

## The Republican Experience. The Texture of the Political Community in the Early Nineteenth Century Colombia

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Between 1808 and 1825 the Spanish American territories experienced a diverse array of transformations: the absence of the king due to the French invasion to the peninsula, the conformation of juntas de Cadiz and the first experience of political organization in several territories of Spanish America, the military moment of the *reconquista*, and finally, the last wave of military struggles of independence. These years have been associated with the pos-colonial period and considered under the light of the exercises of the national construction that seem to cross the nineteenth century. In this paper, I suggest that during the first years after the independence was the republic, nor the nation, the privileged category that gave sense to the political order. Of course, this argument cannot neglect the importance that in the coming years the nation would have, just it serves as a reminder of the importance of historicize the forms of the political community and do not take for granted categories such as the nation, just because the familiarity that we tend to have with this kind of concepts.

Thus, I suggest the possibility of taking the language of Republic into account to understand the type of political community that early 19<sup>th</sup> century elites were trying to build. The text shows the centrality of the republic to imagine the character of the political community in the early years of this construction. Whether or not this order was factually “constructed” is a problem that this paper cannot cover. The paper does not want to identify if the image of the republic was far or close from a “pure” classic ideal, or a well-defined tradition of thought, therefore, I do not try to identify how “pure” or contaminated, or how loyal to a philosophical tradition were the actors. In this sense, the text recognizes, as Erika Pani insists, that we cannot conceive the republicanism

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as a discrete theory, but as a language, as resource within the “rhetoric political arsenal of the period” that might allow the researcher to “restore the “deeply contentious and strategic character of the political discourse”<sup>2</sup>. In a similar way, Luis Castro Leyva emphasized the importance of taking into account the rhetorical “estate of the question” to understand the eloquence of republican liberty<sup>3</sup>. As Roger Chartier shows<sup>4</sup> we cannot merge in the same category –discourses- two realms of inquiry of the researcher: the discursive and the non-discursive-practices. As limited as any historical exercise is, this text is focused on the discursive practices in early nineteenth century. By doing this, I do not want to simplify or show how discourses “created” a reality; but, on the other hand, I want to identify the main discursive practices during the first attempt to construct a political order after the independence wars<sup>5</sup>.

Thus, the Republic as the form of the political community appeared in different spaces and discourses, and it was promoted and expected by several actors. Republic was the solution, partial and unstable, to the question of what kind of political order had to be promoted, expected, and created. In this sense, we would need to take seriously the language in which was proclaimed and imagined the new political community to understand the extraordinary frequency of words

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<sup>2</sup> In words of Pani: El concebir al “liberalismo” y el “republicanismo” no como “teorías” acotadas e incompatibles sino como lenguajes, como elementos dentro del arsenal retórico de los políticos de la época, permite restaurar el sentido profundamente contencioso y estratégico del discurso político. Es una manera –ciertamente no la única— de desenganchar nuestros análisis del pensamiento político de las dicotomías –liberalismo-conservadurismo, éxito-fracaso, modernidad-tradición, propio-importado, modelo latino-modelo anglosajón— que los han encerrado en un círculo” Erika Panni, “Maquiavelo en el Septentrión. Las posibilidades del republicanismo en Hispanoamérica” (Msc), 2009, p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> In Luis Castro Leiva’s words: “la libertad política republicana señala, precisamente, que ésta se acomodó y transformó dentro del “estado del arte” retórico de la época, entendido en aquel entonces como persuasión” Luis Castro Leiva. *De La Patria Boba a La Teología Bolivariana: Ensayos De Historia Intelectual*. 1st ed. Caracas, Venezuela: Monte Avila Editores, 1991, p. 25.

<sup>4</sup> Roger Chartier. “L’histoire entre récit et connaissance.” *MLN* 109 (1994): 583-600. p. 584.

<sup>5</sup> In the same line, Roberto Breña, taking into account the recent discussions on conceptual history and history of politic languages, insisted: “Quizá lo que más podemos decir es que los cambios políticos, sociales y económicos contenidos en esas propuestas discursivas se llevaron a la práctica pocas veces, o mejor todavía, que *siendo estas propuestas un cierto tipo de práctica*, no modificaron las prácticas *concretas* con la celeridad, la profundidad y la resonancia que planteaban discursivamente” In “Las conmemoraciones de los bicentenarios y el liberalismo hispánico: ¿historia intelectual o historia intelectualizada?” *Ayer* 69, 2008 (1): 189-219, p. 219.

like republic, moral order, and passions during these years. This awareness will allow us to understand better the “texture” of politics at the beginning of the modern political communities of the nineteenth century. The first part of the text describes the republican horizon that seemed to pervade the form of the political community during the first years after the independence within the complex of invocations to the political community (nation, fatherland), especially in the so-called Gran Colombia (1821-1830), a Republic integrated by three states: Nueva Granada, Ecuador and Venezuela that was dissolved towards 1830 and gave place to three new republics. In the second part, I describe how the Catholic religion was seen as fundamental for the republic, as one the most important vertices that were informing and shaping the form of the political community, at least, during the first years after the independence.

## 1. The ambiguous form of the Political Community

Yo no vine al gobierno a organizar y conservar, sino a crearlo todo, según el mandato de la ley fundamental y de la constitución. No tuve por delante administración alguna que me sirviese de modelo para conducirme en la mía (...) Nací colombiano y moriré colombiano; las doctrinas republicanas han penetrado en mi espíritu, y nunca seré sino republicano<sup>6</sup>

After the independence wars and the first attempts to construct a Republic between 1810-1814<sup>7</sup>, the 1820s started with a singular historic consciousness: the republic had been established and need to be promoted. In this section, I want to show the republic was a privileged reference, not merely as a form of government, but especially as a way to give sense, to delimit, and to define the political community. The language of the period is not solely about events, efforts, sacrifices,

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<sup>6</sup> Francisco de Paula Santander (1827) “El general Francisco de Paula Santander renuncia por segunda vez ante el congreso de la República la vicepresidencia del Estado, a que fue llamado por segunda vez por los votos de la nación y del cuerpo legislativo, conforme a la constitución, Palacio de Bogotá a 25 de abril de 1827”. In *Escritos políticos y mensajes administrativos 1820-1837* Francisco de Paula Santander. Bogotá: Fundación Francisco de Paula Santander-Biblioteca de la Presidencia de la República. pp. 116, 118.

<sup>7</sup> A good reference for this this period is: Guillermo Sosa Abella. *Representación e independencia, 1810-1816*. Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Antropología e Historia, 2006. See also the compiled sources of this first process. Armando Martínez Garnica. *Actas de formación de Juntas y declaraciones de Independencia (1809-1822): Reales Audiencias de Quito, Caracas y Santa Fé*. Bucaramanga, Colombia: Universidad Industrial de Santander, 2008.

and achievements<sup>8</sup>, it insists also on the promotion of the moral forces<sup>9</sup>, and the conservation, prosperity and happiness of the Republic. In 1821 Antonio Nariño, as acting vice-president in 1821, offered to the congress a project of Constitution and recognized he wanted to avoid the “custom of embracing blindly uses and practices of foreign nations, just because they are more antique and enlighten than us”<sup>10</sup>, even though he expected that the rich productions of the New Republic will reach overseas countries”<sup>11</sup>. In his discourse, there is an ambiguity that we could identify in different sources of the period, a complex use of republic, nation, and fatherland (patria). These words appeared in different forms, and invocations, with different purposes, and aiming to name the form of the political community:

Una República naciente sobre una inmensa extensión de tierra, enriquecida con los mas preciosos dones de la benéfica Providencia: habitada por hombres que han preferido la muerte a á ignominiosa esclavitud, santificada con el martirio de sus sabios, y honrada con la sangre de sus héroes. Tal es la Patria, colombianos, que os habéis ganado por precio de vuestra constancia, de vuestras virtudes y sufrimientos. Tal es la Nación cuya existencia encomendada á los auspicios de este día caminará rápidamente por grados de gloria y prosperidad, que no es dado alcanzar á la humana previsión<sup>12</sup>

In the same year, Francisco de Paula Santander, in his discourse as Vice-president, recognized that “our political relationships just recently have born, because of politics” and the task, he insisted, was “to construct a law’s kingdom to subdue in the obedience men shaped by victory and constituted by servile passions”<sup>13</sup>. The same day, Bolívar proclaimed as president of Colombia:

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<sup>8</sup>*El Zurriago. Todas las barreras civiles, políticas y judiciales, llegan á hacerse iluorias sin la libertad de imprenta.*- Constant. T.2. N.1. Bogotá, Domingo 16 de Diciembre de 1827; *El Huerfanito Bogotano. Al tiempo y a la verdad.* Bogotá, 1826. Imprenta de Espinosa, por Valentín Molano.

