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Chapter 1

Studying Early Nineteenth-Century Nahua Intellectuals in Mexico City

Introduction

The study of intellectuals, intellectualism and intellectual elites in Latin America is a relatively recent field in the humanities, especially in the area of history. This enthusiasm for the study of intellectuals has resulted in the development of an interesting literature that has contributed to the study of indigenous intellectual production in a broader context; nevertheless, scholars need to explore more on the topic of indigenous intellectuality. Much of the literature and secondary studies that are currently available on the analysis and study of intellectuals in Latin America consider this indigenous intellectuality as a phenomenon mostly rooted in the nineteenth century, specifically as a result of national public education reforms. These scholarly arguments center on the premise that educational reforms resulted in the indigenous populations' access to higher education in their homeland or abroad during the first half of the twentieth century in Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador and Chile.³ As Gloria Castillo Félix mentioned about these intellectuals and the discourse that they produced during this period of the twentieth century:

[...] se observa en estos discursos de los setentas una actitud contestataria y de reafirmación hacia adentro que tiene como interés principal reconocerse a sí mismos como indios y defenderse de los embates de los grupos hegemónicos. En sus discursos se observa una primera construcción identitaria de los pueblos indios, que comienzan a reconocerse entre sí mismos y frente al otro cultural.⁴

On the other hand, there is also a historical semantic association between intellectualism and a European tradition of thought related with the classical cultures of the Western tradition. Under this assumption, it is easy for some to argue that intellectualism in the Americas started with European colonization, and that colonial institutions influenced the inhabitants of the continent, imposing upon them a Western influence of thought deeply rooted in the Medieval European traditions of philosophy and theology. Consequently, the study of intellectualism among indigenous populations is usually associated in the literature with the influence that the newly adopted westernized ideas had on these individuals.

³ See Claudia Zapata Silva, compilador, *Intelectuales indígenas piensan América Latina* (Quito: Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar, Ecuador: Abya-Yala; Santiago de Chile: Centro de Estudios Culturales Latinoamericanos, 2007), 11-13.

⁴ See Gloria Alicia Caudillo Félix, *El discurso indio en América Latina* (Guadalajara: Universidad de Guadalajara, 2005).

In Mexico, the study of intellectuals has been mostly guided by the precepts of nationalism and a lineal historiography that pretends to justify and explain the origins and virtues of the modern Mexican state.⁵ This position is rooted in the official historiography developed by the Spaniards at the time of the conquest, which was characterized by eliminating the plurality of the official discourse, and therefore officially denying the participation and diversity of the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas.⁶ This characteristic caused historians to focus on the analysis of Spanish-descent intellectuals and the work that they produced during the colonial period and more recently also on intellectuals who either played a role in the shaping of Mexico during the late nineteenth century, or during the period of the Mexican Revolution. Under these traditional historiographic guidelines, Indigenous Peoples usually remain alienated from the official history and they are equally excluded from the possibility of even being considered as intellectuals.⁷ Even though the contribution of all these studies about Mexican intellectuals contributes immensely to our understanding of intellectualism in Mexico and its historical importance, still it is essential in our own modern studies that we consider and attempt to understand indigenous intellectualism as a long-term process that already existed among Mesoamerican communities and that currently continues.

Humanistic disciplines such as anthropology, sociology and political science have already approached the study of modern indigenous intellectuals in Mexico and their role, as well as their impact on the development of their environment and communities. Other studies have examined their participation in issues of regional or national importance.⁸ Also, by considering the recent number of studies, publications, and literature related to indigenous intellectuals, it seems that this topic received a special interest particularly among historians of the indigenous conflict that emerged in Chiapas in 1994, led by the *Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional*, EZLN.⁹ These historians' contributions gave evidence to the limited previous research made in this field before the armed conflict. Their work also revealed the lack of recognition and importance that indigenous intellectuals have received from Mexican society in general. The rise of the EZLN also made it evident that considering and recognizing the existence of intellectual elites among Indigenous Peoples remained a neglected topic that required extensive discussion.

Mexican nationalism, deeply rooted in the nineteenth-century's political ideas of liberalism, as well as Mexican official historiography, is characterized by its exclusive nature.

⁵ See Horacio Labastida, "Elites intelectuales en la historia de México," *Anuario Mexicano de Historia del Derecho* (1995): 73-92.

⁶ Enrique Florescano, *Memoria mexicana* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1993), 315.

⁷ Mardonio Carballo, *Las plumas de la serpiente* (México: Amoch Libros, 2012), 7.

⁸ See Natividad Gutiérrez Chong, *Mitos nacionalistas e identidades étnicas: los intelectuales indígenas y el Estado mexicano* (México: Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales-Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Plaza y Valdés, CONACULTA-FONCA, 2001).

⁹ Natividad Gutiérrez Chong, "Liderazgo intelectual indígena en México y la frontera," in *Nuevos actores en América del Norte, Volumen 2: Identidades culturales y políticas*, ed. Edith Antal (México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Centro de Investigaciones Sobre América del Norte, 2005), 111-121; 113.

According to official Mexican historiography many members of society, specific groups, and even geographical regions have been underestimated or ignored. Even in the best of cases, including these other actors into the nationalistic lineal history of Mexico only as minor accessories, nameless and voiceless. For instance, we can mention the exclusion of the Afro-Mexican population from the interpretation of Mexican history, as well as the indigenous population's general exclusion as actors in the official history of Mexico, to mention just a few cases.¹⁰ According to the modern historian Antonio García de León in the official historiography places existed in Mexico where “nothing happened.” Since neither the heroes nor the events that shaped the Mexican nation took place in these regions, he argued, entire geographical regions were excluded from the national point of view and were considered as isolated, peaceful and without historical glories.¹¹ In this sense, it is not a surprise to us that indigenous groups from Mexico have been excluded from history. Thus, the consideration that these indigenous groups had intellectuals, at the outset, offers a historical problem for historians to solve in terms of definition and contextualization.

Consequently, it is necessary to approach the topic of indigenous intellectualism by affirming that this phenomenon did not start with the establishment of the Spanish colonial regime in Mexico. Similarly, it is also important to consider the premise that this intellectual tradition did not end with the fall of the racially segregated educational institutions that were abolished during the period of Mexican Independence in 1821. Thus, one of the main premises that guides this present study states that indigenous intellectualism already existed in Mesoamerica before the arrival of the Europeans to the Americas, and that this tradition continued during the colonial era through a complex process of synergy from the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries, and is still vital today in the twenty first century. Likewise, in this study I support the idea that the process of indigenous intellectuality experiences and develops certain characteristics according to the context in which indigenous intellectuals interact. These major components, as well as the reasons, motivations, interests, politics, social class, and ethnic affiliations can be identifiable through the study of context and the works these indigenous intellectuals produced. The major objective of this current study is to identify early 19th century Nahua intellectuals and approach their work in order to understand their context and their social characteristics as a defined group of intellectuals.

