

Bulletin for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies

Journal of the Association for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies

Volume 44
Issue 1 *Iberia in Entangled and Transnational
Contexts*

Article 6

2019

Madre y Matriz: The Politics of Town-Making in Cordoba, 1887-1905

Patricia A. Schechter
Portland State University, schechp@pdx.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.asphs.net/bsphs>



Part of the [History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Schechter, Patricia A. (2019) "Madre y Matriz: The Politics of Town-Making in Cordoba, 1887-1905," *Bulletin for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies*: Vol. 44 : Iss. 1 , Article 6.

<https://doi.org/10.26431/0739-182X.1330>

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.asphs.net/bsphs/vol44/iss1/6>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Association for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies. It has been accepted for inclusion in Bulletin for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies by an authorized editor of Association for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies. For more information, please contact andrew.lee@nyu.edu.

Madre y Matriz: The Politics of Town-Making in Cordoba, 1887-1905

Patricia A. Schechter



*Tarjeta postal, Unión Universal de Correos, Spain
(possession of the author)*

In the summer of 1887, some 300 residents from a mountain valley in northwestern Cordoba province petitioned the Deputation for municipal status. The signatories spoke on behalf of 2,513 individuals who, for about a decade, had resided around a series of mines exploited by the Société Minière et Métallurgique de Peñarroya (the SMMP), an industrial concern owned by de Rothschild Frères in Paris. The creation of Pueblonuevo del Terrible would take 18 years to completely settle and resolve; authorities in Madrid finally enforced their will in support of municipal status in 1905. In the interim, a series of disputes unfolded in Cordoba that reveal much about how Spaniards voiced their attachment to land and place, how they expressed their claims to standing and redress under the law, and how they constituted what the petitioners called their “necessary independence.”¹ The nearly 400 pages of petitions, letters, accords, and maps held in the archive of the

¹ Solicitud, 12 Agosto 1887, Expedientes de segregaciones y agregaciones de términos municipales, 1880-1910, in HC 280.9, Archivo de la Diputación de Córdoba, Córdoba, Spain. (hereafter, ADC).

Deputation also illuminate the views of various stakeholders as they coped with the pressures of an emerging industrial, cash economy as well as the entrance of migrants into their midst. The achievement of municipal status counts as a success story among the efforts of working people to control their lives under transnational capitalist expansion in the late nineteenth century. The politics described below, however, suggest that Pueblonuevo del Terrible was very much an embattled rural industrial polity, born an orphan.

Pueblonuevo del Terrible emerged at the juncture of two trajectories of power in Andalusia. The first trajectory of power involved the siting of extractive and manufacturing outposts by foreign capital in dependent or peripheral economies, a global phenomenon in this period. The second trajectory of power concerned town life and everyday politics in Restoration Spain. These trajectories of power might be grasped historiographically as “colonial” and “national,” respectively, but the webbing of the current literature does not exactly net the drama contained in the archive of Cordoba province.² The petitioners from Pueblonuevo asked not for anti-colonial relief from an impinging France nor for rights-enforcement against overly domineering capital. Instead, Terriblenses asked for a municipality, a normalizing, integrative political container that could protect and advance their interests as they defined them. These interests included tax relief, freedom from labor impressment, and the ability to occupy public space, namely the streets of Pueblonuevo and its central plaza, known as El Llano (“The Flats”). These strictures came not from the SMMP, but from the town of Belmez, located 6 kilometers to the south of the petitioners’ namesake mine, La Terrible.

This story of town creation resonates with the efforts of working people in diverse global settings to contest, control, and transform the terms of their lives in single enterprise communities.³ It is a political story that involves a key theme from scholarship on transnational company towns called place making. Place making is the essential human activity of assigning meaning to a landscape or environment in ways that give order, structure, and value to living. Place making involves the

² Jose Luengo and Pol Dalmau, “Writing Spanish History in the Global Age: Connections and Entanglements in the Nineteenth Century,” *Journal of Global History* 13, no. 3 (November 2018): 425-445. An “entangled history approach” focused on “phenomena and processes common across empires, nation-states, cultures, religious and society in determined spaces and situations,” is most apt in this case. The “flows” and “exchanges” typically invoked in the study of borderlands, contact zones, or world systems history are less salient. This paper also tries to “bring the empire back in” at appropriate moments in the Cordoba story. See Adrian Shubert and José Alvarez Junco, eds., *The History of Modern Spain: Chronologies, Themes, Individuals* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), 8.

³ Oliver J. Dinius and Angela Vergara, eds., *Company Towns in the Americas: Landscape, Power, and Working-Class Communities* (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 2011) and Marcelo J. Borges and Susana B. Torres, eds., *Company Towns: Labor, Space, and Power Relations across Time and Continents* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

imagination as well as ritual and social life; it can involve leisure, labor, or political activity. Groups typically mobilize in defense of, or in aspiration toward, particular sense of place; they cohere emotionally around a set of feelings or myths about communal belonging.⁴ Terriblenses carried out the municipality phase of place making primarily in the idioms of family and faith. My thesis is that while they succeeded in establishing an independent town, the terms of family and faith were stretched to the breakpoint and ultimately betrayed. After almost two decades of struggle, their neighbors in the *cuenca minera* (mining zone) turned their backs on Pueblonuevo as did the deputies of the Provincial Deputation, whose seat was Córdoba capital. This paper tries to explore why by placing this event in the context of transnational industrial capitalism and the everyday politics of the *turno pacífico*.

Telling this story involves piecing together multiple voices, among which the Terriblenses' are actually the hardest to hear in the archive. The best documented voices are those of elected and appointed officials from the neighboring villages of Peñarroya, just to the north, and especially from the older town of Belmez. Located less than 2 km from El Llano, Peñarroya grew up around a Reconquista-era shrine to Nuestra Señora del Rosario, whose chapel still stands high up on the south side of the 2,400 foot extrusion of rock, or *peñón*, that distinguishes this locale. For hundreds of years, Peñarroya had remained a hamlet of Belmez. With its distinctive medieval fortress atop a 1,000 foot jut of stone, Belmez was the *matríz* (originary settlement) of the area. Fuente Obejuna, located 25 km to the north and immortalized by Lope de Vega's play, remained relatively inured from the stresses of industry and growing pains of the surrounding *pueblos*, though its notaries were necessarily active. Lope's exploration of village values and solidarities remains a bellwether for my examination of the politics of town making in modern Andalusia. While none of the parties to the dispute ever claimed that Pueblonuevo del Terrible could not or did not exist, the terms of its existence were sharply contested. Belmez, for one, likened its independence to the act of a child attempting to murder its mother.⁵

⁴ David Robertson, *Hard as the Rock Itself: Place and Identity in the American Mining Town* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2010); Dawn S. Bowen, "In the Shadow of the Refinery: An American Oil Company town on the Caribbean Island of Aruba," *Journal of Cultural Geography* 36, no. 1 (July 2019): 49-77. For suggestive studies of memory in the construction of home and place, see Christopher W. Post, "The Making of a Federal Company Town: Sunflower Village, Kansas," 111-133 and Lisa Perry, "Reflections on an Appalachian Camelot: Place, Memory and Identity in the Former Company Town of Wheelwright, Kentucky, USA," 227-251, both in *Company Towns*.

