

The *donativo* in the viceroyalty of Peru during the reign of Philip IV: an analysis of the collection process and its consequences

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The Spanish empire during the reign of Philip IV suffered a serious fiscal crisis due to the rising cost of war. The king and his favorite, Count-Duke of Olivares, attempted to solve the situation through fiscal reforms. These invited violent reactions throughout much of the empire, thus evidencing the decline of Hapsburg Spain. In the viceroyalty of Peru, these fiscal pressures were compounded by the problems of distant rule, yet it remained free of the violence that affected Spanish possessions in both Europe and the Americas. In order to understand how Spanish Peru was spared from these incidents, it is necessary to inquire into how the various fiscal policies were applied locally, as well as into how colonial society reacted against them. Among those policies, the *donativo* (forced donation) offered to the king by his citizens has been recognized as a successful means of raising revenue. But this interpretation is based solely on the sum of collected income, rather than the overall effects of the collection process. This article examines the process through which the *donativo* was raised and the effect of this process on the extent of colonial domination over local societies.

In the viceroyalty of Peru, the cities of Cuzco and Potosí were consistently prominent for the amounts of *donativo* they produced. Through an analysis of these two cases, I argue that the *donativo* was almost entirely entrusted to local authorities, like bishops and bureaucrats, who leveraged their social bonds and friendship to ease the discontent of the affected citizens. The close attention of these local authorities was indispensable to the successful collection of such forced donations. Many of these authorities were outsiders appointed by the king, who took root in local society by negotiating support in

exchange for favorable treatment. This particular social bond resulted in large sums of donations for the royal treasury, but sometimes led to corruption and the general detriment of royal finances by prioritizing the interests of certain local citizens. The Spanish Crown had been continuously vigilant of colonial officials turned local power holders, whose interests progressively aligned with those of local citizens. The *donativo* collection process actually promoted this trend. In this sense, the *donativo* functioned as a double-edged sword for the Spanish Crown.