<sup>9</sup> *El Huerfanito*, 1826, No. 2, p. 2; Santander, 1827, p. 120.

<sup>10</sup> “He procurado en este trabajo precaverme cuanto me ha sido posible de la contagiosa manía de abrazar ciegamente los usos y prácticas de las naciones extranjeras, solo porque son mas antiguas e ilustradas que nosotros” Antonio Nariño, 1821 in José Félix Blanco and Ramón Azpurúa. *Documentos para la historia de la vida pública del Libertador*. Reedición conmemorativa. Caracas: Comité Ejecutivo del Bicentenario de Simón Bolívar, 1978, p. 618

<sup>11</sup> “Atravesando los mares con las ricas producciones de su suelo” Nariño (1821) in Blanco, 1978, p. 612.

<sup>12</sup> Nariño (1821) in Blanco, 1978, p. 606.

<sup>13</sup> Francisco de Paula Santander (1821) “Discurso pronunciado por el General Santander al tomar posesión de la vicepresidencia en la villa del Rosario de Cúcuta. 3 de Octubre de 1821”. In Santander, 1988, p. 42.

Yo siento la necesidad de dejar el primer puesto de la República, al que el pueblo señale como al jefe de su corazón. Yo soy el hijo de la guerra (...) esta espada no puede servir de nada el día de paz, y éste debe ser el último de mi poder; porque así lo he jurado para mí porque lo he prometido a Colombia; y porque no puede haber República donde el pueblo no está seguro del ejercicio de sus propias facultades. Un hombre como yo es un ciudadano peligroso en un gobierno popular (...) Prefiero el título de ciudadano al de Libertador, porque éste emana de la guerra, aquél emana de las leyes<sup>14</sup>

Politics, as an activity regarding the self-constitution of society and a concern related to the order's construction, appeared, then, as a key element; the task would be to construct an order inspired by republican principles<sup>15</sup>. Simón Bolívar, in a letter to the Congress of Colombia in 1821 regarding his triumph in the battle of Carabobo, proclaimed: "it was confirmed, yesterday with a great victory, the political birth of the Republic of Colombia"<sup>16</sup>. In his discourse to the first general Congress of Colombia in 1821 to the "peoples and sea and land troops of the Republic"<sup>17</sup>, he insisted that one of the most important institutions of the Republic was the "proportional division of the country in order to achieve a prompt justice administration"<sup>18</sup>. In this sense, he invoked the respect the republic entailed, and the necessary obedience to the public faith, those were, among others, the institutions the Republic required<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> Simón Bolívar, "Discurso pronunciado por Simón Bolívar, libertador, al tomar posesión de la presidencia en la Villa del Rosario de Cúcuta", 3 de Octubre de 1821. In Santander, 1988, p. 145.

<sup>15</sup> Francisco de Paula Santander, 1827. In Santander, 1988. p. 118.

<sup>16</sup> "Ayer se ha confirmado con una espléndida victoria, el nacimiento político de la República de Colombia" See: Simón Bolívar, "Bolívar al Congreso de Colombia. 25 de junio de 1821 in Blanco, 1978, p. 633. Reproduced also in Vicente Lecuna. *Cartas Del Libertador*. 2nd ed. Caracas: Banco de Venezuela, Fundación Vicente Lecuna, 1964.

<sup>17</sup> *Alocución del primer Congreso General de Colombia á todos los pueblos y tropas de mar y tierra de la República*: "Las instituciones de la República: "una proporcionada division del pais para la mas pronta administracion de justicia: la seguridad individual: la economía en los gastos consentidos por vuestros Representantes: un respetuoso cumplimiento á los empeños contraidos con la fé pública: la libertad de imprenta que infunde y circula el espiritu de libertad; tales son en compendio las instituciones que reclama nuestra nueva República" In Blanco, 1978, p. 612

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid* This importance of the obedience as key element in the Republic is traceable in different sources, discourses, and proclamations. For instance, in a letter addressed to the acting vicepresident of the Republic in 1821 requesting the promotion of a General he indicated: "Los recomendables servicios que ha prestado a la República el señor general de Brigada José Tadeo Monagas en esta campaña y en las anteriores desde el año de 1812 distinguiéndose siempre por su valor y audacia, no menos que por su obediencia al gobierno y absoluta consagración a la causa de la libertad, me mueven a presentarlo para el inmediato ascenso a general de division" *Al vicepresidente interino de la República, 25 de agosto*. See: Bolívar, 1821 en Lecuna, 1978, p. 119.

The republic was not the only concept discussed and used in Congress' discussions, on the discourses of the secretaries, or in the articles of the newspapers. Nation, a more familiar concept to name the political community, was also present, nonetheless, its use was ambiguous and was closer to the idea of a community of virtues, and duties rather than a political community invented and imagined through cultural elaborations that it seems to be the case for our contemporary definition of nation<sup>20</sup>. These duties as central part of the Republic started with its magistrates whose first duty "was to arrange its behavior to the laws"<sup>21</sup>. For instance, the secretary of interior and author of the first History of the revolution of Colombia, José Manuel Restrepo, commented in a discourse addressed to the 1824 congress: "New nations emerged from this fight, and they, by rising from the dust of slavery, are going to locate themselves besides the old ones"<sup>22</sup>. In 1822, José Grau published the first political catechism of the independent Colombia. Grau took the well-known form of the religious catechisms to spread the basic notions of the republic; his text became to be used as the basic text by the elementary schools, and was mandatory after the 1826's Plan de Estudios. Here, the principal concern was to instill in the Colombian youth the "basic principles of our politic institutions", those of the

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<sup>20</sup> This way of understand the nation could be identified in several works. See for example some articles in the compilation: Thurner, Mark, and Andrés Guerrero, eds. *After Spanish Rule: Postcolonial Predicaments of the Americas*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003; see also Mallon, Florencia E. *Peasant and Nation: The Making of Postcolonial Mexico and Peru*. University of California Press, 1995; Guardino, Peter. *Peasants, Politics, and the Formation of Mexico's National State: Guerrero, 1800-1857*. 1st ed. Stanford University Press, 2002; and the compilation: M. Joseph, Gilbert, Gilbert M. Joseph, Elsie Rockwell, Ana Alonso, Marjorie Becker, Jan Rus, and Armando Bartra. *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico*. Duke University Press, 1994.

<sup>21</sup> "El deber de un magistrado es arreglar su conducta a las leyes". Santander, 1819, In Luis Horacio López (ed), *A Los Colombianos: Proclamas Y Discursos, 1819-1840*. Bogotá: Fundación para la Conmemoración del Bicentenario del Natalicio y el Sesquicentenario de la Muerte del General Francisco de Paula Santander, 1988, p. 25.

<sup>22</sup> "Nuevas naciones salen de esta lucha que levantándose del polvo de la esclavitud en que antes yacían van a colocarse al lado de las antiguas" José Manuel Restrepo (1824). In Luis Horacio López, *Obra educativa de Santander 1819-1826*. Bogotá: Fundación Francisco de Paula Santander-Biblioteca de la Presidencia de la República, 1990. p. 128.

“Republic, Fatherland (patria), Government, laws and liberty”<sup>23</sup>. From his perspective, the nation was specially tied to republican virtues, and to the learning, by the Colombian youth, of them. Some questions of this catechism could illuminate this point and show the temporary solution to the relationship between nation and republic.

DE LA NACIÓN COLOMBIANA

P. ¿Qué es la nación colombiana o República de Colombia?

R. La reunión de todos los colombianos.

(...)