⁵ Manuel Rodríguez Moyano, *Belmez en su documentos* (Córdoba: Ayuntamiento de Belmez, 2009), 263.

Historiographies

The literature on Spanish mining and Iberian company towns jigsaws around the particulars of Pueblonuevo. The work systems and trading patterns of the Spanish at Potosí or Zacatecas do not appear as part of the Andalusian labor or entrepreneurial imaginary; instead the deep Roman past is present, bathing the area in an ancient prestige.⁶ Modern scholarship on company towns in Iberia reflects the lightly industrialized state of the peninsula. Urban archeologists have explored the mill villages surrounding textile production operations in Catalonia, colloquially referred to as “colonias,” and there is interest in Franco-era rural colonization experiments, for example at Llanos del Caudillo, near Ciudad Real.⁷ Bustiello, a coal mining town near Oviedo, was organized in the early twentieth-century according to principles of Social Catholicism and administered by the aristocratic executive of the Hullera Española Company “in the style of a feudal lord.”⁸ Situated to the south of Cordoba in Huelva province, the Rio Tinto Company maps onto the quasi-colonial dynamics attributed by some scholars to transnational capital in the late nineteenth century. There, company managers intervened in and sometimes sat on local government bodies (namely, the expressly created town of Nerva) and used their powers to exploit the environment, the people, and the Spanish purse, eventually provoking a lawsuit for back taxes. Blocked from political power, one historian notes that workers at Rio Tinto “looked to the unions to defend their interests” when conditions reached starvation level during World War I. Broad Spanish opposition to the company’s heavy-handedness against its employees helped sustain a protracted strike in 1920. Racialist thinking also colored the fault lines of that conflict. Rio Tinto’s British executive attributed worker hostility to historic “race antipathy” between Latins and Anglo-Saxons.⁹

⁶ *Libro del centenario: Peñarroya España* (Madrid: Mateu Cromo, 1983), 53-74. Rodríguez Moyano, *Belmez en su documentos*, 202-211.

⁷ Venegas Valdebenito and Morales Barrientos, “Un caso de paternalismo industrial en Tomé: familia, espacio urbano y sociabilidad de los obreros textiles (1920-1940),” *Historia* 50, no.1 (2017): 273-302 and Salvador Tarragó, et. al., “Les colònies industrials catalanes: un exemple modèlic d’implantació industrial, urbanística i arquitectònica,” *Espais: revista del Departament de Política Territorial i Obres Públiques*, no. 5 (1987): 43-47. María José Romano Serrano, *Llanos del Caudillo: memoria e historia de un pueblo de la colonización agraria* (2005) is cited in Antonio Cazorla Sánchez, *Fear and Progress: Ordinary Lives in Franco’s Spain, 1939-1975* (Malden, Ma.: Wiley Blackwell, 2010). Also on the later period, see José Babiano Mora, *Paternalismo industrial y disciplina fabril en España: 1938-1958* (Madrid: Consejo Económico y Social, 1998).

⁸ Adrian Shubert, *The Road to Revolution in Spain: The Coal Miners of Asturias, 1860-1934* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 92. Carmen del Pozo, “La industrialización asturiana: entre la arqueología y la historia (el poblado minero de Bustiello),” *Abaco: Revista de cultura y ciencias sociales*, no. 1 (1992): 79-86

⁹ Charles E. Harvey, *The Rio Tinto Company: An Economic History of a Leading International Mining Concern, 1873-1954* (Penzance, Cornwall: Alison Hodge, 1974), 174, 179. See also Miguel

A link between Rio Tinto in Huelva and the SMMP in Cordoba was the House of Rothschild. An international banking and finance operation, the Rothschilds kept a close eye on but its hands mostly off local decision making in their numerous rail and mining interest in Spain. The London house acquired a substantial minority interest Rio Tinto in 1893, 20 years into the company's operation, but left the British on-site management and technical teams mostly intact. The Frères Rothschild established the SMMP in 1881 and generally kept to this pattern of remote if keen observation of events in Cordoba. Company representatives actively involved themselves local government in Huelva; in Cordoba, leading landowners and politicians invested in Rothschild companies and joined their boards of directors.¹⁰ One business historian acknowledges the nominally "stand alone" status of the Peñarroya operation, affording it "more autonomy" over local decisions than is typically associated with integrated international enterprise in this period.¹¹ The lapping tides of industrial mining activity in Andalusia put a small stream of SMMP workers from Cordoba into the

Á. Pérez De Perceval Verde, et. al., "Biological Welfare and Inequality During the Mining Boom: Rio Tinto, 1832-1935," *Revista de Historia Internacional* 25, no. 2 (2016): 149-181.

¹⁰ Miguel A. López-Morell and Jose M. O'Kean, "A Stable Network as a Source of Entrepreneurial Opportunities: The Rothschilds in Spain, 1835-1931," *Business History* 50, no. 2 (March 2008): 163-184. This essay is López-Morell's strongest statement regarding corruption, bribery, and egregious conflicts of interest between Spanish politicians and Rothschild financial operations. However, he does not endorse a neocolonial reading of the House nor does he ascribe any social engineering agenda to the SMMP. See López-Morell, "Peñarroya: Un modelo expansivo de corporación minero-industrial, 1881-1936," *Revista de Historia Industrial* 12, no. 23 (April 2003): 95-135 and his magisterial *The House of Rothschild in Spain, 1812-1941* (Surrey, England: Ashgate Publishing, 2013), 171-2 and 213-37. Niall Ferguson's *The House of Rothschild: The World's Banker, 1849-1999* (New York: Viking, 1998) ascribes an enabling and self-interested posture of the House toward the imperial ambitions of its customers. Regarding Spanish mining and rail investments in the nineteenth century, he suggests that the Paris-based Rothschild financiers abetted some French politicians' sense of entitlement to "an informal imperial influence over the country" of Spain (pp. 167-9; 354). For more on the House's involvement with international affairs and empire, see Inés Roldán de Montaud, "Guerra y finanzas en la crisis de fin de siglos, 1895-98," *Hispania: Revista Española de Historia* (1997): 611-675 and Leonard Weller, "Rothschilds' 'Delicate and Difficult Task': Reputation, Political Instability, and the Brazilian Rescue Loans of the 1890s," *Enterprise and Society* 16, no. 2 (2015): 381-412.