1.1 Statement of the Research Project

The basic thesis of this dissertation project focuses on a few key questions concerning intellectualism and the intellectual creation of Mesoamerican societies both before and after the collapse of the Spanish regime in the former colony of New Spain. It is essential for the development of this dissertation project to come to an understanding of the basic characteristics

¹⁰ See Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán, *La población negra en México* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1946).

¹¹ Antonio García de León, *Resistencia y Utopía. Memorial de agravios y crónica de revueltas y profecías acaecidas en la provincia de Chiapas durante los últimos quinientos años de su historia* (México: Editorial Era, 1985), 15.

of early nineteenth-century Nahua intellectuals in the area of Mexico City. Thus, this study centers on exploring the main characteristics of a group of Nahua intellectuals who lived and worked in Mexico City after the end of the Spanish colonization in Mexico. At the same time, this study focuses on learning about the interests that these early nineteenth-century Nahua intellectuals had according to political and social contexts in which they lived and worked.

This study, therefore, relies on the basic premise that Mesoamerican intellectual production in the capital of New Spain continued under the sponsorship of colonial authorities after the Spanish process of conquest and colonization in Mesoamerica. The Spanish colonial educational system allowed Indigenous People to continue with their intellectual traditions, but only in a “colonized” and synergic manner. At the end of the eighteenth century, the last indigenous students who attended colonial educational institutions embarked upon their education in the colonial system. However, shortly afterward, in 1822, Mexico declared its independence from Spain and these indigenous students became the last generation of Indigenous Peoples educated under the colonial system. An examination into the way in which these Nahua intellectuals, who served as the last Nahua students to graduate from colonial educational institutions, acted during the aftermath of the Mexican independence is a central key question of this study. This specific group of indigenous students formed a particular “rupture” generation that marked a breaking off point from the former colonial education system and a generational attempt to find a role in the beginning of a new national system.

All of these premises follow from the reasoning which relies on the unquestionable fact that an indigenous intellectual tradition existed in the area of Mesoamerica and varied according to the region and the particularities of the diverse Mesoamerican societies. This tradition continued after the European invasion of the Americas, and its eventual establishment of the Spanish colonial regime in the former area of Mesoamerica. Moreover, the Spanish conquest did not stop the development of indigenous intellectuality. On the contrary, the preservation of history became a rebellious act of resistance.¹² In spite of the oppression exercised over the Indigenous Peoples of Mesoamerica by the Spanish authorities, Indigenous Peoples found various ways to successfully preserve their knowledge, either through the immersion of some of their members into Spanish colonial institutions, or through the performance of diverse practices outside the regulations that the colonial institutions imposed upon them.

This complex process of encountering diverse intellectual traditions due to a process of violent conquest and institutionalized colonization resulted in diverse syncretic intellectuality. This process became manifested differently among each indigenous group according to their region, environment, historical context, and their relations with the Spanish colonial

¹² Miguel León Portilla, *El destino de la palabra* (México: El Colegio Nacional, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1996), 29-30.

establishment and the colonial social organization. Thus, we need to consider that indigenous intellectualism remained as a heterogeneous, mobile, variable, and non-linear phenomenon.¹³

During the era of Spanish colonization, this indigenous intellectual tradition continued either sponsored by the colonial authorities through several colonial institutions, or in an independent and autonomous manner outside the colonial system. The indigenous intellectuals who found a place within the colonial institutions learned new skills that allowed them to preserve their indigenous knowledge in different ways, often combining western literacy with their traditional writing systems. This way, those who learned how to write by using the Latin alphabet were able to preserve traditional ideas, interpretations of their political and cultural environment, or copy other texts that were written in an indigenous writing system into alphabetic documents.¹⁴ In this manner, there are several examples of documents from all of the regions of the New Spain that display both a Catholic influence, but also evidence of an indigenous worldview. Some of these documents, such as the texts known as books of *Chilam Balam* in the Maya area,¹⁵ were written by following an intricate code that did not allow either the Spanish authorities,¹⁶ or people who lacked the knowledge or the social authority of the community, to read and interpret the content of these texts.¹⁷ The same occurred with other types of documents,¹⁸ including architectural elements in buildings such as facades or religious alter pieces, as well as paintings or sculptures.¹⁹ Especially considering that those Indigenous Peoples who participated in the construction of these colonial buildings or monuments under the order of the Spaniards were not simply improvised laborers, but rather people already specialized in these types of labor.²⁰

The documents produced by Indigenous Peoples and the information that they contained often remained limited and restricted to be read and interpreted by a specific elite group that,

¹³ For a good approach to the analysis of cultural continuity see Marteen Jansen and Gabina Aurora Pérez Jiménez, "Mixtec Cultural Vocabulary and Pictorial Writing," in *Linguistics and Archaeology in the Americas: The Historization of Language and Society*; ed. Eithen B. Carlin and Simon von de Kerke (Leiden-Boston, 2010), 45-82; 77.

¹⁴ See Mark Z. Christensen, *Nahua and Maya Catholicisms: Texts and Religion in Colonial Central Mexico and Yucatan* (Stanford: Stanford Press University, 2013), 318.

¹⁵ See the work of Francesc Ligorred Perramón, "El lenguaje de Zuyua y la resistencia literaria yucateca colonial," *Colonial Latin American Review* 9 (2000): 49-61.

¹⁶ See Argelia Segovia Liga, "Los indios del Mariscal. Revisión de un manuscrito yucateco del siglo XVII" (Thesis, UNAM, 2008), 203.

¹⁷ For more information about this idea, see Munro S. Edmonson, *Heaven Born Merida and Its Destiny: The Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986). Also see, John F. Chuchiak, "Writing as Resistance: Maya Graphic Pluralism and Indigenous Elite Strategies for Survival in Colonial Yucatan, 1550-1570," *Ethnohistory* 57, Number 1 (2010): 87-116.

¹⁸ María del Carmen Romo Rodríguez, "Arte tequitqui en el siglo XVI novohispano," in *Anuario Saber Novohispano* (Zacatecas: Universidad Autónoma de Zacatecas, 1995), 323-331.

¹⁹ See George Kubler, *La arquitectura mexicana del siglo XVI* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1983).