P. ¿Qué territorio comprende esta República?

R. El mismo que comprendía, el antiguo virreinato de la Nueva Granada y Capitanía general de Venezuela.

(...)

P. ¿Tiene dueño esta República?

R. No, porque siendo libre e independiente, no es ni puede ser el patrimonio de ninguna persona o familia, además que en ella reside esencialmente la soberanía, y por lo mismo le pertenece el derecho de establecer sus leyes fundamentales. (Art. 1º)<sup>24</sup>.

The Republic does not mean only a system of representative government, it was also a privileged reference to the political community –the “people of the Republic”, the health of the Republic-, and it had a spatial meaning –the cities of the Republic, the exterior and/or interior of the Republic. Along 1821, Bolívar in his letters proclaimed to his subalterns and foreign military allies the sentiments of philanthropy, peace, and harmony, of the republic that he presided and of

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<sup>23</sup> In 1822 José Grau wrote the *Catecismo político arreglado a la Constitución de la Republica de Colombia de 30 de agosto de 1821 para el uso de las escuelas de primeras letras del departamento de Orinoco*. It was reprinted in 1824 “Por orden del Supremo gobierno para el uso de las Escuelas de Colombia”. Bogotá: Imprenta de República 1824. This text started to be used in the primary schools and, in 1826, Santander announced that Grau’s catechism would be the text to teach politics to the students of those establishments. On the other side, two of the most important moral catechisms were those of Fleuri and Lorenzo Jerónimo Villanueva. In fact, they continued to be used in the nineteenth century and were reprinted in several times along the century. Thus, in the 1826 *Plan de Estudios*, Francisco de Paula Santander as Vice-president ordered lessons of moral, politics, courtesy (urbanidad). Among the readings ordered were the three catechisms above mentioned: “Art. 13. Las tablas de lecturas (...) contendrán, además de los silabarios, lecciones de moral, religión, constitución del Estado, urbanidad, principios de gramática y ortografía castellana y de las cuatro reglas principales de la aritmética, tanto con respecto a números enteros como a decimales y denominados, y la regla de tres. Los libros serán el catecismo de moral por J. L. Villanueva, la carta de Jiverates a Demonico, el catecismo de Fleuri, el político constitucional de Grau y la geografía de Colombia por Acebedo”. See: Francisco de Paula Santander. *Sobre el plan de estudios*. Bogotá: 18 de marzo de 1826. See also: Fleuri, Claudio (1638) *Catecismo histórico, que contiene en compendio la historia sagrada, y la doctrina chistiana*. Bogotá: Imprenta de la Cualla. 1844; and Villanueva, Joaquín Lorenzo. *Catecismo de moral*. Imprenta Republicana. 1825.

<sup>24</sup> Grau, 1822, pp. 6, 7.

the rising republics of the austral hemisphere he had helped to emerge<sup>25</sup> The Republic, therefore, was invoked not solely as a government procedure, but especially as a way of understanding the political community, it was not only the form of government but also its substance. It was a question of giving content to public affairs, filling it with meaning, delimiting its spaces and guiding its individuals. Thus, the Republic was a privileged reference for the political community. A newspaper during the crises of 1828 proclaimed: “¡Citizens! The Government will call on you shortly. It will show you the image of a Republic threatened on all sides with its heart torn apart by passion, and differences of opinions that make it unsure of itself”<sup>26</sup>.

This comprehension was not restricted to this single newspaper. In the beginning of the first republican construction of the decade, the Congress discussed how did they have to divide the “territory of the Republic”<sup>27</sup>. In the same year, Bolívar invoked the enemies of the Republic<sup>28</sup>, in 1822 he was engaged in “sustaining the constitution of Colombia to not lose the Republic”<sup>29</sup> and in 1823 he insisted the republic of Colombia was pleased to do sacrifices for Peru’s liberties<sup>30</sup>. In this line, Santander as Vice-president in 1821 called the citizens to vote

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<sup>25</sup> In a letter to the Colonel José Pereira in Caracas: “Desde que me acerqué a esta capital dirigí cerca de V.S. un edecán, a ratificarle los sentimientos de filantropía y liberalidad que animan al gobierno de la república que presido” Bolívar, 1821 in Lecuna, 1964, p. 84. In a letter to the general Miguel de la Torre in Caracas: “Dispuesto a promover la paz y Buena armonía entre la república que presido y la nación española”. Bolívar, 1821 in Lecuna, 1964, p. 86. In a letter to the admiral Cochrane in Trujillo: “La mayor satisfacción que mi corazón va a sentir al acercarme a los antiguos imperios de los Incas, y a las repúblicas nacientes del hemisferio austral”. Bolívar, 1821 in Lecuna, 1964, p. 112.

<sup>26</sup> ¡Citizens! was capitalized in the original. *El Amigo del Pueblo*, 1828, No 11, p. 43.

<sup>27</sup> Congreso en la constitución de 1821. *Constitución de la República de Colombia*. 1821. Rosario de Cúcuta. Bogotá.

<sup>28</sup> Al Presidente del Congreso General de Colombia contra la confiscación de los bienes de Francisco Iturbe: “Don Francisco de Iturbe ha emigrado por punto de honor, no por enemigo de la República, y aun cuando lo fuese, él ha contribuido a librarla de sus opresores sirviendo a la humanidad, y cumpliendo con sus propios sentimientos: no de otro modo. Colombia, en prohijar hombres como Iturbe, llena su seno de hombres singulares” Bolívar, 1821 in Lecuna, 1964, p. 120.

<sup>29</sup> Al general Santander en Cuenca, 27 de octubre: “Voy determinado a sostener la constitución de Colombia, para que no se pierda la república”. Bolívar, 1822 en Lecuna, 1964, p. 313.

<sup>30</sup> Al General Mariano Portocarrero, en Guayaquil el 18 de marzo: “La república de Colombia se complace en hacer sacrificios por la libertad del Perú, y hoy mismo están navegando sus batallones en busca de los tiranos del Perú” Al general Santander como Vicepresidente y General de División, en Guayaquil, 13 de marzo: (Bolívar, 1823 en Lecuna, 1964, p. 360.



carefully since in their decisions lie the happiness or misfortune of the republic<sup>31</sup>; some years later he insisted in the favorable idea regarding that civilized nations have had of the Republic of Colombia<sup>32</sup>; and in 1829 in one of his autobiographical writings he described himself as a citizen whose “philanthropic government was perhaps the most republican of all of the states of America, and, inspired by the doctrines of the finest lawyers (...), loved liberty and had an excited passion for the republican forms”<sup>33</sup>. He saw, eight years later, the foundational moment of 1821 as one when the republican principles had governed and crossed the entire political construction as well as its actors:

Bolívar, condecorado con la presidencia de la República y al frente de los libertadores de la patria, y Santander, a la cabeza del gobierno favorecido con la amistad íntima del presidente, rodeado de consejeros íntegros e ilustrados, y auxiliado por la sabiduría de los diputados del pueblo prometían a Colombia una independencia tranquila, una libertad inalterable, quietud, cultura, ilustración, dicha y prosperidad. Tan seguro era este presentimiento, que los cinco primeros años del gobierno de Santander hizo la República progresos muy considerables que no pudieron menos que excitar la atención de los países extranjeros<sup>34</sup>.

In his regard of the 1828 project of Bolívar’s dictatorship, a system where “everything was for the government and nothing for the governed”<sup>35</sup>, this positive assessment of Bolívar’s republican principles changed drastically. An unlimited power was the trigger of crimes, discontents, and

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<sup>31</sup> “Pensad que al nombrar vuestros electores les consignáis el depósito santo que la constitución fió a vuestras manos como la salvaguardia de vuestra libertad. Vuestra elección es la base fundamental de la dicha o de la desgracia de la República (...) Estudiad, pues, ese código, que habéis proclamado con entusiasmo, amadlo como un bien, y cumplidlo fielmente como una obligación que vosotros mismos os habéis impuesto. Sean todas vuestras acciones y derechos arreglados a la ley, y la República de Colombia acabará de fijar irrevocablemente sus destinos” Santander vicepresidente y Restrepo secretario de Estado y del despacho del interior Santander, 1821, 1988. p. 157.

