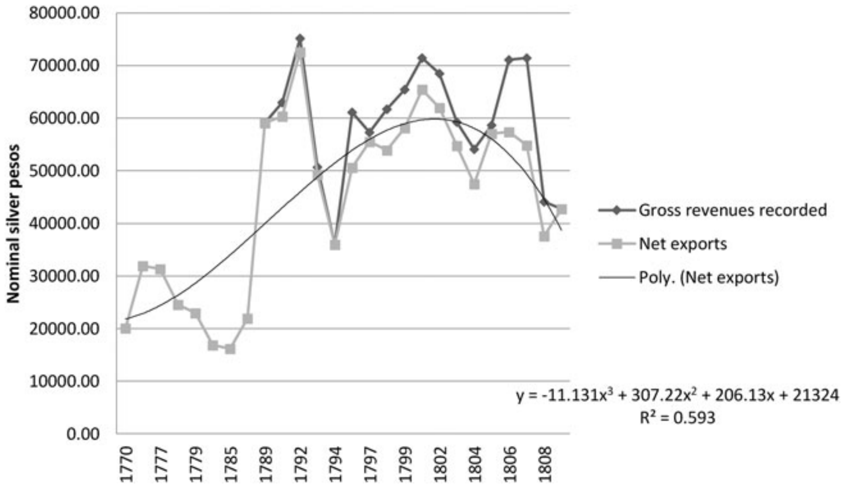
The *aduana* no doubt increased collection efficiency and therefore it taxed a larger share of trade than before 1788. The suppression of the

[27] On the cotton's exemption see AGN-C, Aduanas, t. 13, f. 365-396. For data on wheat flour imports in Mompox during the 1750s see De La Cruz (2017).

[28] Mompox had an *aguardiente* factory that survived throughout this period despite the fierce competition from Catalan beverages. See Mora (1988).

[29] See Pupo's notes on this matter in the 1794 logbook. AGN, Anexo II, box 140, folder 3, f. 96v.

FIGURE 1
Value of recorded exports and re-exports from Mompox 1770-1809.



Source: Appendix 1.

alcabala in 1794, on the other hand, also provided further incentives to conduct business in the port. Yet, trade expansion was a fact well-known among merchants and officials. In 1801, the representative of Mompox merchants filled a petition to the authorities in Bogotá this time not to attack but to support a request of Pupo. The *aduana* was becoming increasingly understaffed, «given the *crecido comercio* (huge trade) of this village [Mompox]»[30]. Both Pupo and the merchants calculated that trade has doubled between 1785 and 1800 so they requested a «reform» both in the number of officials and their wages. If correct, the merchants' estimate suggests that an increment from 25,000 to 50,000 pesos represents a plausible, lower bound in real trade surge. Any increase above that level would reflect fiscal efficiency. While the absolute level of the value of trade flows is subject to error, the movement of trade through time and their rates of change are more reliable. In other words, an expansion of 100 per cent in Mompox exports seems close to the mark.

This growth, however, withered away in 1802. The decline experienced thereafter is better understood once imports had been discounted (see dark line in Figure 1). Had we used the information from the *summarios generales*, the trend would have been rather stagnant (see light line in Figure 1). The gap is explained by the fact that after 1795 officials started

[30] AGN, Alcabalas t. 23, f. 857-894.

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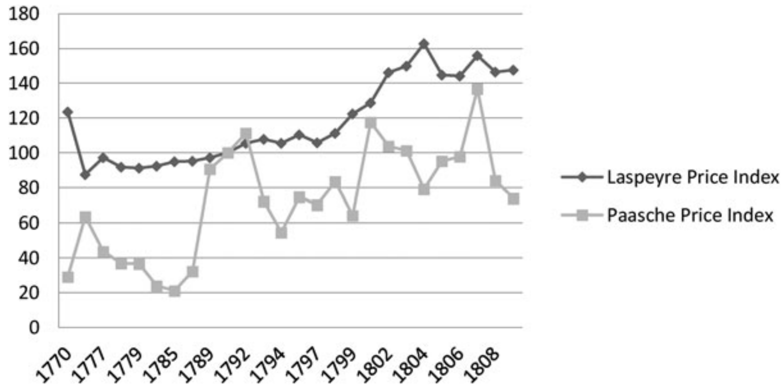
FIGURE 2
Export price indexes: 1770-1809. Base 1790.



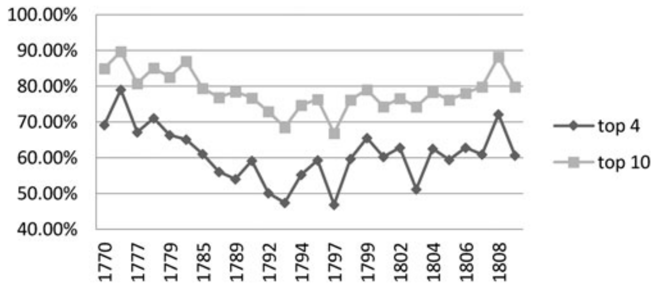
Source: Appendix 1.

to tax salt and foodstuff imports that had not paid the *Proyecto* in their port of origin. Imports from Ciénaga and Tenerife were particularly liable. Further research on those villages should be undertaken to understand why fiscal practices changed. In the meantime, suffice to say that the discount of those records has allowed us to see the real trends.

What are the motives behind trade trends? A first step to provide an answer is to establish if the rise and fall in the value of exports was a function of price movements. We have crafted an export price index to further explore this issue. As stated above, the *Proyecto* was an ad valorem tax and provide the unit price of most of the goods traded in the port. We have harnessed this information to calculate, first, a basic Laspayres index for the commodities for which quotations are available. We have ruled out those goods for which the information is not clear in regards to its homogeneity. Second, we have calculated a basic Paasche price index in order to understand the extent to which the Laspayres index overestimates increases.

As Figure 2 shows, price increases were not always an important part of the growth in the value of export trade. The period was one of overall inflation. Following the Laspayres index, prices surged 20 per cent between 1772 and 1792 and remained at that level until 1797. Between 1798 and 1804 the index climbed 60 per cent and just declined 10 per cent well up to 1809. Then, after 1802 prices kept going up despite the collapse in the value of exports. This suggests that in terms of demand curves, quantity effects were bigger than price effects at least during the first period of expansion. Income effects and elasticities can also explain this conundrum, but more data are needed. The Paasche index, however, provides

FIGURE 3
Relative importance of the top-4 and top-10 destinations in the overall value of exports from Mompox 1770-1809.



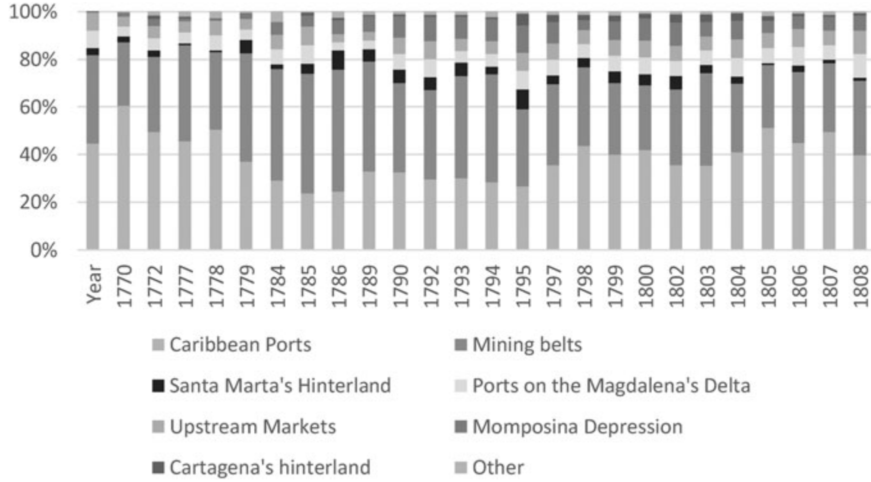
Source: Appendix 1.

a different story. We have calculated ordinary least squares (OLS) regressions using both indexes as independent variables to explain the value of total exports. The results are displayed in Appendix 2. Both the coefficients and the R^2 are statistically significant. The Laspayres index explains only 20 per cent of the dependent variable while the Paasche index explains up to 79 per cent. The latter results warn us from ruling out price effects in explaining the value of exports. Be that as it may, the long-term trend is one of inflation. Even after collapse in prices in 1808, the price level was 60 per cent above the 1770s levels measured by the Paasche index. The 1802-1809 period is one in which prices were high and the value of exports contracted. Even though more evidence is required, the figures point towards an embryonic stagflation. To explain this pattern, we should further break down the data to study the movements of specific commodities and their destinations. Let us begin with the latter.