²⁰ Margarita Loaera Chávez y Peniche, "Memoria indígena en templos católicos. Siglo XVI, Estado de México," in *Convergencia. Revista de Ciencias Sociales* 10, núm. 31 (enero-abril 2003): 153-281; 259.

during the period of the colony, continued to be recognized as such by the rest of the members of the indigenous communities.²¹ Moreover, these remained indigenously produced documents, even though they created them under the sponsorship of a colonial institution, such as schools, churches, tribunals, notaries, monasteries or convents.²²

In this manner, indigenous intellectuality survived Spanish colonization through basically two means: either those works sponsored by the Spanish authorities mentioned above, or other works created outside the newly established colonial system. The first group refers to indigenous intellectuals who, under diverse circumstances and contexts, joined the institutionalized colonial tradition, which was characterized by those individuals who kept the indigenous knowledge alive under the sponsorship of Spanish institutions. Nevertheless, this last condition does not necessarily imply that the works of those who formed part of this group avoided or abandoned the Mesoamerican character in their intellectual production.²³ The second example mentioned refers to indigenous intellectuals who continued producing their intellectuality autonomously from the colonial system. In this case, several of these independent intellectuals were persecuted, excluded, stigmatized and sanctioned by the colonial authorities for continuing with their intellectual production.

1.1.1 Statement of the Problem

In the capital of New Spain, diverse institutions sponsored by the Spanish colonial authorities flourished, including those institutions where Indigenous Peoples participated in order to gain education and instruction in literacy and western knowledge.²⁴ The founding of the *Colegio de Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco*,²⁵ an institution whose initial main purpose focused on educating members of the indigenous nobility into Catholicism and the new cultural values promoted by the colonizers, probably represented the beginning of an institutionalized indigenous intellectual tradition that emerged within and with the sponsorship of the colonial authorities.²⁶ Even though this institution served as the first one that had the purpose of teaching young Indigenous Peoples the western cultural system, there were other institutions and enclosures, such as churches or

²¹ Serge Gruzinski, *La colonización de lo imaginario. Sociedades indígenas y occidentalización en el México español. Siglo XVI-XVIII*, trad. Jorge Ferreiro (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2000), 24-33.

²² See David Tavárez, *The Invisible War. Indigenous Devotions, Discipline, and Dissent in Colonial Mexico* (California: Stanford University Press, 2011), 124-151.

²³ David Tavárez, "La idolatría letrada: un análisis comparativo de los textos clandestinos rituales y devocionales en comunidades nahuas y zapotecas, 1613-1654," in *Historia Mexicana* 49, número 2(1999): 197-252.

²⁴ Pilar Gonzalbo Aizpuru, *Educación y Colonización en la Nueva España, 1521-1821* (México: Universidad Pedagógica Nacional, 2001), 44.

²⁵ Silver Moon, "The Imperial College of Tlatelolco and the Emergence of a New Nahua Intellectual Elite in New Spain (1500-1760)" (PhD diss., Duke University, 2007).

²⁶ David Tavárez, "Nahua Intellectuals, Franciscan Scholars, and the *Devotio Moderna* in Colonial Mexico," in *The Americas* 70, Number 2 (October 2013): 203-235.

courts where the participation of Indigenous Peoples occurred through their participation as translators, scribes, copyists, assistants, or even altar boys.²⁷

During the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, several Nahua individuals such as Antonio del Rincón, Pablo Nazareno, Cristóbal del Castillo, Tadeo de Niza, Domingo Chimalpahin, Fernando Alvarado Tezozomoc, Fernando de Alva Ixtlixochitl, Gabriel de Ayala, Pedro Ponce de León, Juan Buenaventura Zapata, among others, were part of this select group of Indigenous Peoples who attended educational campuses created by the Spanish colonial authorities in Mexico City.²⁸ As members of an intellectual elite, and also as members of the indigenous aristocracy, the content of their works focused on preserving their own interests as members of the indigenous nobility.²⁹ Consequently, their intellectual production focused on lineage chronicles, stories about the ruling families that existed before the invasion of the Spaniards, and other collaborations or relationships that existed between some members of these indigenous aristocratic families and the Spanish conquistadors, as well as the zealous faith that these members practiced towards Christianity. Others, such as Antonio del Rincón centered his interest on the writing of a Nahuatl grammar;³⁰ or in the case of Antonio Valeriano, in writing texts in Nahuatl with religious content in which both elements of Christianity and Mesoamerican religions are present.³¹

After the *Colegio de Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco* lost its good reputation among both Spaniards and Nahuas for preparing scholarly and religiously trained members of the indigenous nobility, and turned into a school of primarily *primeras letras* around the year of 1595,³² other institutions continued the mission of educating Indigenous People. The *Colegio de San José de*

²⁷ John Charles, "Trained by Jesuits," in *Indigenous Intellectuals. Knowledge, Power and Colonial Culture in Mexico and the Andes*; ed. Gabriela Ramos and Yanna Yannakakis (Durham/London: Duke University Press, 2014), 60-78.

²⁸ See the brief list of indigenous chroniclers for the 16th and beginning of the 17th century in New Spain made by Ramón Troncoso in "Cronistas indígenas novohispanos de origen nahua. Siglo XVI y principios del XVII", in *Hombres de a pie y de a caballo. Conquistadores, cronistas, misioneros en la América colonial de los siglos XVI y XVII*, ed. Álvaro Baraibar, Bernat Castany, Bernat Hernández y Mercedes Serna (Barcelona, Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona, Instituto de Estudios Auriseculares (IDEA), 2013), 147-160; 147.

²⁹ See Troncoso Pérez, *Ibid.*

³⁰ Kelly S. McDonough, "Indigenous Intellectuals in Colonial Mexico: The Case of Antonio del Rincón, Nahua Grammarian and Priest," *Colonial Latin American Review* 20, No. 2 (August 2011): 145-165.

³¹ Miguel León Portilla, *Tonantzin Guadalupe. Pensamiento náhuatl y mensaje cristiano en el "Nican mopohua"* (México: El Colegio Nacional-Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2000), 208.

³² One of the reasons the *Colegio de Santiago de Tlatelolco* declined in importance was because the main purpose for the institution had been the Franciscans desire to create an indigenous clergy, which eventually became a questionable idea for the authorities of the New Spain. After the prohibition of the admission of Indigenous People to holy orders, both the religious and civil colonial authorities withdrew their support to the school. For more information see the work of Margarita Menegus y Rodolfo Aguirre, *Los indios, el sacerdocio y la Universidad den Nueva España, siglos XVI-XVIII* (México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Centro de Estudios Sobre la Universidad, Plaza y Valdés, 2006), 21.