<sup>32</sup> “Debe sernos altamente satisfactorio que la regularidad de nuestra marcha política y el respeto que profesamos a la constitución, hayan inspirado en las naciones civilizadas una idea muy favorable de la República, y todavía tenemos que esperar sucesos de la mayor importancia a su seguridad, dignidad y poder” Santander, 1824, 1988. p. 193.

<sup>33</sup> Memorias sobre el origen, causas y progreso de las desavenencias entre el presidente de la República de Colombia, Simón Bolívar, y el vicepresidente de la misma, Francisco de Paula Santander, escritas por un colombiano en 1829: “Santander, educado desde bien temprano bajo principios liberales, ciudadano de la Nueva Granada cuyo filantrópico gobierno quizás fue el más republicano de todos los nuevos estados de América, y alimentado con las doctrinas de los más ilustres abogados de los derechos del hombre, amaba la libertad y tenía una vehemente pasión por las formas republicanas” . Santander, Francisco de Paula *Escritos Autobiográficos, 1820-1840*. 1st ed. Bogotá: Fundación para la Conmemoración del Bicentenario del Natalicio y el Sesquicentenario de la Muerte del General Francisco de Paula Santander, 1988, p. 37.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, p. 47.

<sup>35</sup> “Todo era para el gobierno, nada para los gobernados”. Santander, 1829, 1988, p. 84.

fermented seeds of uprisings<sup>36</sup>; Bolívar had adopted, in Santander's perspective, a system that deprived Colombian Republic of its political liberties, and Colombians of their rights<sup>37</sup>. Despite this dramatic change, the way both assessments invoked the Republic, as a political community bound by the obedience and unified under the law, did not change. Finally, Santander would say that the contemporary political order was the dishonor of the Republic:

En América un colombiano prevalido del favor de la fortuna, y profanando el glorioso título de Libertador, destruye por medios sórdidos la constitución de la patria, se hace conferir la autoridad absoluta, y manda y dispone de los colombianos como si dispusiera de su propio patrimonio. Lo decimos con el más acerbo pesar, el actual régimen político de Colombia es la ignominia del siglo XIX, y la deshonra de la República<sup>38</sup>

This conception is again visible after the separation of the “three states of the Republic” in 1830. The Congress saw as necessary to give new life to the new entity, and to present the Republic of New Granada as “the land of courageous men, birthplace of liberty, as a magnificent republic acknowledged by the world's first potencies”. The Congress insisted in the need to “transmit to the future generations the charm of patriotism, the honor of virtue, and the due respect to the heroes”<sup>39</sup> this new Republic entailed. Thus, the Congress called the citizens to appreciate this Constitution with “republican spirit”, wishing the common sense and the *patriotismo* allow them to accomplish it word by word<sup>40</sup>. This republican government, again, should assure the learning of virtues, procure the restraint of vices and direct passions to the right path.

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<sup>36</sup> “Las reformas de Bolívar no podían menos que derramar el descontento y fermentar las semillas de la insurrección (...) Colombia estaba gobernada por un poder ilimitado, que convirtió en crímenes las acciones que siquiera pudieran indicar desagrado”. Santander, 1829, 1988, p. 86.

<sup>37</sup> “El nuevo sistema adoptado por Bolívar privó a la República de Colombia de sus libertades políticas, y a los colombianos de sus derechos y garantías (...) El general Bolívar se declaró investido del poder legislativo, del ejecutivo y de una parte del judicial, que los debía ejercer a discreción” Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Santander, 1819, 1988, p. 90.

<sup>39</sup> “La tierra de los valientes, el asilo un tiempo de la libertad; esta República majestuosa, reconocida por las primeras potencias del mundo; este nombre inmortal, que se transmitirá a las generaciones futuras con el encanto del patriotismo, el honor de la virtud, y el respeto debido a los héroes” Congreso en la Constitución, 1832. In *Constitución Política del Estado de Nueva Granada de 1832*.

<sup>40</sup> “Os la presentan, seguros de que vuestro buen sentido, espíritu republicano, vuestro patriotismo y vuestras virtudes os inducirán a cumplirla exacta y puntualmente” (Congreso en la Constitución, 1832) For a more concrete reference the exact quotations of the Constitutions. The 1821 Constitution pointed out, in its first article: “[La]

Republic and fatherland were two concepts with great publicity in the first half of the nineteenth century<sup>41</sup>. Although this text cannot explore carefully this overlapping, it seems that the feeling of belonging to a fatherland was promoted by the sharing of the republican principles. In 1821, a poem presented on occasion of the promulgation of the Constitution remembered that were “the *patriotas* those who love, sustain, fight, and share the republic’s principles”<sup>42</sup>. In 1823, Bolivar himself, worried by ideas of federation, wrote to the vice-president Francisco de Paula Santander that was alarmed by the threats against the constitution of the Republic and the bloody sacrifices it has cost. Fortunately, there were citizens inspired by lights and patriotism:

Las ideas de federación que empezaron a difundirse en Colombia, confieso que me alarmaron porque veía derrocado el edificio levantado sobre montones de cadáveres, e inutilizados tantos y tan costosos sacrificios para dar a la República el grado de poder y estabilidad que solo puede sostenerla. Me complazco también de que el gobierno haya sido ayudado por las luces y el patriotismo de ciudadanos tan empeñados por la prosperidad y verdadera dicha de Colombia<sup>43</sup>

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Nación Colombiana es la reunión de todos los colombianos bajo un mismo pacto político”, también insiste en varios artículos en el *territorio de la República*. The 1832 Constitution recognizes in its first article: El Estado de la Nueva Granada se compone de todos los granadinos reunidos bajo de un mismo pacto de asociación política para su común utilidad”. Así mismo, insiste en la acepción de la republica como *forma de gobierno* cuando señala que “El gobierno de la Nueva Granada es republicano, popular, representativo, electivo, alternativo y responsable” (Art. 12). Ahora bien, también la República como espacio físico se manifiesta en la misma carta constitucional cuando ese señala que “Habrá en la capital de la República una corte suprema de justicia, cuyas atribuciones son...” (Art. 131) y que el *territorio de la República* debe dividirse en “provincias, las provincias en cantones, los cantones en distritos parroquiales” (Art. 150). Para 1843, la República como marco articulador se presenta con mayor fuerza pues el primer titulo de la Constitución no es de la nación o del Estado colombiano o de la Nueva Granada, sino: Título I De la República de la Nueva Granada. Sobre ella nos dice que “La República de la Nueva Granada se compone de todos los granadinos unidos en cuerpo de nación, bajo un pacto de asociación política para su común utilidad”. Acá la República devela toda su fortaleza: no sólo es la forma de gobierno, es el gobierno mismo, la asociación de los granadinos conforma la República.

<sup>41</sup> In fact, contemporary politicians have re-introduced the fatherland as the privileged form of describing the political community. This might show the still-powerful use of this concept. In the case of Colombia is remarkable the effort of the president Álvaro Uribe Vélez to decipher a certain form of community throughout the use of “patria” in every talk, conference, discourse, discussion, and interview that he has given. This appropriation of the concept has not been carefully studied.

<sup>42</sup> *Monologo de Lucio*. Reprinted in 1826: Bogotá: Imprenta de Salazar.

<sup>43</sup> Al general Santander como Vicepresidente y General de División, en Guayaquil, 13 de marzo. Bolívar, 1823 en Lecuna, 1964, p. 358.

Seven years later, during the 1828's crises<sup>44</sup>, a newspaper published a *representacion* of a group of citizens of the *municipalidad* de Caracas addressed to the Gran Convención in Ocaña. This group, showing its support to Simón Bolívar, gives us a glimpse of the relationship between these two concepts: "The *Libertador-Presidente* as father of the fatherland and founder of the same Republic, had in his hands the power to save it, as he had done in the most chaotic and disastrous periods"<sup>45</sup> The republic fatherland delineates a horizon of meaning<sup>46</sup>, a way of giving sense and channel the construction of the political order. As we shall see in the second section, this meaning will be tied to a moral order, a "bundle" of principles that the members of the republic would need to share as an essential task of the new order.