¹¹ John McKay, "The House of Rothschild (Paris) as a Multinational Industrial Enterprise, 1875-1914," in *Multinational Enterprise in Historical Perspective*, eds. Alice Teichova, Maurice Lévy-Leboyer and Helga Nussbaum (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 84. Between 1881 and the 1950s, the Peñarroya expanded into a multinational corporation with outposts throughout the Mediterranean, North Africa, and Latin America. *Société Minière et Métallurgique de Peñarroya: Service de Etudes* (Paris: Frères Rothschild, 1957). Arón Cohen, "Peñarroya en Sierra de Lujar: una gran empresa en un territorio histórica de pequeña minería," *Revista de historia industrial* 26, no. 69 (July 2017): 143-175.

global flow of labor, reaching as far as the West Virginia coal fields in the United States.¹²

To everyday Spaniards in the Pueblonuevo of the 1880s, however, the SMMP appeared as a self-contained foreign enclave. The company built an imposing administration building close to their smelter works with offices for its engineers and managers. The upper-level employees lived away from the center of the nascent town, in a walled settlement abutting Peñarroya, complete with a private park, tennis courts, swimming pool, and even its own convent of French nuns, who taught private school.¹³ The SMMP ran an on again, off again company store and engaged in spotty philanthropy. In the 1920s, mine worker health caught the attention of the Rockefeller Foundation, spurring Spain's public health movement and netting mineworkers in Pueblonuevo a modern hospital.¹⁴ Yet the most recent treatment of the SMMP in Pueblonuevo strains to identify the marks of nineteenth-century industrial paternalism. The place lacked the signal feature that sociologists identify with archetypal company towns: significant amounts of employer-owned worker housing.¹⁵ The top-to-bottom company town Bustiello was a rigid experiment in creating model Catholic workers; farther afield, ambitious companies like Ford and Firestone went abroad to make money but also to make reliable industrial employees and modern consumers out of so-called primitive peoples.¹⁶ The SMMP seemingly had no particular social theories to test, no sweeping ideologies to vindicate. The raising, in 1878, of a small chapel to Santa Barbara, patron saint of miners and firefighters, was funded by a British firm, the Union

¹² Thomas Hildalgo, "From the Mountains and Plains of Spain to the Hills and Hollers of West Virginia: Spanish Immigration to Southern West Virginia in the Early Twentieth Century," in *Hidden Out in the Open: Spanish Immigration to the United States*, eds. Phylis Cancilla Martinelli and Ana Varela-Lago (Louisville: University Press of Colorado, 2018), 246-84.

¹³ Jerónimo López Mohedano, "Peñarroya-Pueblonuevo: Recuerdos e Historia," in *Peñarroya-Pueblonuevo: A Cielo Abierto* (Córdoba: Cajasur, Imprenta San Pablo, 2005), 186.

¹⁴ Josep L. Barona, "The International Context During the Inter-war Crisis," *Social History of Medicine* 21, no.1 (February 2008): 87-105 and Josep L. Barona and Enrique Perdiguer Gil, "Health and the War: Changing Schemes and Health Conditions during the Spanish Civil War," *Dynamis* 28 (2008): 103-26. See mentions of Peñarroya and Rockefeller in "Curso sobre anquilostomiasis en Córdoba," *Boletín de la cámara oficial minera de Córdoba* (5 Enero 1928): 6 and "Locales," *La voz: diario gráfico de información* [Córdoba], (17 Enero 1925): 8.

¹⁵ Loïs Otero, "Paternalisme ou Imperialisme? Analyse des strategies économiques et sociales d'une compagnie minière française en Andalousie: La Peñarroya," (mémoire de master, Université Libre de Bruxelles, 2016), 7 and 43-51. By contrast, by 1900 the Rio Tinto Company had built almost a thousand units of housing and tightly regulated/supervised access among its employees. David Avery, *Not on Queen Victoria's Birthday: The Story of the Rio Tinto Mines* (London: Collins, 1974), 246-48.

¹⁶ Elizabeth Esch, "Whitened and Enlightened: The Ford Motor Company and Racial Engineering in the Brazilian Amazon," in *Company Towns in the Americas*, 91-110 and Stephen L. Harp, *A World History of Rubber: Empire, Industry, and the Everyday* (Chichester, England: Wiley Blackwell, 2016), 96-99.

Company, whose agents and employees had made their way to the area from Almadén starting in the 1840s. The church fronted El Llano at the request of two groups of miners, La Fusión (Spanish) and La Ullífera (French).¹⁷ Santa Barbara might be understood as transnational space, as it was a juncture for Catholic miners from Spain and France under the name of an imported rather than indigenous saint during the period of most intensive migration from outside the region.

Pueblonuevo del Terrible thus fits the contours of an enclave single enterprise community. Transnationally-minded research on such industrial settings comprises an important piece of the historiographical puzzle.¹⁸ This body of work identifies various patterns of activity by workers and residents that touch on place making, broadly understood. Workers tend to experiment with various forms of mobilization—labor organizations, religious associations, occupational groups, even sporting clubs—in order to create community. One prominent pattern is bottom up organization, in which factory villages or extractive industry camps organize themselves into unions and then, with political development and opportunity, become autonomous polities, as “union towns.” Bolivia provides an example of successful revolutionary leadership by organized miners against an oligarchy with the “official support” of the state at key junctures.¹⁹ When met with state or company resistance, some groups accede to varying degrees of assimilation and accommodation to rule. And, of course, some industries fold before migrant, citizen, or subaltern workers are able to become politically self-directing—and there is also a literature devoted to how these variously developed polities fare after the big company leaves.²⁰

A few examples from Spanish-speaking and Iberian/Catholic contexts bear mentioning in order to set into relief the Pueblonuevo story. In the Orizaba Valley in Veracruz, private Mexican textile companies pressured the state government to create new municipalities that they could control. In response, workers experimented with political forms until the upheaval of the Revolution permitted them to finally take control of public services and later elect themselves to municipal leadership.²¹ In 1950s Brazil, workers in Volta Redonda gained leverage

¹⁷ Manuel Nieto Cumplido, *La parroquia de ntra. señora del rosario de Peñarroya-Pueblonuevo* (Córdoba: n.p., 1965), 19.

¹⁸ Roberto R. Calderón, *Mexican Coal Mining Labor in Texas and Coahuila, 1880-1930* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2000). Robert L. Smale, *I Sweat the Flavor of Tin: Labor Activism in Early Twentieth-Century Bolivia* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010). Donald Quataert, *Miners and the State in the Ottoman Empire: The Zonguldak Coalfield, 1822-1920* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006).