Belén de los Naturales, founded by Fray Pedro de Gante,³³ served as another institution that focused on teaching the basic elements of Christianity, literacy, and the western canon of artistic creations to the Indigenous Peoples. Similarly, students who graduated from the *Colegio de San Jose de los Naturales*, exhibited their perfectionism in artistic and aesthetical skills, and among them is included sculptors such as Francisco Xinmámatl, Martín Mixcohuatl, Pedro de San Nicolás, Pedro Cocol, Pedro Chachalaca; and the painters Marcos Cipac, also known as Marcos Aquino,³⁴ and the *mestizo* Diego de Valadés.³⁵ Nevertheless, this school also experienced a decline in its reputation when its founder died in 1572, leaving a gap in the instruction of the arts for the peoples in the capital of the New Spain. It was not until the foundation of the *Real Academia de las Nobles Artes de San Carlos* in 1785 when the teaching of fine arts was formally taken up again by the authorities of the Spanish colony.³⁶ The access that Indigenous Peoples had to this institution occurred almost immediately after it was founded,³⁷ and in this way Indigenous Peoples once again had the opportunity to continue with their professional education in the field of the arts.³⁸ As a matter of fact, Pedro Patiño Ixtolinque, a Nahua from Chalco, and a painter and sculptor, was one of the best known indigenous students that graduated from this *Academia*.³⁹

Another colonial institution that focused on the education of the sons of indigenous caciques and *indios principales* in Mexico City was the *Colegio de San Gregorio*, founded by the Jesuits in 1586.⁴⁰ Throughout the time that this school existed, several indigenous students graduated and successfully gained positions as school teachers, professors, lawyers, and scribes at some of the colonial institutions in Mexico City. While the school experienced ups and downs during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it regained its importance as a learning center at the beginning of the nineteenth century, when some modern educational reforms were

³³ Elisa Ramírez Castañeda, *La educación indígena en México* (México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2006), 33.

³⁴ Luis González Obregón, *México Viejo. Época colonial. Noticias históricas, tradiciones, leyendas y costumbres* (México: Librería de la Viuda de C. Bouret, 1900), 518.

³⁵ See Gauvin Alexander Bailey, *Art of Colonial Latin America* (London: Phaidon Press, 2005), 214.

³⁶ Jean Charlot, *Mexican Art and the Academy of San Carlos, 1758-1915* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1962), 19.

³⁷ See the document in which another indigenous person requests financial aid to continue studying in the *Academia de San Carlos*, *Ramo de escultura: José Narciso de los Ángeles Mártires, indio pretendiente a la pensión vacante*, ARASC-FAUNAM, Documento 16, número 793, Gaveta 7, 1793 [números del 764 al 821]. Classification made by Justino Fernández and published in *Guía del Archivo de la Antigua Academia de San Carlos, 1781-1800* (México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, 1968). The current document is filed at the Archivo Histórico de la Academia de San Carlos, at the Facultad de Arquitectura, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Campus Ciudad Universitaria, Mexico City; consulted on June, 2013.

³⁸ Dorothy Tanck de Estrada, *Pueblos de indios y educación en el México colonial, 1750-1821* (México: El Colegio de México, Centro de Estudios Históricos, 1999), 414-415.

³⁹ *Escultura. Pedro Patiño Estolinque* [sic], ARASC-FAUNAM, Documento 7, número 384, Gaveta 2, 1784-1785-1786 [números del 49 al 246].

⁴⁰ See Ileana Schmidt-Díaz de León, "El Colegio Seminario de indios de San Gregorio y el desarrollo de la indianidad en el Valle de México" (PhD Diss., Tulane University, 2001).

implemented in the curriculum of the school.⁴¹ The good reputation and prestige that the *Colegio de San Gregorio* enjoyed between the years of 1790 to 1820⁴² allowed some of their former indigenous students to incorporate themselves successfully as members of the newly independent institutions that were founded after Mexico gained its independence from Spain. Some of these prominent students included Juan de Dios Rodríguez Puebla, Faustino Galicia Chimalpopoca, among others, who played a vital role in politics during the first decades of the nineteenth century and who will be the subject of this study.⁴³

While it is true that education in the New Spain remained basically segregated, between the eighteenth century and nineteenth century, the *Colegio de San Juan de Letrán*,⁴⁴ originally founded in 1547 for the education of the *mestizo* population in the capital of the New Spain, accepted some Indigenous Peoples as students.⁴⁵ Also, the Jesuits schools that were originally not destined to serve as institutions where Indigenous Peoples could be enrolled as students, such as the *Colegio de San Pedro y San Pablo*, founded in 1576; the *Colegio de San Ildefonso*, founded in 1583, and the *Real y Pontificia Universidad de la Ciudad de México*, founded in 1551, eventually all accepted indigenous students into their enclosures.⁴⁶

Nevertheless, the existence of these institutions, and the fact that certain Indigenous Peoples found a place in them, should not lead us to consider that indigenous intellectual production did not also flourish outside the Spanish colonial institutions. There are several sources that demonstrate that Indigenous People continued practicing and perpetuating their religious ideas as well as other cultural manifestations throughout the period of the colonial era in New Spain. Examples of these indigenous intellectual creations included such works as the reproduction of religious or political texts, and translation of documents from pictorial to indigenous languages texts using the Latin alphabet, as well as the creation of “*títulos primordiales*,”⁴⁷ and creative copying and “forging” of land titles,⁴⁸ all of which are documented to a great extent throughout the territory of the Kingdom of New Spain.⁴⁹ While it is true that

⁴¹ See Lilian Álvarez Arellano, “El Colegio de San Gregorio: modelo de educación para los indios mexicanos,” *Boletín Chicomoztoc*, número 8 (noviembre 2008): 101-117.

⁴² Sobre el nombramiento de don Juan Rodríguez Puebla para Rector del Colegio de San Gregorio, y de don Manuel Ortiz de la Torre para vocal de la Junta Directiva del mismo colegio, 1829, AGN, Justicia-Instrucción Pública, Expediente 44/45, Vol. 1, foja 322.

⁴³ *Representación que varios indios hacen a la Junta Directiva del Colegio de San Gregorio*, 1829, impreso, Vol. 1, AGN, Justicia-Instrucción Pública, Expediente 46, fojas 291-291v.

⁴⁴ Dorothy Tanck de Estrada, *La educación ilustrada, 1786-1836. Educación primaria en la ciudad de México* (México: El Colegio de México, 1984), 188.

⁴⁵ Margarita Menegus and Rodolfo Aguirre, *Los indios, el sacerdocio y la Universidad en Nueva España*, 155.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Yukitaka Inoue, “Fundación del pueblo, cristiandad y territorialidad en algunos títulos primordiales en el centro de México,” *Cuadernos Canela* V, XVIII, (marzo 2006): 113-127.