Surprisingly, this conception of republican fatherland is not restricted to Bolívar's supporters. In a similar perspective, the answer that Grau's political catechism gave to the question about the fatherland underlined this association with republic, and the comprehension of fatherland less as birthplace and more as an association promoted by the acknowledgement of rights, duties, and principles to obey. His response to the youth is that fatherland is "that estate of association that protects our rights of liberty, property, and safety, with fair laws"<sup>47</sup>; the *patriota* is that who is "embedded and possessed by the love to this association" and this love, or *patriotismo*, is one of the "finest virtues that characterizes a citizen"<sup>48</sup>. The text is engaged in underlining that *patria* is not merely the "country, territory, or province where we live"; those

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<sup>44</sup> In Bolívar's words, in his *Decreto Orgánico* of August 27, 1828: "Después de una detenida y madura deliberación he resuelto encargarme, como desde hoy me encargo, del poder supremo de la República, que ejerceré con las denominaciones de «Libertador», «Presidente», que me han dado las leyes y los sufragios públicos; y expedir el siguiente *Decreto Orgánico*". Bolívar, Simón. *Decreto Orgánico de 1828*. Bogotá.

<sup>45</sup> The Newspaper *El Amigo del Pueblo*, printed a "Representación dirigida a la Gran Convención en el año de 1828: El LIBERTADOR Presidente, como padre de la patria y fundador de la misma República, conserva también en sus manos el poder de salvarla, como lo ha hecho en las épocas más calamitosas". *El Amigo del pueblo*, 1828, 1: 3.

<sup>46</sup> Borrowing the expression of Pierre Rosanvallon. See: *Pour une histoire conceptuelle du politique : leçon inaugurale au Collège de France faite le jeudi 28 mars 2002*. Paris: Seuil, 2003.

<sup>47</sup> "La patria es aquel Estado de asociacion que proteje nuestros derechos naturales de libertad, igualdad, propiedad, y seguridad, con leyes justas y equitativas, y con las fuerzas reunidas de todos los particulares. Grau, 1822, p. 52.

<sup>48</sup> "poseído de aquel amor para con un estado semejante de asociacion. El amor á la patria, ó el patriotismo, es una de las virtudes mas dignas que pueden distinguir á un ciudadano". Grau, 1822, p. 54.

places do not constitute, in Grau's perspective, a *patria* since it exists only "when our natural rights are maintained and respected"<sup>49</sup>. This republic fatherland must bound its members through the sentiment of the shared duties, the memories of the past, and the acknowledgment of justice as axis of the order. This entity is not, by far, natural; it has to be constructed and promoted, and it should be maintained with obedience and respect.

With this argument the author explains to the Colombian youth that in the past three hundred years they could have had country, territory, or province, but not fatherland since this only takes place when the members share the love and respect to the institutions of the republic:

P. ¿Y hoy tenemos patria los colombianos?

R. Si, el congreso jeneral de la República ha formado, y sancionado ya una sabia constitucion, y acertadas instituciones; que han reformado y reformarán los abusos que nos habian envilecido y debilitado, y espermentaremos todas sus ventajas luego que hayamos repelido y lanzado al enemigo que aun quiere hollar y esclavizar el territorio de Colombia. Esta patria ha producido y producirá héroes que correrán gustosos á morir por mantenerla. (...)

P. ¿Qué debe significar desde ahora en adelante el nombre de colombiano?

R. Hombre libre, valiente, jeneroso, y justo hasta con sus propios enemigos, terror del despotismo, azote de los tiranos, amante y defensor de los derechos del hombre, y obediente seguidor de las leyes de la República.<sup>50</sup>

The people became an object of prime importance in the question of founding an order. It is precisely the Republican people that need to be created. Of the numerous queries of the time, two concerns are paramount: How could they guarantee compliance to the law, control passions and respect order without an external referent holding the same symbolic power of the King? In the same way, how could they guarantee that hardworking and honest men, with a charitable character would make up part of the Republic and at the same time resolve the constant question of the happiness for both the Republic and its people?

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<sup>49</sup> Patriota es el que entabla un vínculo afectivo –amor– con su patria, pero su patria no es solamente "el pais, territorio, ó provincia en que hemos nacido ó vivido". Tal lugar no constituye, no es en sí mismo una patria pues esta sólo "existe cuando se mantiene y respetan inviolablemente todos nuestros derechos naturales. Grau, 1822, p. 54.

<sup>50</sup> Grau, 1822: pp. 55, 56.

Imagined community, not in the sense of a “national identity” but as a communion of republican principles: to obey the laws of the civil power, to wish and promote the health, prosperity, and happiness of the Republic<sup>51</sup>, to respect its authorities and institutions<sup>52</sup>, to inscribe in every member of the republic the accomplishment of the duties, to restraint the vices, and “to reward the virtue and the talent, and every act that aim to uphold a republican system”<sup>53</sup>, those are the shared principles of the new political community. Thus, in addition to the well-known critics to Anderson work<sup>54</sup> we could point out the first way of imagining a political community after the Spanish rule was especially a republic in the sense of shared principles, virtues, and obedience, more than a cultural elaboration of a being-together through printed devices. In other words, Anderson points out the existence of the nation as a community based on press; a community that is sustained and ‘imagined’ through artifacts such as novels and newspapers, under the homogeneous-empty time introduced by Benjamin, which unified through simultaneity. Bringing back the nowadays-famous words of Benedict Anderson the nation is “an imagined community as inherently limited and sovereign”<sup>55</sup>. However, although the question about the foundation of the political community has been developed through the study of

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<sup>51</sup> Francisco de Paula Santander (1824) “Decreto sobre el plan de estudios en todos los colegios y casas de educación”. Bogotá, 20 de enero de 1824. In López, 1990. p. 150.

<sup>52</sup> José Manuel Restrepo “Difusión del conocimiento de la constitución en colegios y universidades. Prevención del gobierno” in López, 1990. P. 128. Bogotá. And a Newspaper two years later emphasized the same point: *El Huerfanito Bogotano*, Bogotá: Imprenta de Espinosa, 1826, No, 1, p. 2.

<sup>53</sup> “Premiar el talento y la virtud y todo cuanto sostiene a un sistema republicano”. *Huerfanito*, 1826, No, 1, p. 2.

<sup>54</sup> The main critics have come from poscolonial and subaltern studies. See: Chatterjee, Partha. *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse*. Univ Of Minnesota Press, 1993; and Chatterjee, Partha. *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*. 4th ed. Princeton University Press, 1993.

Two remarkable contributions in this line regarding the Latin American case are: Lomnitz-Adler, Claudio. *Deep Mexico, silent Mexico : an anthropology of nationalism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001; and Castro-Klarén, Sara. *Beyond imagined communities : reading and writing the nation in nineteenth-century Latin America*. Washington D.C; Baltimore: Woodrow Wilson Center Press ;;Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003.

<sup>55</sup> Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. Rev. and extended ed. London; New York: Verso, 1991.

artifacts that allow to imagine the nation, such as romances and costume stories<sup>56</sup>, we would insist that the first form of imagining this community was the invocation to the shared principles, to civil laws, rights, and duties. In this sense, the imagined community of the first half of the nineteenth century was not the nation, but especially the Republic, the bond of a community that imagines itself is the feeling of sharing a set of principles and obey a series of laws, of being sheltered by the same justice and being part of an order whose fiction is to have been founded by way of voluntary association.

## 2. The Catholic Foundations of the Republic

In 1821, *El huerfanito bogotano*, a newspaper that insisted metaphorically on Bogotá's orphans who did not have responsible fathers to educate them, pointed out some disobedience problems the new order were facing. Several articles in the newspaper were devoted to complain about the lack of respect and the absence of politeness of Bogotá's inhabitants towards their magistrates of the Republic:

Hemos pasado á los extremos opuestos, pues vemos que los hombres que, bajo el rejimen antiguo hacian á un oidor no solo cortesias, inclinaciones y reverencias, sino humillaciones y bajezas, se glorian en el día de no quitarse el sombrero á los majistrados de la República, siendo esta una demostracion de cortesía y buena crianza, muy usada entre nosotros<sup>57</sup>

This *Huerfanito's* lament could be framed in a broader problem: the experience of the construction of legitimacy in an emergent political order, and the problems of moral grounding that appeared as tied to the foundation of the Republic. The language of the first years of the Republic is abundant in references to the moral disorder, unbounded passions, vices' triumph, absence of virtues; and it was dedicated to insist in moral and light *-moral y luces-* as a way to tie the personal happiness to that of the republic. This language of chaotic, morally speaking, order

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<sup>56</sup> Sommer, Doris. *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.