¹⁹ Smale, *Sweat the Flavor of Tin*, 5 and *passim*.

²⁰ Cecily Neil, Markku Tykkyläinen, and John Bradbury, eds., *Coping with Closure: An International Comparison of Mine Town Experiences* (New York: Routledge, 1992).

²¹ Aurora Gómez-Galvarriato, “From Company Towns to Union Towns: Textile Workers in the Revolutionary State in Mexico” in *Company Towns*, 45-67.

against the state-run National Steel Company by partnering with the church. With the support in the form of meeting space, spiritual succor, and validation of grievances according to the principles of Social Catholicism, the community successfully won extension of paternalistic welfare programs far beyond the company's preferred scope.²² Spanish workers led activism in the oil industry in interwar Patagonia, where shared language with Argentines and camaraderie with fellow Iberians, the Portuguese, enabled strikes, walk-outs, petitions, and other protests. Faced with punitive deportations and expulsions, however, the affinities that had aided resistance also primed these same groups of workers to eventually accept the stern law and order program of "Argentinization" enforced by the government in support of state-run oil enterprise.²³ Scholars interested in women's history note the special role of women in mining contexts, notably around place making. By stretching their gendered responsibilities as wives and mothers, women have fostered neighborhood solidarity, provided strike support, and bent their traditional roles in food provision, health care, and children's education towards social and political leverage for their communities.²⁴

Linking the literature on transnational capitalism and company towns with studies of worker mobilization and politics in Andalusia is still in its early stages in scholarship. After several robust challenges in the 1970s to the Díaz del Moral thesis on rural anarchism in Andalusia, working class and labor history in Cordoba province has largely stalled.²⁵ In the meantime, however, the whiff of failure still

²² Oliver J. Dinius, "Glory Days no More: Catholic Paternalism and Labor Relations in Brazil's Steel City," in *Company Towns*, 134-157.

²³ Susana B. Torres and Marcelo J. Borges, "Labor Resistance and Accommodation among Immigrant Workers in the Oil Company Towns of Patagonia, Argentina," in *Company Towns*, 111-149.

²⁴ Temma Kaplan, "Redressing the Balance: Gendered Acts of Justice around the Mining Community of Rio Tinto in 1913," in *Constructing Spanish Womanhood: Female Identity in Modern Spain*, eds. Victoria Lorée Enders and Pamela Beth Radcliff (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 283-300. Jaclyn J. Gier and Laurie Mercier, eds., *Mining Women: Gender in the Development of a Global Industry, 1670 to the present* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009) and Amaranta Herrero and Louis Lemkow, "Environmentally Blind Discourses on Coal Extraction and the Idealization of the Miner in Spain," *Capitalism Nature Socialism* 26, no. 4 (July 2015): 215-35. See also Laurie Mercier, *Anaconda: Labor, Community and Culture in Montana's Smelter City*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), Barbara Kingsolver, *Holding the Line: Women in the Great Arizona Mind Strike of 1983* (Ithaca, New York: ILR Press, 1989), and Bradley Richardson, "The Forgotten Front: Gender, Labor, and Politics in Camas, Washington, and the Northwest Paper Industry, 1913-1918," (MA Thesis, Portland State University, 2015).

²⁵ The Díaz del Moral thesis is that the anarchistic *campesino* upsurge of the *años bolsheveki* was largely messianic in spirit, religious in structure, and a failure as politics. Poor rural workers were not just outmatched but doomed once they provoked the landowners and then refused to participate in formal politics. Malefakis (1970), Kaplan (1977), and Collier (1986) have responded to the Díaz del Moral thesis. Each delivers an important corrective, like valuing the sturdy interventions of socialist activists and partisans in the region or crediting the long-standing self-help traditions that

clings to studies of the region. A sympathetic study of mine workers mostly laments “the total failure of syndicalism in Peñarroya.”²⁶ Historians with an interest in electoral politics in the province have had relatively little to say about mining or miners.²⁷ Raúl Ramírez Ruiz takes the *cuenca minera* seriously as an economic and demographic entity in Cordoba, but ultimately as the exception that proves that the “true axis” of political power ran from the capital south to olive-growing zone known as La Campiña. Politically speaking, the mining towns up north were a “fungus,” unable to challenge the concentrations of power in Cordoba capital.²⁸

Archeologists and demographers have done the freshest research conveying the people-centered and place making stories of Andalusian mining.²⁹ Of these, Arón Cohen and his research team from the University of Granada have gotten the closest to the miners of the SMMP, especially their health and their demographic profiles. Using hospital records, they have made two interesting findings. First, that 90% of the cohort of miners active in the first decade of the twentieth century were migrants from around Cordoba province or from Badajoz, just next door to the west. Second, they suggest that over time, Cordoba-origin workers became an

structured and sustained poor peoples’ engagement with elites and parties, regardless of whether or not particular initiatives succeeded or failed. Calero (1976) advances a colonialism thesis. Juan Díaz del Moral, *História de las Agitaciones Campesinas Andaluzas* ([1929] Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1967). Edward E. Malefakis, *Agrarian Reform and Peasant Revolution in Spain: Origins of the Civil War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970); Antonio María Calero, *Movimientos Sociales En Andalucía, 1820-1936*, (Madrid: Siglo XXI de España Editores, 1976); Temma Kaplan, *Anarchists of Andalusia, 1868-1903* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977). George A. Collier, *Socialists of Andalusia: Unacknowledged Revolutionaries of the Second Republic* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1987).

²⁶ Manuel Ángel García Parody, *El germinal del sur: conflictos mineros en el alto guadiato, 1881-1936* (Sevilla: Fundación de Estudios Andaluces, 2009), 124. See also Edward E. Malefakis, “Spanish Working-Class History,” *International Labor and Working-Class History*, no. 41 (Spring 1992): 49-57; Jordi Domenech, “Institutional Change Industrial Relations: Strike Arbitration in Spain, 1880-1915” *Revista de Historia Económica* 24, no. 3 (January 2006): 433-463 and Angel Smith, “Spaniards, Catalans and Basques: Labour and the Challenge of Nationalism in Spain,” in *Nationalism, Labour and Ethnicity, 1870-1939*, eds. Angel Smith and Stefan Berger (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 64-92.

²⁷ Antonio Barragán Moriana, *Conflictividad social y desarticulación política en la provincia de Córdoba, 1918-1920* (Córdoba: Ediciones de La Posada, 1990); Francisco R. García Verdugo, ed., *Francisco Azorín Izquierdo: arquitectura, urbanismo y política en Córdoba, 1914-1936* (Córdoba: Universidad de Córdoba, 2005). Rosa María Almansa Pérez, *Familia, tierra y poder en la Córdoba de la restauración* (Córdoba: Universidad de Córdoba, 2005) focuses entirely on elite landowners.