⁴⁸ Margarita Menegus Bornemann, “Los títulos primordiales de los pueblos de indios,” *Estudis: Revista de historia moderna*, N° 20 (1994): 207-230.

⁴⁹ The cases in which Indigenous Peoples were involved in practicing in religious rituals, ceremonies, and other activities that demonstrated the existence of their Mesoamerican thought and intellectualism even after the Spanish conquest are vastly documented. Since Mesoamerican thought and the practices related to it were

indigenous intellectual production during the colonial era also occurred outside of the colonial institutions, it is also true that in several cases conducting research on these creations represented a serious challenge for the individuals due to the repressive character that colonial institutions wielded against these types of autonomous indigenous intellectual activity.

On the contrary, institutionalized indigenous intellectualism emerged from a more stable position, sponsored both by civil and ecclesiastical authorities in the New Spain. This sponsorship resulted in a prolific production of indigenous intellectual sources, both pictorial and written. It is important to emphasize that this referred to institutionalized indigenous intellectual tradition already existed before the invasion of the Spaniards. The existence of institutions among the Nahuas, such as the *calpulli* and the *calmecac*, are clear examples of how structured and solid this institutionalized tradition existed among the Nahuas before the arrival of the Spaniards to the Americas.⁵⁰ This indigenous tradition continued thriving through the Spanish colonial institutions in New Spain once the Spanish colonial government was established in the territory. Moreover, the indigenous intellectual tradition that continued among those Indigenous

considered as idolatry by the Spanish authorities, therefore it is only possible to know about them by reading documents associated with the Catholic Church. One of the famous cases is the one of Don Carlos Ometochtzin in Mexico City, who was sentenced to death in 1539. In the case made against Don Carlos, it is possible to evidence the Mesoamerican ideas that could conduct into an indigenous rebellion threaten the stability of the Catholic Church. See Luis González Obregón, ed., *Proceso inquisitorial del cacique de Tetzaco, don Carlos Ometochtzin Chichimecatecotl* (México: Publicaciones del Archivo General de la Nación, 1910). The case in which Don Carlos Ometochtzin was involved is one of many documented and currently housed in different archives. There are current studies published about this topic in which we can find a correlation between literacy, intellectualism and indigenous resistance during the period of the Spanish colony. For the case of the area of Oaxaca, see the work of Maarten Jansen and Gabina Aurora Pérez Jiménez, *Historia, literatura e ideología de Nuu Dzaui. El Códice Añute y su contexto histórico-cultural* (Oaxaca: Instituto Estatal de Oaxaca, 2007); from the same authors “The Search for History in Mixtec Codices,” in *Ancient America*, Volume 1, 1990, pp. 99-112. Also David Tavárez, “Escritura, espacios sociales y cosmologías indígenas en la Nueva España: una aproximación a los calendarios zapotecos,” *Revista de Indias* LXIX, núm. 247 (2009): 39-62. Kevin Terraciano, *The Mixtecs of Colonial Oaxaca* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001). For the area of the Sierra Gorda, in the current Mexican state of Queretaro, see Gerardo Lara Cisneros, *El cristianismo en el espejo indígena: Religiosidad en el occidente de Sierra Gorda, siglo XVIII* (México: Archivo General de la Nación- Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 2002). Some important works that refer this experience in the Maya area are Frans Blom, “Gaspar Antonio Chi, Interpreter,” *American Anthropologist* 30, No. 2 (April-June, 1928): 250-268. Also John Chuchiak, “Pre-Conquest Ah Kinob in a Colonial World: The Extirpation of Idolatry and the Survival of the Maya Priesthood in Colonial Yucatan, 1563-1697,” in *Maya Survivalism: Acta Mesoamericana*, edited by Ueli Hostetler and Matthew Restall, 135-160. Germany: Verlag Anton Sarwein, 2001. While trying to list and analyzed the series of indigenous rebellions that occurred in the New Spain during the colonial era, the book of Alicia Barabas, *Utopías indias. Movimientos sociorreligiosos en México* (México: CONACULTA, INAH, Plaza y Valdés, 2002). Another interesting work that demonstrates how this phenomenon of intellectual resistance from the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas share similar elements, see Martin Lienhard, ed., *Testimonios, cartas y manifiestos indígenas: Desde la Conquista hasta comienzos del siglo XX* (Caracas: Biblioteca Aracuch, 1992).

⁵⁰ For more about Mexica education and institutions see Alfredo López Austin, *Educación mexica. Antología de documento sahuaguntinos* (México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Antropológicas, 1985). Also, Patrick Johansson, *La palabra, la imagen y el manuscrito. Lecturas indígenas de un texto pictórico en el siglo XVI* (México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, 2004). Also see Jacques Soustelle, *Daily Life of the Aztecs on the Eve of the Spanish Conquest*; trans. George Weidenfeld and Nichols Ltd. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961).

Peoples educated in colonial institutions was not solely limited to the learning of literacy and production of written texts by using the Latin alphabet, but it also included the artistic creation of sculptures, paintings, feather working, etc.⁵¹ By considering this statement as valid, it is then possible to learn about the transformation of this indigenous intellectual tradition by reviewing the documentation that Nahua intellectuals, who passed through these colonial institutions, left behind.

The work that several Nahua intellectuals created in the first two centuries of the Spanish colony has generated high interest among current scholars.⁵² As a result, the studies published about this topic have resulted in the uncovering of a vast literature.⁵³ These works reveal the intellectual independence that the Nahuas kept even during the period of the colony, but they also reveal the interest that these Nahua intellectuals had in keeping their social history alive, or at least the history in which their ancestors had actively and victoriously participated.⁵⁴ The diverse documents that these intellectuals created also reveal the cultural synergy that existed among the indigenous elite at the time when the colonial system was already well established in the territory. A review of this documentation lends evidence to the interpretation that pre-colonial Nahua elements of knowledge were still vivid and in practice among these educated intellectuals, who were instructed under the zealous Catholic sponsorship of the colonial authorities.⁵⁵

Consequently, there is a vast quantity of information to show us that every generation of these indigenous intellectuals had their own interests in their cultural productions, linked to their social, political and cultural background. However, this statement does not pretend to typify each generation of indigenous intellectuals as if they and their works were classifiable. Instead, this hypothesis considers the possibility that we might come to know more about the political positions, opinions and interests of a generation of indigenous intellectuals through the analysis of their own works within their social and historical context.

⁵¹ About the diversity of indigenous education that also offered the colonial authorities more control over the inhabitants of the New Spain consult Lourdes Tourrent, *La conquista musical de México* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1993).