The inland port experienced an important process of market diversification. As Figure 3 outlines, during the 1770s the four largest destinations absorbed between 70 and 80 per cent of Mompox exports. This concentration declined to 46-65 per cent during the 1790s and, despite the upsurge in the relative share of the top four markets after 1805, alternative nodes became important outlets for Mompox merchants. Even if we expand the analysis to the top ten destinations, the same U-shape trend is displayed. To further understand these trends, we have clustered markets according to their location and economic base (see Figure A1). We have kept the three major ports the Atlantic separated in order to appreciate the changing nature of the connections between Mompox and the Atlantic economy (regions 2-4-6 in Figure A1). Four additional clusters have been established. First, the mining regions of southern Mompox and Antioquia (region 8). They were connected with Mompox through

FIGURE 4

Relative importance of the value of Mompox exports by region 1770-1809.

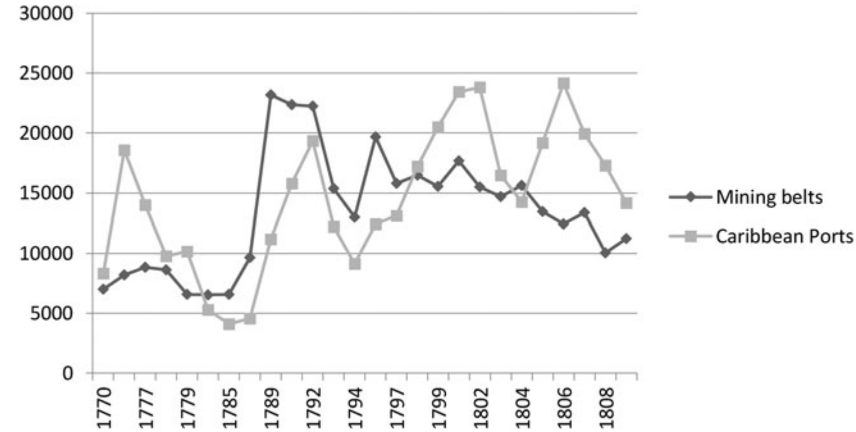


Source: Appendix 1.

the Magdalena, Cauca and San Jorge Rivers. Second, the hinterland of the province of Santa Marta that used the César river and its tributaries as arteries for trade (region 5). Third, the small ports on the different forks of the Magdalena Delta that also connected the inland port with the Atlantic economy (region 3). Fourth, the economies of the southwestern hinterland of Cartagena that encompassed the agricultural settings around the Sinú River and the Tolú plains (region 1). Finally, the hinterland of Mompox that roughly encompassed the central portions of what geographers call the *Momposina* Depression, a set of wetlands created by the confluence of the San Jorge, Cauca and Magdalena Rivers (region 7).

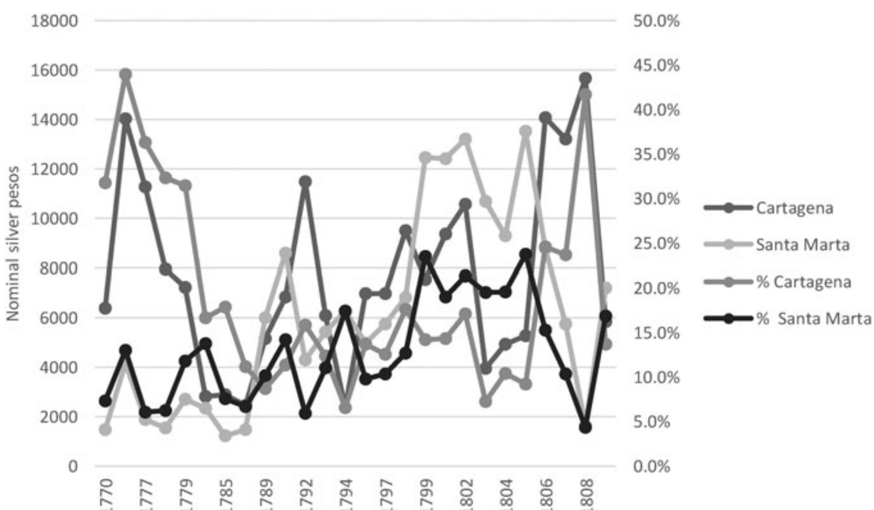
Figures 4-6, then, provide an outline of Mompox exports by regions. Several aspects spring from the data. First, the decline in the relative importance of Cartagena as the main destination of Mompox exports. The share of the seaport in the value of exports dropped from 44 per cent in 1772 to 6.5 per cent in 1794. During the 1790s the average stood at 13 per cent. Cartagena only recovered its hegemony in 1807 and 1808 when its share climbed to 23.7 and 41.7 per cent, respectively. Yet, this resurgence proved short-live since the share dropped again to 13.7 per cent in 1809. In absolute terms, Cartagena's receipts were volatile with spikes in 1772, 1792, 1802 and 1807. This pattern contrast to that of Santa Marta and the ports on the Magdalena Delta. In the 1770s the share of the former ranged from 6 to 13 per cent but doubled in the

FIGURE 5
Value of exports from Mompox to the mining belts and the Caribbean ports (nominal silver pesos) 1770-1790.



Source: Appendix 1.

FIGURE 6
Value of Mompox exports to major Caribbean ports. Relative and absolute importance 1770-1809.



Source: Appendix 1.

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1790s. Santa Marta in fact, flourished during the 1795-1805 conjuncture. Sea ports such as Barranquilla and Sabanilla also experienced an important period of expansion, foreshadowing the larger role they will play in the 19th century. In the early 1770s these ports only absorbed between 2 and 4.5 per cent of Mompox exports, yet this share soared to 7-8 per cent in the 1790s and the 1800s. Riohacha, finally, remained peripheral for Mompox exports of domestic goods during the whole period. Yet, as later will be described, the port absorbed important quantities of unexpected commodities.

How do we explain the changing nature of Mompox trade with Atlantic seaports? As stated above, New Granada experienced a process of export diversification led by a surge in tradable commodities (Fisher 1990; McFarlane 1993). The export boom is connected to three broad processes (Findlay and O'Rourke 2007). First, the change in the conditions of global supply and demand due to the Haitian revolution that basically eroded the largest world producer of cash crops such as sugar, coffee and cocoa. Second, the shift in the demand curve for tropical goods associated with the expansion of the early industrialisation and a shift in the disposable income in European markets. Finally, the growth in intensity and scope of the impact of the Atlantic wars on international trade. The latter, after 1793, disturbed the patterns of international trade hitherto observed. Blockades forced Spanish authorities to deploy changes in their trade system by authorising some ports to undertake trade through neutral vessels, in particular American ships (Barbier 1990). This policy known as *comercio neutral* (literally, neutral trade) favoured ports such as Santa Marta and other ports on the Magdalena delta[31].