<sup>57</sup> *El Huerfanito Bogotano. Al tiempo y a la verdad*, 1826. No 2, p. 25.

acts as a topic that needs to be counteracted with a republican education that promoted the necessary virtues. In words of the same newspaper: “a government whose purpose is the virtue must create good republicans”<sup>58</sup>. Five years earlier, José Manuel Restrepo, as secretary of interior, and Jerónimo Torres, vicepresident of the Parliament and who will publish in 1838 a moral and politic treatise<sup>59</sup>, recognized, just after the 1821 Constitution, that the forging of new citizens had to go hand in hand with catholic religion principles. Then, they signed a law that founded a “College of priests (colegio de ordenandos)” since that was “the duty of a well-ordered Republic to provide the ministers of religion with effective means and with great virtues to instill the moral and to counteract the vices, the fatal origin of the crimes”<sup>60</sup>. Thus, the Congress points out that the Spanish government had neglected this important part of its obligations and recognizes that the creation of this college is central due to the “influx that the priests have in souls guidance, Colombia is in the imperative necessity of promote learning and customs regularity in those who aspire to the altar ministry”<sup>61</sup>.

One year later, the Congress introduced a law on “the means to civilize wild Indians”. The justification of this law is built, again, on the necessity of moralizing and “christianizing” the members in the fringes of the republic. The law explains that one of the first duties of the

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<sup>58</sup> “Un gobierno cuya divisa es la virtud debe esforzarse en forjar buenos republicanos” (*El Huerfanito Bogotano. Al tiempo y a la verdad*. 2: 5). The newspaper points out this relationship between republic and a disposition towards virtue constantly. In other section of the same number the newspaper insists “Nada corrompe tanto, á esta edad tan preciosa, como el mal ejemplo, por lo cual debe tenerse siempre al abrigo de toda seduccion; y en los gobiernos cuya divisa es la virtud, es en donde esta necesidad tiene mas imperio. Un buen republicano debe ser religioso sin hipocresía: es indispensable que ante todas cosas, se penetre bien de las saludables reglas de la piedad cristiana, por que sin ella, no se teme á Dios, no se respeta á sus padres, ni á la sociedad, ni se conoce á si mismo” *El Huerfanito Bogotano. Al tiempo y a la verdad*. No 2, p. 25.

<sup>59</sup>Torres, J. *Deberes domésticos, civiles, políticos, morales, y religiosos del hombre en sociedad. Redactados sobre los principios y maximas de los mas celebres escritores antiguos y modernos*. Bogotá: J.A. Cualla. 1838.

<sup>60</sup> “El deber de toda República bien ordenada es proporcionar los medios más eficaces para que los ministros de la religión tengan las virtudes e instrucciones que pide su sagrado ministerio, pues que son los inspectores e instaladores morales que deben combatir los vicios, origen funesto de los crímenes TORRES, Jerónimo y RESTREPO, José Manuel (1823) *Ley sobre la creación de un colegio de ordenandos*. Bogotá Junio 20 de 1823. In López, 1990, p. 106.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid



republic is to “protect and promote the propagation of Christianity and civilization to the gentile Indian tribes who inhabit within its territory”<sup>62</sup>. This intention will appear, several years later, in one *pastoral* of the Archbishop Manuel José Mosquera who insisted that it was the Christian doctrine the most effective mean to “attract to the true faith to the wild tribes in the deserts of the Republic”<sup>63</sup>. Although out of the scope of this text, this reference is interesting since could help to show how present was this link between moral education and Christian principles in New Granada’s Republic, even after 1832. We could mention another couple of cases. In 1834 in the formation of the *Sociedad de Educación Primaria de Bogotá* created by the city council to “promote by any possible means the spreading of the public instruction”<sup>64</sup>. For the founders of the society<sup>65</sup> “one of the sacred duties law imposed” and “the republic considers with especial attention” is the “moral education and the formation in the Christian principles on which our system must be founded”<sup>66</sup>. Santander, returning to Colombia as New Granada’s president, in his new foundational discourse called the *Ministros del altar* to “be an example of obedience (...)

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<sup>62</sup> Ley sobre los medios para civilizar a los indios salvajes” donde la justificación se construye de nuevo, desde la necesidad de moralizar y cristianizar a sus miembros. De ahí que señale que uno de los primeros deberes de la República sea “proteger la propagación del cristianismo y la civilización de las tribus de indígenas gentiles que viven dentro de los límites de su territorio” *Gaceta de Colombia*, 1822. In López, 1990, p. 193.

<sup>63</sup> El cristianismo era el modo más eficaz de “atraer á la verdadera fé á las tribus salvajes de los desiertos de la República” See: Mosquera, 1842, p. 7. Mosquera continúes: “No os dirijimos hoy la palabra, hermanos é hijos [...] mui amados, como lo hacemos con frecuencia sobre los deberes ordinarios del cristiano: un objeto extraordinario, grande, eminentemente católico, *glorioso para le Relijión i para la Patria*, nos obliga [...] para llamarnos á todos en torno del Gobierno en auxilio de la grande obra de la propagacion de la fé, en el establecimiento de las misiones [...] la obra de la iluminacion de los pueblos, de su resurreccion intelectual, de su rescate moral, es la obra esclusiva del cristianismo; pero del cristianismo que conserva la unidad, i con ella aquel inagotable fondo de fé i de caridad [...] pensamiento tan cristiano como político movió sin duda la piedad i el patriotismo de los padres de la Patria, para dar lugar entre sus preferentes trabajos al decreto sobre establecimiento de colegios de misiones” See: Mosquera, 1842, pp. 6, 7.

<sup>64</sup> “Fomentar por cuantos medios estén en la esfera de sus atribuciones, la difusion de la enseñanza i de la instruccion pública. Estatutos de la sociedad de educacion primaria de Bogotá (1834) Establecido por la Camara provincial en 4 de octubre de 1834

<sup>65</sup> Among others: “Sebastian Esguerra. Presidente de la Cámara; Pastor Ospina. Secretario; Rufino Cuervo; Francisco Escovar. Secretario de la gobernación” Estatutos, 1834: 6.

<sup>66</sup> “Entre los deberes sagrados que impone la ley a la república, considera la especial atención a la educación moral y la formación en los principios cristianos sobre los cuales debe reposar incontestablemente nuestro sistema social” (*Estatutos* 3). *Estatutos de la Sociedad de Educación Primaria de Bogotá*. 1834: 3.

and spread the practice of the Christian virtues” since this “sacred religion aims to reform the customs, purify the heart, enforced the moral duties and obedience to laws and magistrates”<sup>67</sup>

In 1865, José María Samper, trying to argue why it was possible to be “catholic and republican” constructed a distinction that could be useful to describe the constitutions of the early republic regarding the place of catholic religion in the political order. He proclaimed, for instance, a catholic *and* republican revolutionary pantheon since “July, 20<sup>th</sup> of 1810, day when Revolutionaries declared the independence along with the exclusively uphold of the catholic, apostolic, and roman religion”<sup>68</sup>. For Samper, there was a distinction along the 19<sup>th</sup> century between a group of catholic and republican, catholic and tolerant, and intolerant constitutions<sup>69</sup>. In the first group he placed the Constitutions of 1821, 1832, and 1843. We could take this distinction to show how during the first republic of Colombia this link –Catholicism and Republic- was a constant. In 1821, the “Fundamental Law” that inaugurated the Constitution was invoked under the “auspicious name of the supreme being”<sup>70</sup>. This formula will not change in the constitutional arrangements of the period we are grappling with. A rapid overview will be sufficient. In 1821 the representatives of the “peoples of Colombia” recognized “God as author