⁵² See Susan Schroeder, ed., *The Conquest All Over Again* (Ontario: Sussex Academic Press, 2010).

⁵³ Some recent examples: Susan Schroeder, *Chimalpain and the Kingdom of Chalco* (Arizona: Arizona University Press, 1991); James Lockhart, Susan Schroeder, and Doris Namala, trans., *Annals of His Time Don Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006); Arthur J. O. Anderson, *Codex Chimalpahin: Society and Politics in Mexico Tenochtitlan, Tlatelolco, Texcoco, Culhuacan, and Other Nahua Altepetl in Central Mexico* (Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997). Amber Brian, Bradley Benton, and Pablo García Loaeza, trans., *The Native Conquistador: Alva Ixtlilxochitl's Account of the Conquest of New Spain* (Pennsylvania: Penn State University Press, 2015).

⁵⁴ See James Lockhart, ed. and trans., *We People Here: Nahuatl Account of the Conquest of Mexico; Volume I* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 1993).

⁵⁵ Elizabeth Hill Boone and Tom Cummins, eds., *Native Traditions in the Postconquest World, A Symposium at Dumbarton Oak* (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks, 1998).

In this sense, it is important to recognize that even considering the violent and subjugating nature of the period of the Spanish conquest and colonization in the New Spain, the outcome resulted in a relatively strong institutional stability that encouraged certain groups of indigenous intellectuals to engage in a vast production of materials. On the other hand, the nineteenth century in Mexico represented an institutional rupture that started with the declaration of independence of Mexico from Spain. This historical period remained characterized by a general political instability and lack of institutional strength. These major changes deeply influenced and affected the Nahua intellectuals who had earlier gained access to education through the colonial institutions which the independence movement abolished. As a result of the war of Independence, these Nahua intellectuals also lost both their juridical identity as “*indios*,” along with the concomitant loss of their rights and obligations; as well as their segregated collective corporate communities’ status as legal entities.⁵⁶

Thus, the main objective of this study is to analyze the works produced by what I have identified as some of the most important members of the last generation of Nahua intellectuals who had access to higher education through their attendance at the already mentioned colonial institutions before the decade when Mexico became an independent nation. The analysis of the intellectual production of this generation of Nahua scholars and artists will focus on an examination of how the movement of independence in Mexico and the first years of independent government influenced and affected the lives of this generation of Nahua intellectuals. Also, the central objective is to analyze how the abolition of segregated educational institutions affected or contributed in the development and continuity of this institutionalized intellectual Nahua tradition, and how these events influenced the further development of the political and cultural ideas of these intellectuals.

1.1.2 Identifying Nineteenth Century Nahua Intellectuals

Through the study of the available sources it is possible to examine the continuity of an institutionalized indigenous intellectual tradition during the years of the Spanish colony. This tradition remained deeply rooted in Mesoamerican cultural understandings. In the area of central Mexico, the continuity of this Mesoamerican tradition, its transformation and inheritance by indigenous intellectuals remained possible due to a complex process of synergy⁵⁷ in which several cultural elements, both from the Mesoamerican and Spanish peoples, played an important

⁵⁶ Erika Pani, “La calidad de ciudadano. Past and Present. The Nature of Citizenship in Mexico and the United States: 1776-1912,” *Latin American Program Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars*, Number 258, (2002).

⁵⁷ Although the term synergy has its origins in biology, the term offers several advantages to the study of societies in the humanistic field. In this sense, the term synergy must be defined as “a term used to emphasize that post-colonial cultures are the product of a number of forces variously contributing to a new and complex cultural formation.” Leading to the combination of “[...] equal but different elements that the various historical periods and forces have contributed in forming modern post-colonial condition.” See Bill Ashcroft et al, *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies* (London/New York: Routledge, 1998), 229.

role as transcultural agents. As part of this complex process, several colonial institutions somehow sheltered the intellectual production of Indigenous People from the surveillance and supervision of colonial authorities.

Nevertheless, the resulting independence of New Spain at the beginning of the nineteenth century disrupted the institutional stability provided by the colonial establishment.⁵⁸ By the time that Mexico achieved its independence from Spain, the legal status of the original inhabitants of the Mesoamerican region changed substantially.⁵⁹ During the colonial era the Spanish authorities viewed the Indigenous Peoples as subjects and vassals, whom they considered to have “child-like” capacities, labeling them juridical and administratively as “*indios*.” In contrast, during the nineteenth century Spain recognized the citizenship of these independent “*indios*,” first by the decree of the Constitutions of Cadiz in 1812, and later on by the declaration of independence.⁶⁰ The promulgations and statements made by the contents of the Constitution of Cadiz served as the first historical event that marked the beginning of a judicial transformation that New Spain’s “Indians” experienced, with subsequent changes in the way they were treated, taxed and judicially perceived by the Spanish Crown.⁶¹ This transformation however, continued to be conflictive and even led to outright aggression during the first decades after Mexican independence.

The interest in studying the last generation of Nahua intellectuals educated under the sponsorship of colonial institutions in the New Spain focuses mainly on an attempt to learn how these Nahua intellectuals experienced this conflictive transition. In other words, the interests of this study came about by examining the historical and juridical events that the independence movement in Mexico brought about with the abolition of the juridical concept of the separate legal entity of “*indio*” and its social consequences.

The suppression of the juridical entity of the “*indio*” did not affect these individuals in an isolated manner, but rather it also transformed the legal approach and the administration of the institutions and properties that had been under their control and which they had used for their own benefit.⁶² As a consequence, all of the educational institutions created for the exclusive

⁵⁸ See Ferrer Muñoz, Manuel, *La formación de un estado nacional en México: el Imperio y la República Federal: 1821-183*. (México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México-Instituto de Investigaciones Jurídicas, 1995), 379.

⁵⁹ Andrés Lira, *Comunidades indígenas frente a la ciudad de México. Tenochtitlan y Tlatelolco, sus pueblos y barrios, 1812-1919* (México: El Colegio de Michoacán-Consejo Nacional para la Ciencia y la Tecnología, 1983), 426.

⁶⁰ See, *Constitución de Cádiz de 1812*, “Capítulo IV, Artículo 8, De los ciudadanos españoles: Son ciudadanos aquellos españoles que por ambas líneas traen su origen de los dominios españoles de ambos hemisferios, y están, avecindados en cualquier pueblo de los mismos dominios.”

⁶¹ See Stanley C. Green, *The Mexican Republic: The First Decade 1823-1832* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1987).