As Moreno (2013) has shown, while imports of European goods collapsed in Cartagena, the value of imports in the custom houses of the interior of the viceroyalty expanded. Our data on Mompox exports of domestic goods support Moreno's argument. Yet, it is important to add two considerations. First, the relative importance of Cartagena as collection point of Mompox exports dropped initially in the mid-1780s. In other words, the break in 1793-1794 abruptly reinforced a process of network diversification undertaken by Mompox merchants in the 1780s. Second, the 5 years after the British victory in Trafalgar 1805 witnessed the collapse in trade in both Cartagena and the alternative ports. Even though a complete explanation of this issue is beyond the scope of this paper, our data suggest that Mompox trade also seriously contracted. Alternative ports were not an option to keep trade flows growing. A preliminary exploration on records of the custom houses of the interior of the viceroyalty indicates that

[31] Bassi (2016) has shown how ports such as Barranquilla and Sabanilla became pivotal enterpôts in a *de facto* free trade area in the Caribbean.

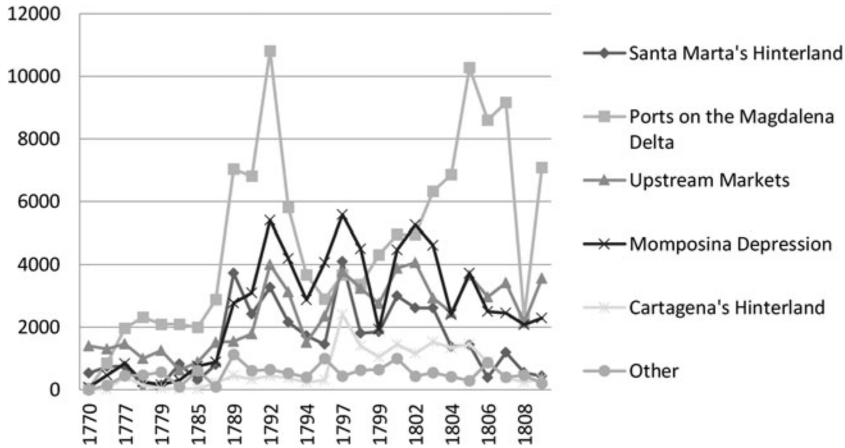
markets for imports such as Bogotá increasingly resorted to ports such as Maracaibo, a centre that was authorised to undertake trade with neutrals. Scholars have studied the political consequences of the refusal of the Spanish authorities to open the ports of New Granada to neutral ships after 1805 (McFarlane 1993). Yet, further research is needed to understand the economic consequences of this policy and the importance of the Maracaibo–Bogotá connection. In the meantime, suffice to note that Mompox exports to traditional and alternative markets also contracted during this period.

As important as the expansion of external markets was the expansion of mining markets in Antioquia and Southern Mompox. Exports to these regions grew from 7,000 silver pesos in 1770 to 23,000 silver pesos in 1790. These figures reveal that Mompox and its hinterland benefited directly from the forward and backward linkages of gold production. Two main nodes dominated this trade. Zaragoza, in northeast Antioquia, absorbed on average 20 per cent of Mompox exports during the 1790s. It also served as the entrepôt to forward goods to southern mining nodes such as Remedios. Santafé de Antioquia, on the other hand, accounted for 8 per cent of the exports during the same period. Historians of gold mining in Antioquia have overlooked the connections between the region and coastal New Granada in terms of the flow of domestic goods (Twinam 1982). This neglect is explained, in part, because the mining belt of Zaragoza has been considered as peripheral in the history of the region even though no scholar has offered quantitative data on gold production in the area. In the same vein, the mining belts of coastal New Granada have not been subject of systematic studies. Yet, the gold from the two areas was relevant enough to nurture a foundry complex in Mompox that also awaits its historian[32].

Our data, then, suggest that mining markets were pivotal in Mompox expansion. During the 1790s the region was the destination of 32 per cent of remittances from the inland port. In the 1800s it still accounted for 26 per cent of them. We have calculated an OLS regression between the value of exports to the mining regions and the overall value of Mompox exports. Both the coefficient and the R^2 are statistically significant. The exports to the mining regions explain up to 83 per cent of the movement of the overall exports. Therefore, to what extent did the collapse in Mompox exports reflect a contraction in mining markets? The latter no doubt experienced a significant drop between 1800 and 1809. During these years, the coefficient of the OLS regressions of the value of exports to the mining belts through time is negative and well below the positive slopes of the 1790s and the 1780s. The scant quantitative information on gold

[32] See Torres (2019) for preliminary forays.

FIGURE 7
Value of exports from Mompox to several regions (nominal silver pesos) 1770-1809.



Source: Appendix 1.

output in Zaragoza suggests that the region's economy was facing hard times by then. It is clear, then, that the contraction in mining centres added fuel to the volatile, negative trend of Atlantic markets.

The analysis of the two regions to the east and west of the Magdalena River, in conjunction with the settlings in the hinterland of Mompox, allows us to contribute to the debate around the role of peasantry and markets in coastal New Granada (Figure 7). These regions, in fact, specialised in the production of foodstuffs and consumer goods that met the needs of ports and mining regions. Mompox's exports to these areas, then, is a preliminary proxy of market widening. Figure 6 displays the exports to the three regions in relative and absolute terms. The three areas experienced a staggering expansion. The receipts in the east and west grew from 500 and 15 silver pesos in 1770 to roughly 4,000 and 3,500 silver pesos, respectively. The Mompox hinterland became an important market whose receipts climbed from 400 pesos in 1770 to roughly 5,000 silver pesos in 1795. Fair-towns such as Tacasuán and Magangué for instance, thrived during these years. The data suggest that these regions inserted themselves in trading networks to put their surpluses and to buy increasing amounts of consumer goods as well. The next section will provide further data on this matter.

Finally, let us briefly examine the upstream exports towards the interior of the viceroyalty. If compared with downstream flows, these exports are clearly small. They accounted only for 6 per cent of Mompox exports in the 1790s. Yet, two features of these flows deserve to be underlined.

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First, the growth in these exports no doubt speaks of a process of market widening that should be addressed in future research. In absolute terms, the value of these exports tripled in the 1790s. The fact that merchants in the interior were increasingly importing domestic goods from downstream ports despite the expensive nature of upstream navigation suggests that New Granada was experiencing changes in terms of relative prices, consumption patterns and disposable incomes. Second, if we further breakdown the destinations to this region, the upstream ports of Ocaña and Girón accounted for roughly 22.5 per cent of this trade in the 1770s and 56 per cent in the 1800. Honda and its environs, in turn, absorbed 57.2 and 21.3 per cent, respectively. This confirms that the ties between Mompox and the former ports were increasingly channelling the trade between coastal New Granada and the Andes.

4. MEASURING COMMODITY FLOWS

This section will provide further insights into the structure of trade flows by analysing the commodities and consumer goods exported from Mompox. As stated above, our data include those goods that had not previously paid their duties in other ports, goods that were distributed by Mompox merchants to middlemen and, finally, goods produced in Mompox's hinterland. In other words, our data provide a lower bound of both exports and re-exports. Even though it is not possible to get a breakdown of these two components, it is possible to provide some preliminary insights on the commodities that were re-exported by Mompox merchants as well as on the regions from which they were imported. The *alcabalas* records for the biennium 1790-1792 are valuable sources to measure Mompox imports in a period without external shocks such as conflicts in the Atlantic and harvest failures. The sales taxes recoded receipts worth 119,000 silver pesos a year. Again, this is a lower bound of aggregate imports since an important portion of goods were exempted from the *alcabalas*.