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<sup>67</sup> Santander, 1988, p. 187. His call is to “respetables ministros del altar” para que puedan enseñar con el ejemplo y la palabra la “obediencia que de rigurosa justicia debe prestarse a las autoridades constituidas” y para que prediquen “la práctica de las virtudes cristianas” y empleen su “ministerio de paz en reunir los ánimos bajo las instituciones rectoras que van a regiros”. En este nuevo discurso fundacional, Santander insiste en la obediencia a las instituciones republicanas de la que deben ser protagonistas los ‘ministros del altar’. Así, el clero debe subordinarse a la autoridad civil, y al mismo tiempo el gobierno debe reconocer que esta “religión santa [...] contribuye a reformar las costumbres, purificar el corazón, hacer cumplir todos los deberes morales y asegurar la obediencia a las leyes y a los magistrados” Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> In Samper’s words: “Próceres de la independendencia! fundadores de la República! Heroicos revolucionarios de 1810! Escuchad! Nariño, mártir republicano que nos enseñasteis los derechos del hombre!, Fernpandez Madrid! ilustre majistrado, cantor y diplomático de la República, Cálidas, Camilo Torres (...) invocásteis al Dios de los católicos i la patria de los republicanos! Farsantes inmortales! Paso al redactor del Tiempo, que viene a borrar vuestro nombre del martirolojio republicano! Ya que no os pueden espulsar de la república de los vivos, os espatrian de la república de los muertos! En vano habeis habitado el panteon de los republicanos! Os ultrajan, os reniegan porque fuisteis católicos!” See: José María Samper, *El catolicismo i la república*. Medellín (reimpresión). Imprenta de Isidoro Isaza, 1865. p. 11.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, p. 13.

<sup>70</sup> *Constitución*, 1821

and legislator of the Universe” (Constitución, 1821). The message of the Congress to Colombian inhabitants after the constitution is careful to not leave aside the catholic foundations of the Republic. In the “epilogue” of the Constitution, the representatives commented, “they have deposited an unlimited confidence on laws” since “they assure the equity among all and everyone; and they are the support of Colombian’s dignity, source of freedom, and the soul of the Republic”<sup>71</sup>. However, they insist there was always something they never left aside, the “most precious object of their meditations”:

Lo que vuestros representantes han tenido siempre a la vista, y lo que ha sido el objeto de sus más serias meditaciones, es que las mismas leyes fuesen enteramente conformes con las máximas y los dogmas de la Religión Católica Apostólica y Romana, que todos profesamos y nos gloriamos de profesar: ella ha sido la religión de nuestros padres, y es y será la Religión del Estado; sus ministros son los únicos que están en el libre ejercicio de sus funciones, y el Gobierno autoriza las contribuciones necesarias para el Culto Sagrado.<sup>72</sup>

The momentary 1830’s Constitution maintained this invocation and 1821’s principles. In addition, it underlined in its second title, the *Colombian religion*, that “Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman is the religion of the Republic”, the Republic must protect it and do not “tolerate the public cult of any other religion”<sup>73</sup>. The *Decreto Orgánico* of Simón Bolívar, after the Ocaña Convention, did not disagree with this point and would order in his 25<sup>th</sup> article: “the government will sustain and protect the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman Religion as the Colombian religion”<sup>74</sup>. In 1832, under the legal framework of the Nueva Granada’s Constitution, this principle will be re-affirmed dramatically. First, the Congress presented the new arrangement underlining that they have established the separation of the powers, the legal liberty of the press

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<sup>71</sup> Los representantes “sólo han puesto una confianza ilimitada en las leyes” pues son ellas las que “aseguran la equidad entre todos y cada uno; y son también el apoyo de la dignidad del colombiano, fuente de la libertad, el alma y el consejo de la República” Constitución, 1821

<sup>72</sup> Énfasis en el original. See: Constitución, 1821.

<sup>73</sup> Título II –De la religión colombiana– que la “Católica, Apostólica, Romana es la religión de la República” y que la República debe procurar “en ejercicio del patronato de la iglesia colombiana, protegerla y no tolerar el culto público de ninguna otra” *Constitución Política de la República de Colombia*. 1830. Bogotá.

<sup>74</sup> “Artículo 25.- El gobierno sostendrá y protegerá la Religión Católica, Apostólica, Romana, como la religión de los colombianos. In Simón Bolívar, *Decreto Orgánico*. Bogotá. 1828.

as well as they have recognized how “rigorous must be in the New Granada the duty of protecting the holy catholic, apostolic, and roman religion, the only authentic, precious origin of the good that the *granadinos* have inherited from the heaven in the baptism, and by mercy’s Good they will adore, conserve intact and pure”<sup>75</sup>. Second, for the 1832’s representatives of the peoples of the Nueva Granada, it was crucial to pay a sincere homage to “that sacred (*sacrosanta*) religion” since it “constitutes a indissoluble and sacred tie that bound every *granadino* with each other, and to all *granadinos* with heaven”<sup>76</sup>. The words could not be more precise to describe the bind of the political order with catholic religion: it is a tie that connects and makes equals the members of the republic; it assures the earthly stability of a fragile order. Religion is here a basis that conserves the order and makes possible the republic<sup>77</sup>.

Thus, the Republic can only be sustained by the morality of its members. The Plans of Public Instruction, regardless their discussion about substantial issues, showed also this concern. In 1827, the *Gaceta* de Colombia argued in favour of the new curriculum of public instruction. It stated the education of youth was central for the Republic, especially as it aimed to “strengthen the body, illustrate the spirit, and form the heart”<sup>78</sup>. The *Gaceta* also recognized that “the form of government has an immediate influence on the kind of education to be given to young people”, therefore, “in monarchies the public education was limited, in absolutist regimes was

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<sup>75</sup> “El riguroso deber que tiene la Nueva Granada de proteger la santa religión católica, apostólica, romana, esta religión divina, la única verdadera, precioso origen del bien que heredaron los granadinos de sus padres, que recibieron del cielo en el bautismo, y que por la misericordia del Dios que adoramos, conservaremos todos intacta, pura, y sin mancha” Congreso en la Constitución, 1832. *Constitución Política del Estado de Nueva Granada de 1832*. Bogotá.

<sup>76</sup> “Rendir pública y solemnemente un homenaje humilde y sincero [...] hacia esa religión sacrosanta” pues ésta constituye un “lazo indisoluble y sagrado que une a todos los granadinos con el cielo, y por cuya conservación inmaculada perderían todos la vida”. Congreso en la *Constitución*, 1832.

<sup>77</sup> Art. 14 : “Es un deber del gobierno proteger la libertad, la seguridad, la propiedad y la igualdad de los granadinos” y el 15 que “Es también un deber del gobierno proteger a los granadinos en el ejercicio de la religión católica, apostólica, romana” *Constitución*, 1832.

<sup>78</sup> “Fortificar el cuerpo, ilustrar el espíritu y formar el corazón”. *Gaceta de Colombia*, Bogotá, 1827, p. 368.

eliminated, and in republican governments this must be broad and general”<sup>79</sup>. In 1820 that is the justification that Santander gives when he decreed the establishment of public and primary schools: “public education is the easiest way for citizens of a Republic to acquire the knowledge of rights and duties they have in society”<sup>80</sup>. Thus, the Republican government must ensure the education of its citizens; this education could assure that the governed will find, in the fulfillment of its obligations, their happiness. Because of this, liberty does not have an open connotation of *laissez-faire*; it is closer to the observation to the rule:

Ser libres es no serlo contra lo que prohiben las leyes, es claro que una traba no puede conducir á la licencia. Luego si las leyes mandan el respeto á los majistrados, la ecsactitud y pureza en el desempeño de los deberes respectivos, la forma de gobierno, el premio del talento y de la virtud, la proteccion de las garantías individuales, y cuanto sostiene á un sistema republicano, el que desconoce estos principios no puede ser libre. (...) El campesino que se deja seducir por los que desean trastornar las instituciones, es tan criminal como el que publica opiniones subversivas, só-pretexto de ilustracion. Uno y otro deberían conocer que sin unión no hay seguridad, y sin seguridad, libertad: que, ningun ciudadano puede sobreponerse á las leyes, y que un esclavo voluntario es la gangrena de la República, la cuál debe estirparse inmediatamente. Ser libre es ser virtuoso, y no puede ser virtuoso un hipócrita. El hombre religioso sin ostentacion, el obediente al gobierno, el amigo del orden, ese es un verdadero colombiano, ese tiene libertad.<sup>81</sup>

But this understanding of liberty is not exclusively of a single newspaper. Since the 1820s, Santander, as vice-president, and José Manuel Restrepo, as secretary of interior, insisted that to be free was to be virtuous, and to be virtuous was to respect, especially, republic’s laws. In this sense, for them, in republican governments the education is regarded as the only way to sustain the order; and since the republic needs to be founded in virtue, they education will need to be promoted. Santander in 1820 saw as fundamental the public instruction to promote these principles since it was the most powerful way to spread the “republican principles and the virtues

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> “La instrucción pública es el medio más fácil para que los ciudadanos de una República adquieran el conocimiento de los derechos y deberes que tiene en sociedad”. Santander, 1820, in Santander, 1988, p. 17.