²⁸ Raul Ramírez Ruiz, *Córdoba durante el reinado de Alfonso III, 1902-1931*, (Córdoba: Universidad de Córdoba, 2007), 723-25.

²⁹ Javier Escalera Gisap, “Cultura del trabajo y culturas de empresa en la cuenca minera de Riotinto,” *Revista de Dialectología y Tradiciones Populares* 55, no. 2 (2000):249-269; Juan Manuel Cano Sanchiz, “Ser minero. El contexto cultural generado por la minería industrial (siglos XIX-XX) en el sur de la Península Ibérica,” *MINUBE Antopologia-Arkeologia* 65 (December 2014): 249-268.

increasingly larger percentage of all workers, growing from 63% to 79% of the total, (1905-1930).³⁰ In the spring of 1920, when SMMP workers struck, a sympathetic city counsellor from Córdoba observed that the *cuenca minera* functioned like “a true colony” and that the SMMP comported itself “with the same approach used in central Africa” by the European powers.³¹ But in the crucial founding decades, when Spaniards argued about how to navigate a rapidly changing economic and demographic situation, they mostly pointed fingers at each other. No one pointed at the SMMP.

In that tussle, the language of faith and family grounded the early efforts at place making and politics. The root from which these discourses grew was the word *matríz*. The word *matríz* is from the Latin root for womb or mother, and this root word has three important branches of expression in the story. In Spanish Catholicism, the designation *parróquia matríz* (mother parish) signifies an originary site of veneration or worship, around or over which a shrine or church might be constructed. The town of Belmez claimed *matríz* status, site of the first chapel to Nuestra Señora de los Remedios, established in 1535, and designated a Real Iglesia Matríz in 1810.³² Another branch of the discourse is geographic. Nineteenth-century records refer to the area by the phrase *la matríz y sus términos*, that is, Belmez and [her] hamlets (Hoya, Doña Rama, Pueblo Nuevo, and Peñarroya). A third branch of meaning for the word *matríz* is geological, referring to the section of earth in which veins of ore are embedded. In and around this *cuenca minera*, then, the everyday activities of work, governance, and worship reinforced three dimensions of the word *matríz*, turning it into local common sense about place.

The Petition

Three notes sounded in the 1887 petition from Pueblonuevo. First, petitioners mobilized the languages of family and faith to make themselves credibly heard. Second, they invoked the Organic Law, the Spanish laws involving sovereignty, in order to normalize and advance their request, with an accent on the logic and heft of numbers. Finally, they evoked the Spanish tradition of concord

³⁰ Arón Cohen, et. al., “Los registros hospitalarios de una gran compañía minero-metalúrgica (Peñarroya, 1902-1950). Una fuente y algunas aplicaciones metodológica para la historia del trabajo,” *Scripta Nova Revista Electrónica de Geografía y Ciencias Sociales* 3, no. 1 (1999). Figures are from Amparo Ferrer Rodríguez, et. al., “Desarrollo minero e industrial, migraciones y poblamiento en el etorno de Peñarroya, Córdoba durante el primer tercio del siglo XX: una perspectiva microanalítica,” *Revista de Demografía Histórica* 23, no. 1 (2005): 107-137. See also Arón Cohen, et. al., “La siniestralidad laboral en la minería y la industria de Peñarroya durante la primera mitad del siglo XX,” *Ería: Revista Cuatrimestral de Geografía* no. 69 (2006): 75-95.

³¹ Francisco Azorín quoted in “La Huelga – una información interesante,” *La voz* (29 May 1920):

1.

³² Nieto, *La parroquia de ntra. señora del rosario*, 19.

and accommodation by affirming that the requested action would not “prejudice the legitimate interests” of anyone else involved. All three of these notes went sour in the ears of Belmezanos. Cordoba province’s Deputation heard different things in this chord, and ultimately could not decide how to respond to it.

The tone of the petition is respectful and matter of fact, not belligerent or testy. The petitioners identified themselves as living in the “neighborhood or hamlet” of Belmez called “Pueblo-Nuevo,” one of the “sisters” in a ring of neighborhoods that had grown up around the “mother village” of Belmez. They spoke on behalf of thousands of souls (“*almas*”) for whom independence would properly honor their many “efforts and sacrifices” in building up the town. “On behalf of morals and religion,” the people helped raise a church as well as a school for public instruction. The petition’s story of hardworking, upstanding people mitigated the stigma usually attached to the improvised and rough and tumble living conditions typical of mining zones. The area was known for a strip of thatched mud huts near the active mines as well as a cluster of somewhat ramshackle housing around the train station.³³ Rather than live in company housing, evidence suggests that, like other mining areas in rural Spain, a significant percentage of the workers were *jornaleros*, or day workers, who cycled between industrial and farm labor, or were herdsman whose seasonal rounds could include a stint in the mines.³⁴ The petitioners also requested that their town take the name “Pueblonuevo del Terrible,” rooting their sense of place and belonging to the discovery of the mine named Terrible.

The petition made another normalizing gesture by invoking the weight of numbers. Of the growing hamlets around Belmez, Pueblonuevo was the largest as well as the location of three of the most prosperous and active mines: La Terrible, San Miguel, and Santa Elisa.³⁵ This situation also made Pueblonuevo a hub for daily commutes from the other hamlets; hundreds of workers came and went daily. The numbers foregrounded by the petition bolstered conformity with the Organic Law, namely, the regulation requiring a population of 2,000 for town status. The petition also invoked the traditional Spanish request for relief from inconvenience. It did so by citing “constant rivalry” with Belmez over issues listed but not fully explained. These issues included fees for policing and labor support of public works. Such services would be cheaper if paid for and administered directly. The

³³ *Diario de Cordoba* (12 Octubre 1886): 3.

³⁴ Shubert, *Road to Revolution*, chapter one. Jordi Domenech, “Land Tenure Inequality, Harvests, and Rural Conflict, 1931-34” *Social Science History* 39, vol. 2 (2015): 253-286. Domenech affirms high rates of mobility among rural workers in Andalusia. His argument that opportunities in the “polity process” and not just bad conditions or high rates of “grievances” best explain worker engagement in activities aimed at economic and political change (255-56) is very suggestive for the Pueblonuevo case.