Figure 8 shows the breakdown of the value of Mompox imports of domestic goods by region. Roughly 42 per cent of imports were supplied by Ocaña, Girón and their environs. Remittances from Honda, on the other hand, only accounted for 5 per cent of the value of imports. The evidence, then, lends support to Humboldt's comments on trade patterns. Andean commodities and consumer goods accounted for almost 50 per cent of the marketing activities of the most important inland port of coastal New Granada. The region we labelled Santa Marta's hinterland in the previous section supplied 24 per cent of the imports. Villages such as Chiriguaná and El Paso accounted for roughly 15 per cent of overall imports. This confirms the importance of the area in regional marketing

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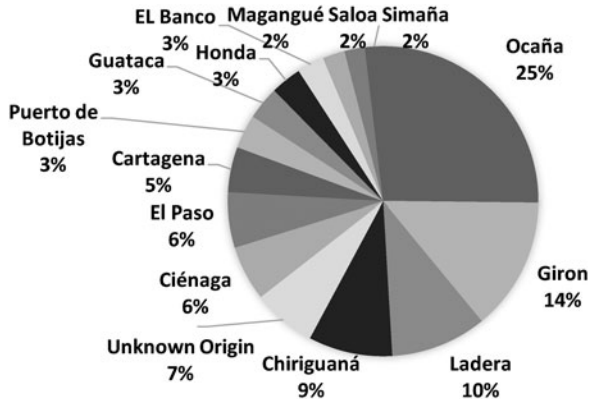
FIGURE 8
Relative importance of the value of Mompox imports by market 1790.

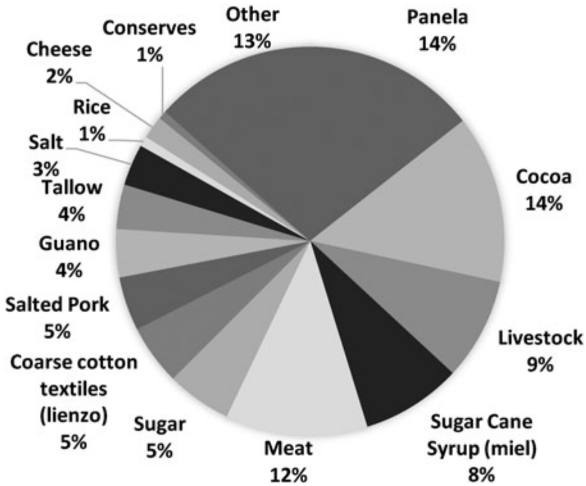


Source: Appendix 1.

networks as Sánchez (2011) has shown through probate inventories. Finally, 26 per cent of imports were supplied by nodes in the *Momposina* Depression (19 per cent), Cartagena (4 per cent) and the ports on the Magdalena Delta (1 per cent).

Cash crops dominated imports in the inland port (Figure 9). Cocoa accounted for 14 per cent of the value of Mompox imports, 75 per cent of which came from Girón (44.25 per cent), Ocaña (25 per cent) and Girón's satellite ports of Botijas and El Pedral (20 per cent). The remaining share of cocoa imports was supplied by markets in the Momposina depression. The data complement other scholar's evidence on the importance of cocoa production in the region (Tovar 1988; Daza 2009). Yet, this is clearly a sector that deserves further research. Unrefined cane sugar (*panela*) and sugar accounted for 14 and 5 per cent of imports respectively. *Panela* has been an important source of calories for the inhabitants of the region up to these days, yet, it is surprising the geographical scope of its supply chain during the late colonial period. In fact, Ocaña supplied 70 per cent of this product and other upstream ports such as Girón, San Bartolomé and Honda accounted for 10 per cent of the supply. The scope of the sugar network is even more impressive. Ocaña again dominated exports (79 per cent) but Honda supplied way up to 10 per cent. The remaining 11 per cent was supplied by producers in the *Momposina* Depression. Sugar cane syrup (*miel*), an input for alcoholic beverages, made up 8 per cent of total imports, the supply of which was dominated by mills in Mompox's hinterland. Most of the installed capacity of the hinterland was used for the output of goods with little added value while the refined

FIGURE 9
Relative importance of specific commodities in the overall value of Mompox imports 1790.



Source: Appendix 1.

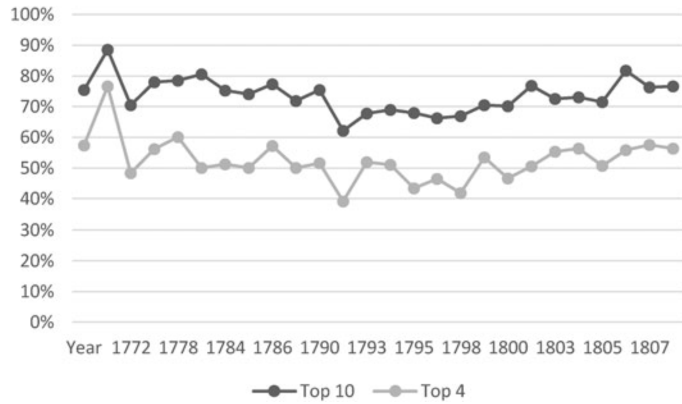
products such as *panela* and sugar, that better endured transportation costs, were left to long-distant suppliers.

Meat, livestock, salted pork and cheese accounted for roughly 28 per cent of the value of Mompox receipts, the supply of which was heavily dominated by Chiriguaná, El Paso and Valledupar. The supply of other foodstuffs such as rice, corn and potatoes were, as expected, dominated by Mompox hinterland. Yet, bulky products such as garlic and corn were imported from upstream ports. Finally, coarse cotton textiles (*lienzos*) also claimed an important share of Mompox imports (5 per cent). The export of these textiles was heavily concentrated in Girón, the collection centre of the manufacturing regions of eastern New Granada.

Once provided this outline of Mompox imports, it is possible to analyse the nature of exports. Figure 10 is a good start. It shows the relative importance of the value of the top ten goods exported. Export diversification is beyond doubt. In the early 1770s the top ten goods accounted for 85-90 per cent of total exports. This share dropped to 70-75 per cent during the 1790s. Yet, in similar ways to the trend of market diversification, export diversification experienced a downturn in 1805 with a huge concentration spike in 1808. In order to understand this pattern, we should analyse the performance of the main commodities involved.

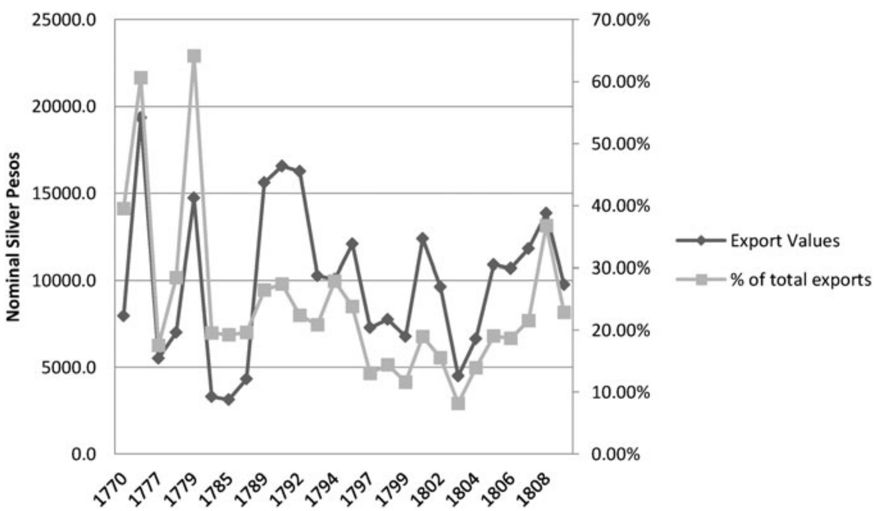
Cocoa used to be the main export commodity of Mompox (Figure 11). In the early 1770s it accounted for roughly 56 per cent of the total value of

FIGURE 10
Relative importance of top 4 and top 10 commodities in the overall value of Mompox exports 1770-1809.