⁶² Manuel Berganzo, “Colegio Nacional de San Gregorio,” in *México en el Diccionario Universal de Historia y Geografía. Volumen 3*, Antonia Pi-Suñer, coord. (México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2000), 145-159.

access of the Indigenous Peoples during the colonial era upon independence were taken away from their administration and access. Without access to these educational institutions, indigenous intellectuality itself on an institutional level became threatened.⁶³

1.1.3 Analysis on a Few Nineteenth-Century Nahua Intellectuals

During the research for this project in the archives that belonged to these colonial institutions, I found the names and works of several of the Nahuas who formed the last generation of indigenous intellectuals educated in these colonial institutions. During the independence period in Mexico, schools such as the *Colegio de San Gregorio*, the *Real y Pontificia Universidad de Mexico* and the *Real Academia de las Nobles Artes de San Carlos* continued to serve as institutions that allowed Indigenous Peoples to enroll as students. This fact does not mean that at other institutions, such as the *Colegio de San Juan de Letrán*, the *Colegio de San Ildefonso*, or the *Colegios de San Pedro y San Pablo*, indigenous students were not accepted, since diverse studies have demonstrated that an important number of indigenous students enrolled and attended these institutions as well.⁶⁴ However, the large number of indigenous students enrolled in institutions in which they had a legal preference to be accepted, as juridical defined “*indios*,” such as the *Colegio de San Gregorio* and the *Academia de San Carlos*, resulted in a certain number of sources that have facilitated the study of several of those who were part of this generation by means of examining their intellectual productions.⁶⁵

As stated above, between the last decade of the eighteenth century and the first decade of the nineteenth century, the institution that remained the primordial place for the education of Indigenous Peoples was the *Colegio de San Gregorio*. A group of Nahua intellectuals that made themselves visible both before and after the year of 1820 graduated from this institution, the same year when Mexico gained its independence from Spain, and also the year in which the newly Independent Mexican state abolished the juridical entity of “the Indian.” Several of these intellectuals from the *Colegio de San Gregorio*, included men like Juan de Dios Rodríguez Puebla, a Nahua student at the *Colegio de San Gregorio* and later on its director, also recognized for publishing political pamphlets on the defense of indigenous rights during the first years after Mexican independence; José Calixto Vidal, deputy of the *Congreso Constituyente*, director of the *Colegio de San Gregorio*, and also an enthusiastic defender of these indigenous institutions; Faustino Galicia Chimalpopoca, professor of Nahuatl and Otomi languages at the University of

⁶³ Manuel Ferrer Muñoz, “La difícil andadura del Colegio de San Gregorio durante el siglo XIX: unos episodios críticos,” in *Liber ad Honorem Sergio García Ramírez I* (México: Instituto de Investigaciones Jurídicas, 1998), 193-209.

⁶⁴ See Menegus and Aguirre, *Los indios, el sacerdocio y la Universidad en Nueva España*. In this book the authors explain that the records about indigenous students enrolled at the University of Mexico are vast. However, due to the characteristics of the book, the authors admit that they were only able to review a small sample of the records associated with these indigenous students.

⁶⁵ This is considering the affiliation that these Nahua intellectuals had with the colonial institutions such as Linda Tuhiwai Smith mentioned in her book *Decolonizing Methodologies. Research and Indigenous Peoples* (Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 1999), 69-72.

Mexico, a copyist and lawyer, and during the period of the French Intervention in Mexico, chief interpreter and translator of the Nahuatl language for the emperor Maximilian of Habsburg, as well as a member of the *Sociedad Mexicana de Geografía y Estadística*.

From the *Real Academia de las Nobles Artes de San Carlos* the documentation available demonstrates that one of the most prominent students was Pedro Patiño Ixtolinque, a Nahuatl sculptor, artist, illustrator, and during the first years of the War of Independence a soldier and guerrilla who joined forces with Vicente Guerrero. After 1825, Pedro Patiño also appears as member of the *Cabildo de la Ciudad de México*, and eventually as Director of the *Academia de San Carlos*. Similarly, Estanislao Rincón appeared as a former student from the *Academia* who joined the group of Nahuatl intellectuals who defended the right to keep the *Colegio de San Gregorio* under the control and administration of Indigenous People. Another Nahuatl with the name of Francisco de Mendoza y Moctezuma does not seem to be affiliated either as a professor or as a former student at any of the mentioned institutions, but he does appear as an advocate and representative of Indigenous Peoples after 1820, also serving as a promoter of the idea of keeping the former indigenous institutions under the administration of Indigenous People after 1820.

As the basis of this present research, I will take into consideration the works of the above-mentioned intellectuals in order to attempt to gain a glimpse into the collective context in which they lived and the common and individual interests that they had as members of a specific generation. Without a doubt this list of intellectuals is by no means complete in comparison to the total number of possible Nahuatl intellectuals that may have existed during the nineteenth century. In order to achieve a reconstruction of all existing Nahuatl intellectuals, it would be necessary to carry out a much longer term archival research project in which a much wider variety of archival documentation could be reviewed. However, due to the time constraints of this current project, it is not possible for me to conduct such exhaustive archival research for this dissertation project. Nevertheless, I consider that the sources available for the study of these above-mentioned Nahuatl intellectuals are accessible, and they can provide us with a good comparative group sample of the problems, backgrounds, and personal and collective interests shared among other Nahuatl intellectuals who might have been part of this generation, or who are only sporadically mentioned in the historical sources.

1.1.4 Studying Indigenous Intellectuals through Primary Sources

The intellectual production of the Nahuatl during the period of the Spanish colony was vast and it was not limited to the creation of written documents, but as mentioned above also included the creation of other types of sources such as sculptures and paintings. Nevertheless, it is important to consider that the colonial establishment highly valued literacy and written documents over other types of intellectual production. Therefore, the intellectual production created by indigenous intellectuals that emerged from the colonial institutions can be currently found not

only in archives, but also in public spaces, such as churches, religious buildings, mural paintings, and sculptures, all of which clearly displayed the cultural syncretism that emerged from the violent contact that occurred during the conquest.

The intellectual sources produced during the Spanish colonial period in Mexico have been preserved in different ways. Since the education of Nahua nobility and Indigenous People remained under the administration of different religious orders, such as the Franciscan and the Jesuit orders, several written documents as well as sketches or drafts are preserved in the archives of the said orders, and they are currently housed in diverse archives in Mexico, the United States, and throughout Europe.

Nevertheless, it is not possible to make a similar statement about the conservation of non-written documents created by Nahua intellectuals during the Spanish colonial period. Several documents such as religious altarpieces, paintings, religious sculptures, works on canvas or embroidery perished due to either deterioration over time, renovations, or warfare and conflicts that occurred throughout the colonial era and during the political instability of the nineteenth century. Also, some of the authors of several non-written documents remain unknown, making the contextualization and the identification of the authors of these intellectual works harder to achieve.