³⁵ Francisco José Aute Navarrete, “La mina como génesis,” in *Peñarroya-Pueblonuevo: Á cielo abierto*, pp. 233-293.

petition included figures to show that by collecting its own fees and taxes, the town could sustain its own budget well in the black. Finally, Pueblonuevo del Terrible felt like a place. Daily life and labor made the town “a true center” with an “essentially industrial character.”³⁶

The petition was written on the stamped paper required for official documents but the effort did not self-identify as a social movement or organization. The closing statement identified three conveners of the petition process: José Antonio Rodríguez Aparicio, Augusto Lavaurs, and Ramón Villaseñor, followed by 14 pages of signatures, totaling 309. Almost half of the signatories signed by their own hand; 52% had their name penned for them by someone else. These amanuenses were identified by the phrase “at the request of” and about 25 different people signed for others. Only the name of one petitioner carried the annotation “for not knowing how to sign,” which suggests that most of the residents of Pueblonuevo approved proxies. Of the 21 female signatories, only 3 of them signed their own names. The petition closed with a statement about certifying the signatures, but no appendix or formal census survives in the archive.³⁷

Four men dominated among the amanuenses: Agripino Medina, Sebastian Sánchez, Miguel García, and Leon Gutiérrez. Gutiérrez was a dry goods merchant whose store was located in Belmez but he apparently lived in Pueblonuevo. He later served in the first city government. *Diario de Cordoba* published a routine notice of the petition’s filing at the Deputation, and mentioned only Augusto Lavaurs among the leading names.³⁸ Lavaurs might have been a go-between or translator, possibly of mixed national parentage. Among the putative organizers, José Antonio Rodríguez Aparicio, who served as the first mayor, was a broker in foodstuffs from Madrid who became a transportation contractor. That assertive shopkeepers and aspiring entrepreneurs were in the lead of the organizing points to opportunities brought by the cash economy. That Gutiérrez’s shop was burglarized in December of the petition year suggests tensions over goods and services, as well as problems with public order.³⁹

Indeed, what does not appear in the normalizing framework of the petition is the social tensions on the streets of Pueblonuevo. In the late 1870s, Peñarroya’s priest complained to the diocese about the unchurched, Protestant, and polyglot population next door, denigrating them as “foreign peoples from all of Europe, of suspicious birth.”⁴⁰ Yet creating Santa Barbara may have raised expectations for

³⁶ Solicitud, 12 Agosto 1887, HC 280.9, ADC.

³⁷ Solicitud, 12 Agosto 1887, HC 280.9, ADC.

³⁸ *Diario de Cordoba* (24 Agosto 1887): 3.

³⁹ “Edictos,” *Diario de Cordoba* (20 Diciembre 1887): 3. The goods were relatively high end: a pistol and dry goods, 2 kilos of *azafrán*, colored ribbons, and embroidery materials. Notes for the “Cámara Oficial de Comercio e Industria,” *Diario de Cordoba* (19 Marzo 1899): 1 lists Rodríguez Aparicio as a member. See also Mohedano, *Peñarroya-Pueblonuevo: Á cielo abierto*, 86.

⁴⁰ Quoted in Nieto, *La parroquia de ntra. señora del rosario*, 20.

order and accommodation that the clergy could not deliver. In 1889, the priest wanted to prohibit religious processions from the neighboring towns from crossing into Pueblonuevo, thus avoiding “complaints in the community.” The request was denied by the diocese, but Belmez’s clergy received the news of this request with “disgust.”⁴¹

The political leadership of Belmez strongly responded to the petition by regulating “Pueblo-Nuevo.” New local ordinances issued in 1890 focused on the “special conditions” there that threatened to change local customs “almost completely.”⁴² The priority of these regulations—before market inspection of foods, before clean water—was the use of public space. Only Catholic ceremonies or public manifestations would be permitted in streets and plazas. There was to be no blocking of church doors (“without exception”) and no singing of secular songs on Holy Thursday. On the secular side, Belmez stated its powers to impress labor for public works as well as advanced a rule that residents lodge unhoused persons in private homes. The ordinances specified that no one under the age of 16 (or over 50) could be impressed and for no more than 20 days a year nor more than 10 days consecutively. The requirement to house individuals was to be calibrated by “social position and the capacity of the home” but was unavoidable (elites could pay a hotel or inn for their assigned lodgers). Only “strangers,” war veterans, and telegraph operators were exempt from this requirement.⁴³ This stipulation might have aggrieved the Spanish residents of Pueblonuevo, since non-Spaniards were given differential treatment.

In the 50-page ordinance document, public tranquility took up bulky chapters, noting concerns over gaming, fighting, a black market for goods, public drunkenness, the unregulated use of firearms, and solicitation for sex. Even though it still claimed the largest settled population, Belmez appeared prickly in the press, declaring itself “a Spanish town and therefore, Catholic par excellence.”⁴⁴ It’s worth mentioning that Belmez had fussed for 100 years over the boundaries with its neighbor, Fuente Obejuna, created in 1499, pointing to a long memory of jealously guarding its interests and prestige as *matríz*.⁴⁵ Belmez’s concern over protecting customs that had prevailed “since ancient times” conveys an embattled

⁴¹ Yldeforno Sanchez Gómez [Belmez] al Señor Cura Párroco del Barrio de Pueblo Nuevo, 11 June 1889 and complaint summary by Alejandro Gil de Reboleño, secretario de la Cámara y Gobierno del Obispado, 12 Junio 1889, Box 119, Despachos Ordinarios, 1880-1930, Archivo del Obispado de Córdoba, Córdoba, Spain.

⁴² *Ordenanzas municipales para la villa de Belmez y su término Pueblo-Nuevo* (Córdoba: La Puritana, 1891). Copy in HC 280.9, ADC.

⁴³ *Ordenanzas municipales*, pp. 5-6.

⁴⁴ *Diario de Cordoba* (4 Mayo 1886): 3.

⁴⁵ Rodríguez Moyano, *Belmez en su documentos*, 249-252.

sense of place, now besieged by persons and populations “from different provinces.”⁴⁶

Turning Point: 1894

After the defensive regulatory action over “Pueblo-Nuevo” by Belmez in 1890, the political process stalled. In the spring of 1894, a letter from Pueblonuevo to the Deputation in Cordoba complained about the “inexplicable paralysis” of the government as the town’s population continued to climb.⁴⁷ Then, that summer, a Royal Order dated 28 July officially segregated Pueblonuevo from Belmez.⁴⁸ The new city government of Pueblonuevo del Terrible was inaugurated in December. Held in the public school building and witnessed by the constitutional mayor of Belmez, six new councilors were installed and a mayor, lieutenant, and secretary put in place. In the copy of the Actos filed at the Deputation, references were made to the construction of an electoral list but it appears that this inaugural government was organized by appointment and internal election.⁴⁹ This structure did not mean unchallenged, unadulterated *caciquismo* or domination by elites, however. The struggle to create and sustain Pueblonuevo involved mostly local office-holders and, especially, new aspirants to power, buoyed by and eager to maintain wealth from the new cash and commercial economy.⁵⁰

In these same months, Peñarroya assembled a large file for submission to the Deputation for its own municipal status. Reaction to Pueblonuevo’s independence as well as population growth, from about 1,500 in 1887 to just over 3,500 in 1894, drove this effort. In contrast to the 1887 petition from Pueblonuevo,

⁴⁶ *Ordenanzas municipales*, 7-10.