Source: Appendix 1.

FIGURE 11
Value of cocoa exports and its relative importance in the overall value of Mompox exports.



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exports. This share dropped to 18 per cent during the 1790s and surged again in 1808 to roughly 30 per cent. In absolute terms, cocoa exports experienced upsurges in 1772 (80 tonnes), 1790 (60 tonnes) and 1808 (35 tonnes). It seems that the cocoa supply was quite inelastic to prices. We have performed log–log regressions between quantities exported and prices to explore these issues. The results are only statically significant once we have lagged the regression 5 years. Even the latter result shows that while prices were going up, the supply contracted. Given the nature of the production function of cocoa, this result is not surprising. Yet, the incapacity of cocoa producers to meet the windfall in prices suggests that the sector was facing hard times. Be that as it may, in absolute and relative terms, cocoa lost ground as the main export commodity of Mompox. Granados and Pinto (2019) have stated that the economic policy that followed the Maracaibo–Guayaquil conflict over the supply of New Spain markets led to the collapse of cocoa production in northeastern New Granada. Pamplona's producers redirected output towards domestic markets reducing profit margins. However, had this flooding of domestic markets taken place, a collapse in coca prices would have ensued. Our evidence shows that this was not the case (Figure 11). Given the scope of this paper, in a sequel paper we will expand on relative prices analysis (Figure 12).

Mompox cocoa exports served internal and international markets. As Figure 13 shows, Cartagena and, increasingly Santa Marta and Barranquilla absorbed the lion's share of these exports. Some of this cocoa was no doubt consumed in the ports but most of it was destined for European markets. Roughly 3 per cent of the registers include information as follows: «cocoa shipped to Cartagena to be sold in Cádiz». On the other hand, it is surprising the volatile, yet impressive importance of mining markets in Antioquia as outlets for Mompox's cocoa. In the same vein, markets in Santa Marta province also became important, which again lends evidence to the existence of market-oriented peasantry whose disposable income allowed them to import cash crops produced on the Andean slopes. The 1802-1808 years again are of great interest. The collapse of mining markets as outlets for cocoa heavily explained the overall decline in Mompox exports. In the same vein, the rise and fall of Santa Marta as the main linkage with the Atlantic economy and the brief revival of Cartagena in 1808, show the powerful impact of viceregal port policies that deserve further research.

Sugar cane derivatives followed cocoa as the main export commodities. Sugar exports boomed after 1789. Exports grew from less than 5 tonnes in the 1770s to roughly 48 tonnes a year during the 1790s (Figures 14 and 15). The trend, however, was highly volatile with three major peaks in 1792, 1800 and 1807 followed by contractions in 1793, 1804 and 1809. The latter was particularly harming reducing exports to just 8 tonnes a year. Like

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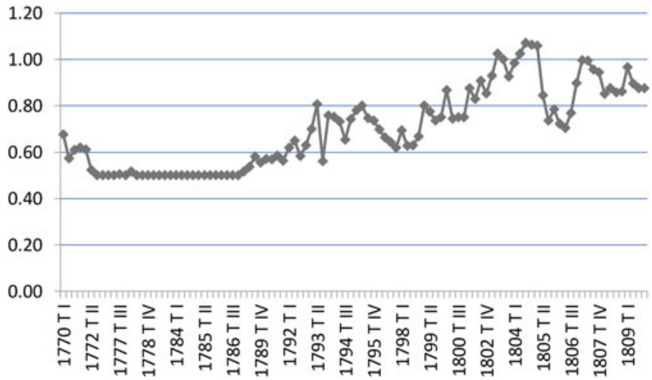
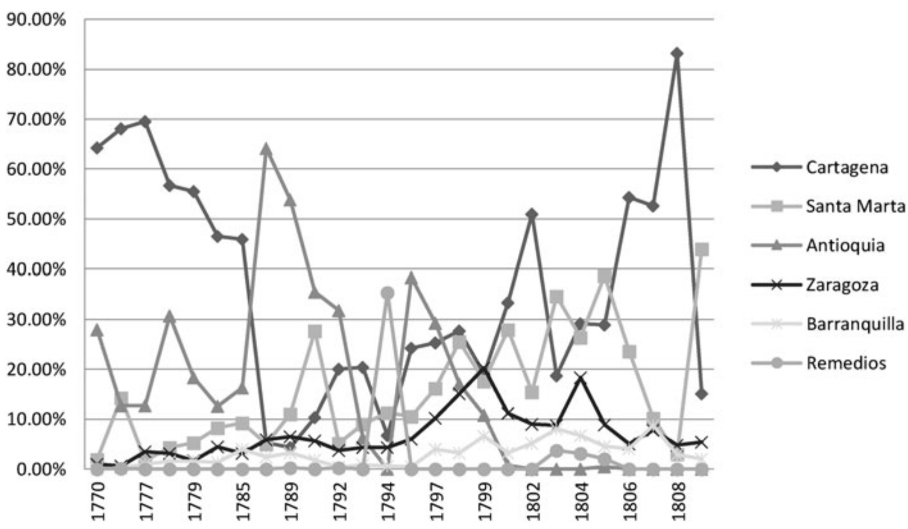
FIGURE 12
Trimestral cocoa prices in Mompox. Silver reales per millar.



Source: Appendix 1.

FIGURE 13
Relative importance of the main outlets for cocoa exports from Mompox.

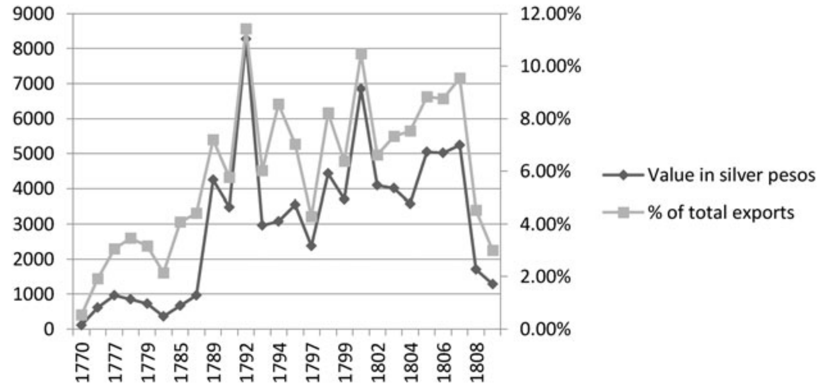


Source: Appendix 1.

cocoa, sugar exports served domestic and international markets. The upsurge in sugar exports after 1780 was no doubt the result of the collapse of Haitian exports. Mompox merchants started to export sugar to

FIGURE 14

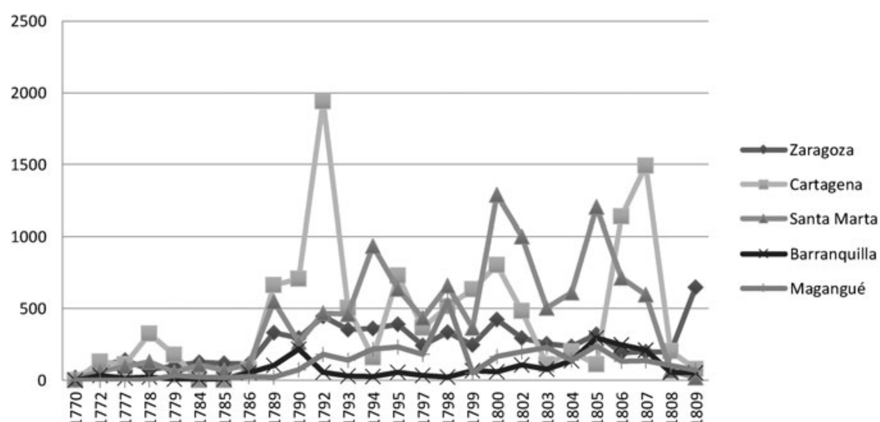
Value of sugar exports and its relative importance in the value of total Mompox exports.