Even though the study of the work of Nahua intellectuals during the colonial era represents a challenge, it is also true that the institutional stability that these intellectuals enjoyed between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries in many ways facilitates the study of their works and the localization and identification of their authors. However, this is not the case of many of these early nineteenth century Nahua intellectuals. The major political changes that occurred during the first two decades of the nineteenth century disrupted the organization of the institutions that had focused on the education of Indigenous People in the capital of the former colony of New Spain. This disruption resulted in the loss, dismemberment, or destruction of many archives that belonged to these colonial institutions, regardless of whether they were civil or ecclesiastical.⁶⁶

Thus, the numbers of written sources produced by the above-mentioned generation of intellectuals is vast, but they are currently dispersed and held in a variety of different institutions. The case of other documents such as sculptures, paintings, works on canvas or murals barely survived the Wars of Independence, and many were destroyed during the later period of the Reform which began in 1864.⁶⁷ Nevertheless, some copies and sketches of these works, or

⁶⁶ As an example see the guide made by Justino Fernández, *Guía del Archivo de la Antigua Academia de San Carlos*. This book includes only a classification of the material housed at the Academia de San Carlos in downtown Mexico City. However, half of this collection is housed at the Facultad de Arquitectura de la UNAM, at Ciudad Universitaria, in Mexico City. This collection housed at UNAM lacks of any kind of classification.

⁶⁷ See Ida Rodríguez Prampolini, *La crítica de arte en México en el siglo XIX: Estudios y documentos I (1810-1850)* (México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México; Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, 1997).

written references about their existence and former location, as well as the identification and information on the authors of these works, are currently filed in separated archives either in Mexico City or in other countries such as the United States.

The sources produced by these Nahua intellectuals that will be used for the purpose of this study are currently housed in numerous archives. Some of these archives are located at archival institutions in Mexico City, such as the *Archivo General de la Nación*; the *Archivo de la Academia de San Carlos*; the *Archivo de la Academia de San Carlos* at the Faculty of Architecture at the National Autonomous University of Mexico, on the Campus of the *Ciudad Universitaria*; the *Archivo General de Notarías*; *Archivo Histórico de la Ciudad de México*; *Archivo de la Sociedad Mexicana de Geografía y Estadística*; *Archivo de la Biblioteca Nacional de Antropología e Historia*; and the *Biblioteca Nacional*. In the United States it was possible to gather documents created by these Nahua intellectuals already mentioned at the Nattie Lee Benson Latin American Collection, at the University of Texas, at Austin; at the New Mexico State Library, in Santa Fe, New Mexico; at the Center of Southwest Research at the University of New Mexico; as well as at the Latin American Library at Tulane University, in New Orleans Louisiana. In Europe, I consulted documentation at the National Archive of Austria, located in Vienna. Most of the sources that will be used as a basis for this research are sources directly written by this generation of Nahua intellectuals to whom I previously referred. By using these sources written directly by the Nahua intellectuals, it is the purpose of this study to gain an understanding of the ideas that these indigenous intellectuals expressed by reading their own works and rescuing their own voices dispersed in these various archives.

1.2 Conclusion to Chapter 1

One of the main purposes of this study is to locate and analyze the existence and work of nineteenth-century Nahua intellectuals in Mexico City as a starting point for reviewing their indigenous intellectual tradition in independent Mexico. Although current scholars have revisited the topic of indigenous intellectuals in New Spain and also have created a new historiographical perspective about this topic, more attention is needed to examine the work of nineteenth-century intellectuals. In terms of temporal or chronological delimitation of this topic, most scholars demonstrate that they agree with the idea that the independence of Mexico from Spain marks the beginning of a new period in history. This argument rests upon the idea that the independence of Mexico from Spain resulted in a major change in the political, social and economic organization of the country, forcing adaptations in the way in which the inhabitants responded to these changes. These transformations in the establishment did affect the intellectual production in former New Spain, and consequently the life and organization of indigenous communities in the territory. The way indigenous intellectuals acknowledged and approached the diverse issues that affected them individually and collectively during this turbulent time also became transformed after the period of the independence. Another aspect of this study centers on the fact that early nineteenth century Nahua intellectuals in Mexico City represented the last

group of indigenous students who received education under the colonial Spanish system. This represents an important gap between this group and the indigenous people who eventually gained access to higher education under the Republican or independent system after the year 1822. In this sense, we are talking about two different generations of indigenous people who had access to very different systems of education at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the second decade of the nineteenth century in Mexico. The group I will analyze in this work is formed by individuals who grew up in the last decades of colonial New Spain, within a semi-segregated society that also provided them with the status of “*indios*,” and who held different rights and obligations in comparison to the rest of non-indigenous inhabitants of New Spain. This group of indigenous students also had access to higher education under the sponsorship of the Spanish colonial system; thus, the type of education that they received in colonial segregated cloisters influenced their collective identity, as well as the way they acted and worked after the colonial system changed when the independence of Mexico occurred in 1822. After the third decade of the nineteenth century, there is a second group of Indigenous Peoples who gained access to higher education in the newly sovereign country of Mexico, which also determined their new judicial status as Mexican citizens, and not as “Indians,” which also dictated their newly acquired social obligations and rights. This second group also grew up under a political system characterized by liberalism and other political influences that also determined their collective identity and the means that they found to participate in the newly independent society.

In agreement with this idea, I propose in this study to identify the individuals from the first group previously described (those who represented the last generation of indigenous individuals who had access to education in the colonial institutions and who also experienced firsthand the political transition from the colonial to the independent system in Mexico, former New Spain), as the representatives of a “rupture generation” for the study of indigenous intellectualism.

My proposal refers to the term of a “rupture generation” in order to identify the work of Nahua intellectuals who lived under determined and specific characteristics influenced by the process of independence of Mexico, and the subsequent armed conflicts that the country faced. As I will attempt to demonstrate in the following study, the term “rupture generation” does not pretend to classify, minimize or homologize the social phenomenon of indigenous intellectuality, but rather to provide a series of social characteristics about Nahua intellectuals’ works as well as their social interests and historical context. Through this analysis, we may be able to see the continuity and differences in indigenous intellectual work and recognize the particularities of this generation of indigenous intellectuals. Additionally, through an analysis of the intellectual material produced by members of this “rupture generation,” we will be able to understand the social role these intellectuals played and the way in which they interpreted the events that affected their communities and the assessments of the well-being of the indigenous population in this period of Mexican history.