⁴⁷ Don Ángel Fernández, et. al. to Sr. Gobernador Civil de Córdoba, 1 Junio 1894, HC 280.9, ADC.

⁴⁸ *Gaceta de Madrid* (2 Agosto 1894): no. 214, p. 419.

⁴⁹ 14 December 1894, minutes transcribed by Enrique Soria, HC 280.9, ADC.

⁵⁰ For an excellent overview, see Javier Moreno-Luzón, “Political Clientelism, Elites, and *Caciquismo* in Restoration Spain, 1875-1923,” *European History Quarterly* 37, vol. 3 (2007): 417-441. Pueblonuevo’s founding resonates with some of the openings and adjustments possible within the clientage system as described in Javier Tusell, *Oligarquía y caciquismo en andalucía, 1890-1923*, (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1976), in that new men with new access to resources sought political influence, rather than the other way around. See also Salvador Cruz Artacho, “Clientelas y poder en la alta Andalucía durante la crisis de la restauración,” *Hispania* 59, no. 201 (1999): 59-74. For general details on town creation, see Enrique Orduña Rebollo, *Municipios y provincias: historia de la organización territorial española* (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Constitucionales, 2003), 487-501. This text has a rather sour anti-revisionist view of Spanish state development but the author makes a number of interesting observations for my project. One is the hit or miss quality of efforts to consolidate power in the hands of appointed civil governors in the late nineteenth century. The other is that reform efforts in the 1870s and 1880s focused on the empowerment of local authorities were in no small part designed with Cuba and Puerto Rico in mind. The embattled Constitution of 1869 defined a *municipio* rather vaguely, as “all the persons residing” (p. 465) in a locale. Until 1902, the revisions of the municipal law restricted the suffrage and reinforced the civil governor’s powers.

however, Peñarroya's dossier was much more formal, comprised of 25 separate documents prepared by notaries and officials on letterhead. These documents included a detailed census, a formal budget, reports, endorsement letters, and an accord signed by Belmez. Playing both sides against the middle, Belmez allied with Peñarroya against Pueblonuevo. By presenting an accord rather than request for active assistance ("certifying that no opposition has presented itself"), the dossier offered a *fait accompli*, drawing a contrast to the more grass-roots supplication from El Terrible.⁵¹

The arguments in favor of Peñarroya were even tamer and more commonsensical than those made to establish Pueblonuevo. Peñarroya did not quite have to prove itself as a place in the same way that Pueblonuevo did. Not only had it been an acknowledged entity for centuries but certain recent events had emphasized its place-ness: the French mining company took the locale's name for its own and also gave it to their new rail road station, La Estación de Peñarroya.⁵² Peñarroya's appeal to local common sense sounded in a slightly different key than Pueblonuevo's however, ringing not the logic of numbers and a daughter growing up, but the prestige of landownership. The endorsement letters from the surrounding towns were all on cue, confirming that the residents of Peñarroya were "owners of extensive land" around the *peñón*.⁵³ The petition further asserted that the creation of Pueblonuevo made its residents into aliens or intruders in their own environs, potentially subjecting them to new regulations, fees, or other impingements. The petition also contained the familiar language about concord and accommodation; that municipal status would not "prejudice the interests" of any other parties. Creating the new polity Peñarroya could at the very least balance the wheel, fostering harmony through a "union of agriculture and industry."⁵⁴ To local naysayers, proud Peñarroyans stood firm. "Peñarroya será villa," wrote a grumpy *vecino* (neighbor) later that year in *Diario de Cordoba*. "Pese á quien pese; lo hecho; hecho está" ("what's done is done").⁵⁵

By the end of 1894, hundreds of pages of documentation in support of creating Peñarroya and implicitly or explicitly against the existence Pueblonuevo

⁵¹ "Expediente instruido para la separación de Peñarroya de su término Belmez y su constitución en municipio," 14 Agosto 1894, over the names D. Vincente Hernández Luca, D. Cristobal Mohedano, and Felipe Gómez. Supportive documents came from the towns of Belmez, Espiel, Granjuela, Hinojosa del Duque, Villanueva del Duque, and Fuente Ovejuna dated September through October in HC 280.2, ADC. See acknowledgement of the filing in "Expedientes," *Diario de Cordoba* (21 Noviembre 1894): 3.

⁵² *Diario de Cordoba* (9 Junio 1894): 1; (12 Julio 1894): 3. A major news item for 1894 was a new rail line planned to Fuente de Arco, west from Peñarroya.

⁵³ A representative endorsement is the letter from Carlos Valderrama of Hinojosa del Duque, 18 October 1894, HC 280.2, ADC.

⁵⁴ Expediente instruido para la separación de Peñarroya, 14 Agosto 1894, HC 280.2, ADC.

⁵⁵ "Peñarroya," *Diario de Cordoba* (27 Febrero 1895): 1.

had accumulated at the Deputation. Despite the claim of certain activist neighbors, however, the lines of living and working among the hamlets were not at all clear. The first complaints came, tellingly, from “neighbors in Belmez” who “resided in Pueblo-Nuevo,” casting doubt on the zealous census and tabulations performed by Peñarroya.⁵⁶ The fact was that workers moved around constantly, thanks in part to a network of small gauge rail lines put in place by the SMMP that people rode for free. Vendors and shop keepers did business at several addresses and lived at a third. Moreover, the population included some migrants from outside of Cordoba but also seasonal workers from the surrounding rural area who lived only part time in one area—or part time in several. These migrations—and some of the evidence of them, like the mud huts—were not new, just newly concentrated, visible, and scrutinized in changing conditions. Such mobile residents were labelled “transients” or “strangers” and they numbered over 1,000 in Peñarroya alone. These inhabitants were not counted as part of the census threshold for municipal status.⁵⁷

Belmez Responds

Belmez focused on delegitimizing Pueblonuevo. It aligned with Peñarroya’s aspirations for independence in order to engulf and disappear Terrible, which was recast in the story as an empty shell polity situated between the two older and united land-owning communities. The disruption of the flow of foodstuffs from the farms around the *peñón* down to Belmez was a repeatedly voiced concern. Pueblonuevo could now tax or put a toll on a thoroughfare and thereby reshape commerce, shifting the balance of power. Delegitimizing Pueblonuevo also turned on the presence of “foreign landholders” there and the claim that “none” of the “resident neighbors” were “farm owners.”⁵⁸ These general statements did not get much political traction at the Deputation or in the media and no one named the SMMP or any other specific person or entity under the sign “foreign.” In November, the Deputation approved Peñarroya’s petition for municipal status. However, some dissident residents of Peñarroya, aided and abetted by Belmezanos who were worried about losing their long-standing informal rule of that hamlet, managed to get Madrid to suspend the Deputation’s approval of Peñarroya.⁵⁹ Emboldened by this victory, Belmez pressed forward to have Pueblonuevo unrecognized and returned to its *matríz*.