Source: Appendix 1.

FIGURE 15

Volume of sugar exports (in arrobas) from Mompox and their destinations 1770-1809.



Source: Appendix 1.

unexpected markets in Europe and the Caribbean[33]. Cartagena, Barranquilla and Santa Marta served alternatively as the collection centres of these exports. Though important, mining markets' share of total exports

[33] Between 1790 and 1793 sugar remittances from Mompox to far-flung markets in the Caribbean such as Florida, Puerto Rico and sugar enterpôts such as La Habana, shows the impact of the changing conditions in the global supply of this commodity.

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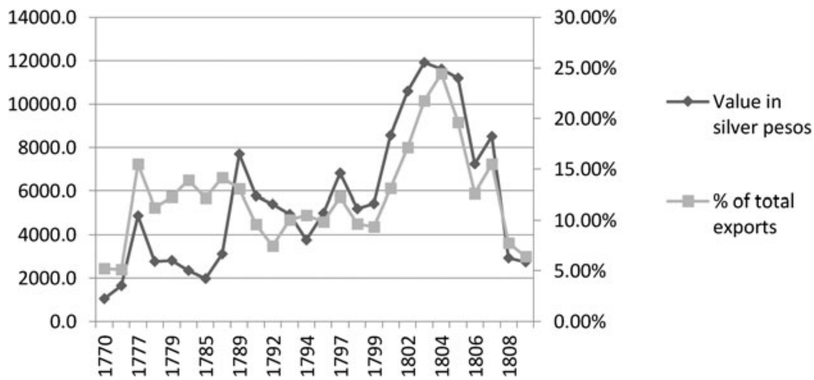
FIGURE 16
Value of panela exports and its relative importance in the value of total Mompox exports.



Source: Appendix 1.

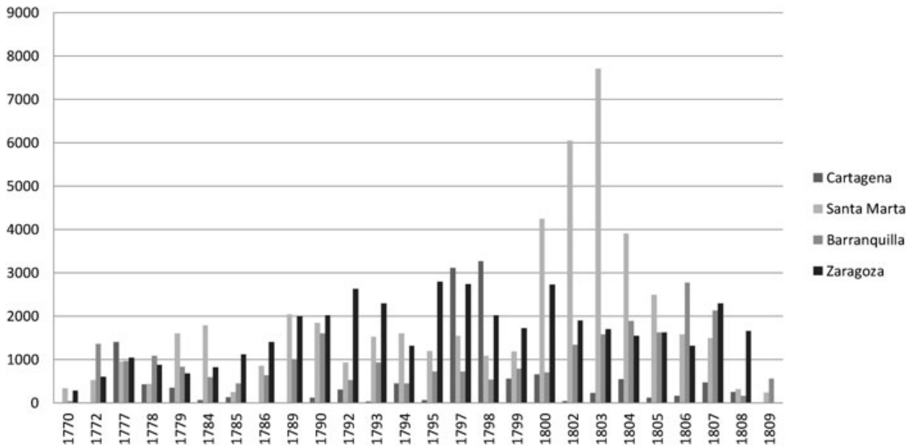
declined throughout the period from 60 per cent in the early 1770s to less than 10 per cent in the 1800s. More important was the expansion of sugar consumption in markets in the Mompox depression and the hinterland of Santa Marta and Cartagena. Magangué and Valledupar, for instance, absorbed up to 12 per cent of sugar exports in the 1800s. These figures provide evidence on the market deepening and widening in these regions.

Panela exports played a larger role than sugar in total exports (Figure 16). They accounted for 10 per cent of the value of global exports between 1770 and 1798 and 15 per cent afterwards. In absolute terms, the growth was impressive. Panela exports grew from 50 tonnes on average during the 1770s to 120 tonnes on average during the 1790s[34]. Yet, as happened to other commodities, panela exports severely contracted after 1805. As Figure 17 shows, the main outlets for this commodity were the ports on the Atlantic and the mining regions. Yet, the growth in panela consumption in the Depression and Eastern Cartagena is noteworthy. The upsurge on exports between 1798 and 1804 was led by Santa Marta and, to lesser extent, by Barranquilla. The available statistics on commodity exports in these ports (McFarlane 1993) suggests that panela was not reshipped to markets in the Caribbean and Europe. Therefore, it seems rather that this commodity was consumed in the ports or sold for coastal trade.

Salted meat was an important branch of Mompox remittances as well. Even though it was part of the export boom of the 1790s, it lost ground in

[34] If compared with the data from the 1750s unearthed by De la Cruz (2017), the growth is even more impressive.

FIGURE 17
Volume of panela exports from Mompox (in arrobas) and their main destinations 1770-1809.



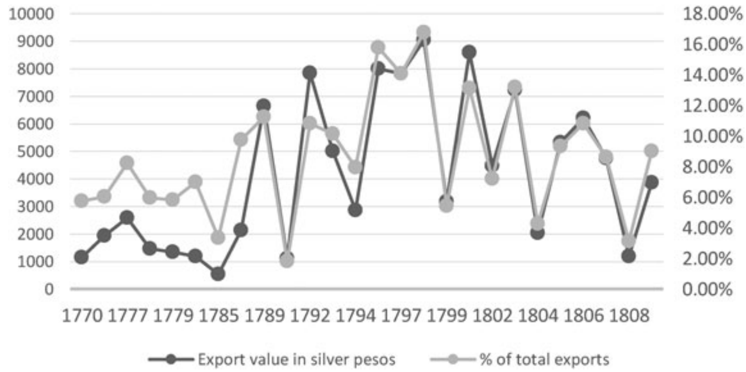
Source: Appendix 1.

absolute and relative terms to other commodities. Exports dropped from 35.7 tonnes in 1790 to 36.3 tonnes in 1800 and 23.4 tonnes in 1807. Its share on the value of total exports also dropped from 9 per cent in the 1780s to 4.5 per cent in the 1790s and 5.8 per cent in the 1800s. The decline in the export of salted meat was compensated by goods with higher added value such as cheese, tallow, candles and soap[35]. The latter four accounted for 8.7 per cent of total exports in the 1790s. Swine and salted pork also contributed significantly to the surge in the value of exports. The main outlets for all these commodities were the mining markets. Zaragoza, for instance, absorbed on average 48 per cent of Mompox exports of salted meat, 55 per cent of cheese and 55.6 per cent of swine. The mining belts were also the main outlet for foodstuffs such as corn, manioc and potatoes. Even though the value of the latter was not important in absolute terms, in some years they accounted for more than 10 per cent of the value of total exports. This lends evidence to the importance of inland navigation in the transport of bulky products to upstream pockets of food deficits. Finally, other markets for husbandry products were the ports on the Atlantic. Cartagena, Santa Marta and ports in the Magdalena delta absorbed way

[35] Manufacturing and artisanry in the port have not attracted enough attention form historians. For an excellent overview see Solano (2011).

FIGURE 18

Value of lienzos exports and their relative importance in the value of Mompox exports.



Source: Appendix 1.

up to 20 per cent of salted meat shipments. Cartagena was the main market for candles while Santa Marta was the main outlet for soap.