<sup>81</sup> *Huerfanito*, 1826, No 1, p. 2.

derived from them”<sup>82</sup>. Restrepo pointed out in 1824 the government had dedicated painstaking efforts to promote education:

Se han establecido varias escuelas; y algunos colejos, que por falta de medios y por las consecuencias desastrosas de la guerra estaban en decadencia han sido reparados y provistos de fondos hasta donde el apurado estado de nuestra Tesorería ha permitido al Ejecutivo destinar a este objeto<sup>83</sup>.

Restrepo himself, in his inaugural discourse of 1826 in the Academia Colombiana, commented that a general education would bring light to every corner of Colombia. To this purpose the politic and moral sciences were central:

Si os deteneis últimamente en las ciencias políticas y morales, aún son de mayor importancia las materias que se ofrecen a vuestras meditaciones. Instituciones y leyes que reformar, para que hagan la felicidad de los pueblos: hábitos, usos y costumbres que mejorar, para que reine entre nosotros la virtud y se consoliden las instituciones liberales; ignorancia y preocupaciones que combatir; y, en fin, establecer, sostener y perfeccionar una educación general, que difunda las luces por todos los ángulos de Colombia; he aquí, señores, en compendio, lo que tenéis que hacer en las ciencias políticas y morales, que ejercen un tan poderoso influjo sobre la felicidad común<sup>84</sup>

In 1826, the Congress promoted an emphasis in the discipline and respect in every level of the education. For they who want more discipline it was crucial to instill republican principles. The *Gaceta de Colombia* called to support the *Plan de Estudios* de 1826 especially because they emphasized discipline and respect as axis of the education. If the Republic wants to create useful men it had to stress this aspect of the education, otherwise, it will have

Leguleyos en vez de abogados [...], empíricos por medicos [...] larraguistas por teólogos; más valen para ella 25 buenos juristas cada seis años, que sean capaces de encargarse del honor, de la vida y de las propiedades de sus compatriotas que no 300 ignorantes que contribuyan a embrollar la administración de justicia; 12 médicos que respondan de la salud de un enfermo, que no 100 empíricos que lo envenenen en vez de curarlo, y 20 eclesiásticos que sepan interpretar la Biblia y resolver en su beneficio un caso de moral, que no 200 clérigos que prediquen necedades [...]<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> “Los gobernados se contagien de los principios republicanos y de las virtudes propias de éstos; sólo así se “contribuirá al bienestar de los individuos y a la felicidad de los pueblos” Santander, 1820, in Santander, 1988, p. 17.

<sup>83</sup> Memoria del Secretario del Interior presentada al congreso el 27 de abril pasado, *El Constitucional*, 1824, p. 4.

<sup>84</sup> Restrepo, 1826, in López, 1990, pp. 354, 355.

<sup>85</sup> *Gaceta*, 1827, p. 371.

It was Catholic moral that allowed a definition of the limits and content of what exactly one should understand as virtuous, that which should be fought as vice and what to direct and contain as passion<sup>86</sup>. Only a catholic, apostolic and roman religion can assure internal peace, the consecration to the cause of liberty, the most virtuous education and the fight against ignorance; just in this way can it be understood that two years after passing the Constitution of the Republic of Colombia José Manuel Restrepo, as Secretary of State and interior office, registers for the Congress, Senate and House of Representatives:

Es un deber de toda República bien ordenada, proporcionar los medios más eficaces para que los ministros de la religión tengan las virtudes e instrucciones que pide su sagrado ministerio, pues que son los inspectores e instaladores morales que deben combatir los vicios, origen funesto de los crímenes y (...)

3° Que en fuerza de estas razones y por el influjo que tienen los sacerdotes en la dirección de las almas, Colombia se halla en la imperiosa necesidad de promover la ilustración y la regularidad de costumbres de los que aspiren al ministerio del altar (Restrepo, 1823: 106).

Towards 1827, the Republican Congress recalls such an understanding of the Republic when it recognizes the need to promote an education that “guides the passion towards just and noble ends, brings man closer to his maker, unites him with his country and makes him into a good father, husband and citizen”<sup>87</sup>. Three years after the first Constitution of the Republic of Colombia was passed, Restrepo himself points out that moral is not just something that should be instilled as a direct and fundamental object of education. Moral is also a force. It forms and encourages the ties that should unite men under a republican government. “Two and a half years

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<sup>86</sup> Regarding the texts of catholic moral education one really interesting fact is the re-printing of the catechisms used in the colonial period for the catholic moral education. Thus, for instance, the old *Catecismo histórico* of Fleuri was published in 1844 with “new incorporations and adjustments”<sup>86</sup>; and Villanueva’s work was re-printed in 1825, 1827, and 1845 in different places: Lima, Tunja, and Bogotá respectively. This, of course, without taking into account the texts published with the same purpose –to instill the basic principles of the religion- during the period. One interesting figure is Mariano del Campo Larraondo who published several text that were used in the elementary schools of Popayán. In his text, he critized the “old” style of catechisms such as Villanueva’s and promoted a more “gracious and freedom genius of poetry”. See: DEL CAMPO Larraondo, Mariano (1835) *Compendio de la moral cristiana, para el uso de las escuelas primarias de Popayán. Por el doctor Del Campo Larraondo, presbítero y miembro honorario y corresponsal de la sociedad de educación primaria elemental de dicha ciudad*. Bogotá, Impreso por José Ayarza. 1835.

<sup>87</sup> *Gaceta*, 1827, p. 368.

have passed since our constitution was published and the experience of this period gives us slight hope for what is to come (...) the habit of obedience to the law, love and respect for its orders that give moral strength and consolidate political institutions, is being formed.”<sup>88</sup>

### 3. Conclusion

After the independence wars the task of constructing a political order was a central issue in the agendas of the recently created countries. In the case of Colombia, the discussions about the political community, that is to say the political form that was to replace the monarchical authority, were articulating in ambiguous forms three main concepts Republic, fatherland, and Nation. The first two appeared as the privileged invocation in a common mixed formula: *patria republicana* or republic fatherland. Taking into account the discussions in the congress, the newspaper revised, and the political discourses of the period, we could insist that the republic was a key figure in the effort to make sense to the political construction in progress. It was not a novelty and articulated a singular meaning of the political community: a group of people that needed to be virtuous to participate in the political order, by doing this, it promoted the learning of moral principles that needed to be incorporated in the new order. The republic, as privileged form of political community during the first years after the independence, with its emphasize on the virtues and the moral force, was especially a catholic order which emphasized the understanding of its principles, the obedience to the new institutions, and the respect to the new authorities as central issues.

I suggest that the Republic was a frequent form of imaging the political community during the first years after the independence, and I tried to show how frequent were the allusions to this figure and how important was the Republic for those who were trying to imagine the

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<sup>88</sup> *El Constitucional*, 1824, p. 4.



political community. In this sense, we would need to open our history of the national construction to a history of the political communities. We need to abandon the national prison, that is to say, to image a nation-building process since the very end of the revolutionary experiences. Perhaps, Republic is just an opening and an invitation to reconsider the nation as the omniscient category of analysis, at least during the first years after the independence wars.