The regional export of textiles and manufactures constitutes one of the most revealing aspects of Mompox's role as entrepôt (Figure 18). These exports grew from 5 per cent of total exports in 1770 to 15 per cent in 1800. Coarse cotton textiles (*lienzos de la tierra*) and cotton and woolen sheets (*mantas de la tierra o del Reino*) were avidly consumed in coastal and mining markets. It is revealing, for instance, that Santa Marta, Cartagena and Barranquilla, consumed on average roughly 12 per cent of these textiles. Riohacha, whose global impact in Mompox's exports was peripheral, absorbed notwithstanding up to 24 per cent of textile exports from the inland port during key years. Further research is needed to establish the role of Andean textiles in the trade networks of a key region for the coastal trade of southern Caribbean. Antioquia and Zaragoza, on the other hand, were key markets of textiles despite the volatile nature of their receipts. This suggests that Mompox merchants acted as middleman in the networks that connected the eastern and western portions of the viceroyalty. Yet, the main markets for Andean textiles were those in the Momposina Depression and Santa Marta's hinterland. Valledupar, Chiriguaná and Magangué were the main outlets for these commodities. This evidence adds fuel to the case for the expansion of the market economy in these regions.

Scholars have argued that by the late colonial period, European textiles were already driving domestic textiles out of the market. As Moreno (2013) has shown, most of the European clothes imported through Cartagena were sold in coastal markets and not in the Andean interior. Yet, the fact that the consumption of Andean textiles in the coast expanded during these years shows that they coexisted with higher-quality European textiles as differentiated products in a segmented market. Torres has shown that in markets in the interior of the viceroyalty both types of textiles faced different demand functions (2015). These issues, again, deserve further research. On the other hand, the growth in the export of other manufactures such as pita fibres, sacks and baskets suggest that the commodity export boom was promoting subsidiary activities across the region.

Manufactures produced in Mompox's hinterland also experienced a period of expansion. Hats produced in small villages such as Tacamocho and Cascajal were redistributed by Mompox merchants towards upstream ports. Honda, for instance consumed 21 per cent of hats shipped upriver. Mats (*esteras*) produced in Mompox also constituted an important fraction of exports. They were avidly consumed in the Atlantic ports and in the Santa Marta province. Pottery, finally, also experiences a process of expansion. Mining regions and settlements such as Chiruguaná imported increasing amounts of *loza criolla* (pottery) that suggests that these regions not only consumed cash crops, but also durable goods associated with the consumption of them. To use Jean de Vries' jargon, they were acquiring «consumption bundles» (2008). It would be a far-fetched exaggeration to state that the peasantry of the region was experiencing something close to an industrious revolution. Yet, future research on the way in which these manufactures were produced and the way in which they shaped consumption patterns in the countryside, would be promising.

Upstream exports, finally, also surged during the late colonial period. The main commodity traded upriver was salt produced in Ciénaga, a settlement nearby the port of Santa Marta. Two types of salts were produced: *sal espuma* and *sal piedra*. The difference between the two was the condensation method used to craft them. Mompox merchants imported the two varieties and re-exported them to mining markets and upstream ports such as Girón and Ocaña. Isolated, yet revealing remittances were also sent to Honda and Nare. These flows suggest that Atlantic salt was successfully penetrating in markets traditionally linked with salt produced in the Andean heartland[36]. An analysis of relative prices is badly needed to understand these flows.

Surprisingly, another branch of upstream trade was the export of sea and river fish. Even Honda, a port well-known for its fisheries, imported some species from Mompox. This is a call for environmental and economic historians to further study changes in this sector. Luxury products, finally, complete this overview of Mompox exports. Shrimps, medicinal herbs and condiments constituted small yet interesting portion of exports. Most of

[36] For an introduction to Andean salt see Sánchez-Coral (2011).

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them were sent to Bogotá, Honda and distant markets such as Popayán and Quito.

5. FINAL REMARKS

The lack of quantitative data has been one of the most important obstacles in understanding the role of markets and trade flows in 18th-century New Granada. Anecdotic evidence has been the main source to date to understand these issues. This paper has followed an alternative path by treating contemporaries' reports as hypothesis to be quantitatively tested. The analysis of the records of the Mompox custom house allowed us to undertake an empirical examination of several issues around the role of inland ports in interregional trade. Even though we essentially provide a lower bound estimate on trade flows, we contend that Humboldt's diagnosis of the magnitude and importance of river trade deserves to be taken seriously. Mompox not only grew thanks to the expansion of European imports but also thanks to the surge of upstream and downstream trade in domestic goods (*bienes de la tierra*). The paper has provided evidence on the expansion of the connections between Andean and coastal markets. After a mostly descriptive work, we have arrived at three main contentions.

First, the inland port experienced a boom–bust cycle during the late colonial period. The export of domestic goods doubled between 1770 and 1800. Yet, exports subsequently collapsed way down to the 1770s levels during the 1802-1809 years[37]. A systematic explanation on the motives behind this cycle will require data beyond the scope of this paper. Yet, we have provided some preliminary forays. The collapse of mining markets and the impact of Atlantic wars on trade flows are probably the main explanatory variable in the contraction. Our data also show that price increases do not fully explain the movements in the value of exports of domestic goods. Our export price index suggests that price levels surge 20 per cent between 1770 and the mid-1790s. Afterwards an important inflation trend clearly took root with prices expanding roughly 60 per cent during the next 10 years. Exports doubled during the first inflation wave and collapsed when inflation became stronger. This suggests that in terms of demand curves, quantity effects were bigger than price effects at least during the first period of expansion. Income effects and elasticities can also explain this conundrum but, again, more data are needed. Yet, the impact of inflation on exports should not be disregarded completely. The

[37] Political historians have suggested that Mompox experienced a local political crisis after roughly 1805 exacerbated by recurrent floods of the Magdalena River. The extent to which the political and the economic crises worked synergistically remains to be determined. See Gutiérrez (2012).

Paasche index is a reminder for caution. By encouraging the expansion of total income of upstream producers, prices could have been important in explaining, at the margin, the surge in interregional trade. Be that it as it may, our price data confirm the inflationary wave that the viceroyalty was experiencing as price data for other regions has shown.

Second, Mompox benefitted from an important process of market diversification. In the early 1770s Cartagena was the main destination of Mompox exports. In the 1790s, however, the inland port served a broad set of domestic and international markets. Mining regions became the main trader partners of Mompox merchants during the expansion phase. The region absorbed roughly 40 per cent of Mompox exports. Our figures prove that the region shelved subsidiary sectors that took advantage of the upsurge in gold production. Further research is needed to understand the mechanics of trade with the mining regions as well as the role of the Mompox's foundry in bullion markets. The inland port also benefited from the expansion of Atlantic markets during these years. New Granada, in fact, experienced an important commodity boom during the 1780s and the 1790s that opened new opportunities for growth. The inland port was strategically located to serve as entrepôt for the commodities that from the interior of the viceroyalty were released to international markets. Even though Cartagena was still important as Mompox's outlet on the Atlantic, it was the relationship with Santa Marta and the ports on the Magdalena's delta that took the lion's share of the expansion. Finally, both the mining and commodity boom had important spillovers over regions at the two flanks of the Magdalena rivers. The relative importance of these regions in the overall value of Mompox exports expanded. In other words, they became important outlets for a wide range of commodities. Again, this connection should be the topic of future inquiries.

Finally, the analysis of the composition of Mompox exports suggests that the region experienced a process of market deepening (an increase in the volume, number and quality of commodities exchanged) and widening (an increase in geographical size of the market). Even though the export of cash crops such as cocoa and sugar surged in absolute terms, their relative importance declined during this period. Despite this decline, unexpected demand in the hinterlands of both Santa Marta and Cartagena provinces increased the purchases of cash crops. In the meantime, a broad set of consumer goods with higher added value started to be the subject of interregional trade and consumption. Andean textiles, local manufactures and dairy products flowed across markets that no doubt experienced a positive shift in disposable incomes. Even upstream exports of salt and manufactures soared to meet the demand of markets in the Andes. Our data, then, provide preliminary evidence on regional specialisation and indirect insights on peasant market involvement. To what extent does Smithian growth help to explain the process of New Granada's economic expansion during the second half of the 18th century? To what extent does the collapse in markets in the early 1800s explain the sluggish long-term economic performance of the region? These issues, naturally, are the matter of future inquiries.

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Appendix 1

Mompox daily logbooks of the Proyecto kept in the AGN

Year	Section	Reference
1770	Anexo III (Real Hacienda Cuentas)	1560c
1772	Anexo III (Real Hacienda Cuentas)	2147c
1777	Anexo III (Real Hacienda Cuentas)	1529c
1778	Anexo III (Real Hacienda Cuentas)	2356c
1779	Anexo III (Real Hacienda Cuentas)	1561c
1784	Anexo III (Real Hacienda Cuentas)	1704c
1785	Anexo III (Real Hacienda Cuentas)	1465c
1786	Anexo III (Real Hacienda Cuentas)	1524c
1789	Anexo III (Real Hacienda Cuentas)	2143c
1790	Anexo III (Real Hacienda Cuentas)	2867c
1792	Anexo III (Real Hacienda Cuentas)	2098c
1793	Anexo III (Real Hacienda Cuentas)	2710c
1794	Anexo II (Alcabalas)	Box 140 File 3
1795	Anexo III (Real Hacienda Cuentas)	1604c
1797	Anexo III (Real Hacienda Cuentas)	2365c
1798	Anexo III (Real Hacienda Cuentas)	1937c
1799	Anexo II (Alcabalas)	Box 265 File 3
1800	Anexo III (Real Hacienda Cuentas)	1966c
1802	Anexo III (Real Hacienda Cuentas)	2748c
1803	Anexo III (Real Hacienda Cuentas)	2750c
1804	Anexo III (Real Hacienda Cuentas)	2836c
1805	Anexo III (Real Hacienda Cuentas)	2753c
1806	Anexo III (Real Hacienda Cuentas)	2790c
1807	Anexo III (Real Hacienda Cuentas)	2762c
1808	Anexo III (Real Hacienda Cuentas)	2669c
1809	Anexo II (Alcabalas)	Box 178 File 2
Alcabalas Logbooks		
1790	Anexo III (Real Hacienda Cuentas)	2029c

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Appendix 2

LSO Regression outputs. Value of Mompox exports as a funcion of Laspayre and Paasche price indexes.

```
. regress mompoxexp laspeyreindx

      Source |       SS       df       MS              Number of obs =      26
-------------+------------------------------           F(  1,    24) =    5.82
       Model |  1.3610e+09     1  1.3610e+09           Prob > F      =  0.0238
    Residual |  5.6113e+09    24   233805967           R-squared     =  0.1952
-------------+------------------------------           Adj R-squared =  0.1617
       Total |  6.9724e+09    25   278895644           Root MSE      =   15291

------------------------------------------------------------------------------
   mompoxexp |      Coef.   Std. Err.      t    P>|t|     [95% Conf. Interval]
-------------+----------------------------------------------------------------
laspeyreindx |   307.8545   127.5959     2.41   0.024     44.50958    571.1994
       _cons |   8331.224   15343.35     0.54   0.592    -23335.89    39998.34
```

```
. regress mompoxexp paascheindx

      Source |       SS       df       MS              Number of obs =      26
-------------+------------------------------           F(  1,    24) =   95.48
       Model |  5.5718e+09     1  5.5718e+09           Prob > F      =  0.0000
    Residual |  1.4006e+09    24  58356916.6           R-squared     =  0.7991
-------------+------------------------------           Adj R-squared =  0.7908
       Total |  6.9724e+09    25   278895644           Root MSE      =  7639.2

------------------------------------------------------------------------------
   mompoxexp |      Coef.   Std. Err.      t    P>|t|     [95% Conf. Interval]
-------------+----------------------------------------------------------------
 paascheindx |   478.2729   48.94668     9.77   0.000     377.2519    579.2939
       _cons |   9693.511    3877.24     2.50   0.020      1691.28    17695.74
------------------------------------------------------------------------------
```


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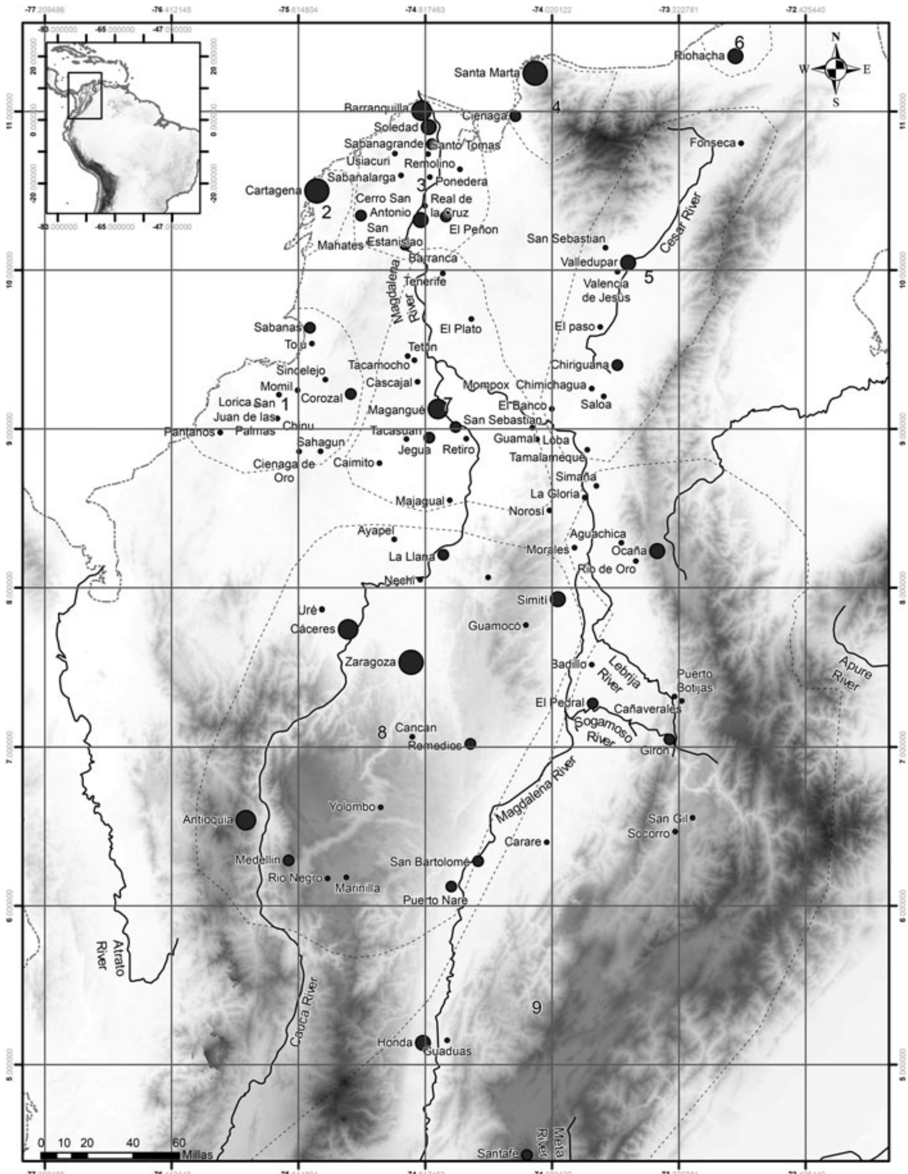
FIGURE A1
Mompox exports of domestic goods and their markets during the late colonial period. Points weighted by their importance in silver pesos. Regions described in text.



Source: Appendix 1.

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