Over the next two years, the debate and tussle over the political existence of the towns slowly ground to a stalemate. A number of documents show breakdown in the activities of the boundary-drawing commissions authorized by

⁵⁶ “Un recurso,” *Diario de Cordoba* (15 Diciembre 1894): 3.

⁵⁷ Expediente instruido para la separación de Peñarroya, 14 Agosto 1894, HC 280.2, ADC.

⁵⁸ Antonio Gómez and 13 additional signatories to the Diputación, 11 Marzo 1895, HC 280.9, ADC.

⁵⁹ Gobernador Civil to the Ministerio de Gobernación 7 Febrero 1895 uses the phrase “quedar en suspenso” in HC 280.8, ADC. See also *Gaceta de Madrid* (28 Marzo 1895) no. 87, p. 1151.

Madrid. A main point of contention? Which town could claim the train station.⁶⁰ The only business voice in the extant record was a representative from the Compañía de Ferrocarriles Andaluces, who appeared at a special session of the Belmez city council to register his opposition to dividing any lands involved with mining into distinct municipalities.⁶¹ Peñarroya accused opportunists in Pueblonuevo of collaborating at court in Madrid with “certain foreign personages.”⁶² Pueblonuevo partisans, for their part, accused Belmez of greed, wanting to keep the “yolk, white, and shell of the egg” of the new economy all to itself.⁶³ Belmez also developed a position that ended up stumping the Deputation. They claimed that the Province had no authority to mediate this sort of dispute among neighbors and that Pueblonuevo had been created by “special privilege,” outside of the letter and intent of the Organic Law.⁶⁴

Ironically, reforms to the Organic Law in the 1880s that were designed to empower local voices in the colonies, especially in Cuba, may have helped Belmez to assert itself against the Deputation. By resisting the Deputation’s boundary-drawing efforts, Belmez made provincial authorities look weak. Then in the fall of 1895, the Provincial government pushed back. Three sitting deputies were appointed to a commission and charged with arbitration of the disputes. Two members were deputies from the northern district of Hinojosa-Fuente Obejuna that included Belmez and the hamlets; one was an at-large member from Cordoba city.⁶⁵ The men visited up north, walked the proposed lines between the towns, and met with all parties, but their report could have been taken out of the Belmez play book. Their findings belittled Pueblonuevo’s residents as mere “settlers” who would “disappear” as soon as their contracts terminated in the mines, casting doubt on Terrible’s claim about population that satisfied the Ley Municipal threshold. By contrast, Peñarroya was the more “wealthy, established, and important” of the hamlets by virtue of its more “permanent means” of sustaining an “agricultural population.” They further amplified the bubbling critique of the political process, declaring the Deputation “incompetent” to adjudicate such disagreements. Such “lack of agreement among neighbors” could not be forced and deserved a legislative solution. The report also concurred with the charge that Pueblonuevo del Terrible had been created “by a special law,” one that they declared “illegal” and “anomalous.” The investigators sharply concluded that Pueblonuevo del Terrible

⁶⁰ Statement by Ayuntamiento de Pueblonuevo del Terrible, over the signature of José Antonio Rodríguez Aparicio, 16 Febrero 1895, HC 280.9, ADC.

⁶¹ Rodríguez Moyano, *Belmez en su documentos*, 265.

⁶² “Peñarroya,” *Diario de Cordoba* (27 Febrero 1895): 1.

⁶³ “Ecos de Pueblonuevo del Terrible,” *Diario de Cordoba* (29 Diciembre 1896): 1.

⁶⁴ Rodríguez Moyano, *Belmez en su documentos*, 257, 259.

⁶⁵ Libro de Actas de la Diputación de Córdoba, 13 Noviembre 1895, HC 1425.3, ADC. See also *Almanaque del Obispado de Córdoba* (Córdoba: Imprinta y Libería del Diario de Córdoba, 1895), 21-23.

could not be created without injury to the two other communities, defining its independence as an affront to the traditional values of concord, order, and harmony.⁶⁶

The report conveniently excused the Deputation's failure to carry out the directives from Madrid concerning new town lines. However, by the time the report came to the full body at the end of the year, one of the investigators had changed his position. Miguel Marin è Higuera, the at-large member (and former mayor of Cordoba city) withdrew his support. He seems to have bridled at the language of violated family relations that came before Deputation on this matter. A representative from Belmez had argued that when towns "arrive at majority age," they could "emancipate themselves" but such action must not involve "destroying their mother" by depriving her of resources. Marin countered this family metaphor with the idea of "strict justice," which alluded to the logic of numbers. He also disputed Belmez's claim on certain streets, real estate plots, and assets like the train station, declaring them unnecessary ("no necesita") to that town's survival. Instead, he endorsed the lines that had been marked out back in the summer of 1894 for Pueblonuevo. Confronted with broken ranks, the chair of the Deputation called for a vote on the report and it lost, 19 to 6. In setting the report aside, the body stopped short of professing to have no power to rule. However, neither did it actively claim power. Instead, it effectively created an opening for Belmez to push the question to the next level of government.⁶⁷

On a philosophical level, the report affirmed that nothing could be created without something else being destroyed, a position that ran counter to the naturalistic argument that town growth was welcome and expected, like the growth of a child. Marin's position comported with majoritarian thinking: that numbers involving population and cash budgets mattered and deserved a fair reckoning. Belmez went one better claiming, as *matríz*, that it had already created El Terrible under its own sovereign powers as the hamlet "Pueblo-Nuevo." Further, establishing the municipality called Pueblonuevo del Terrible effectively "created" Peñarroya but also "destroyed" it because it put a line where there was none before. This aspect of the line-drawing process Belmez labeled a special privilege. Before the Administration, Belmez argued that Madrid could "*deslinde*," as in approve a physical, geographical line agreed upon by neighbors but could not engage in *demarcación*, as in draw a political line among a population who were in a state of disagreement. However, in the spring of 1905, the question that the Administration

⁶⁶ Informe, signed by D. Alfonso Cárdenas, D. Carlos Manzanares, and D. Manuel è Higuera, 19 Febrero 1896, HC 280.9, ADC.

⁶⁷ This position, debate, and vote are recorded in Libros de Actas de la Diputación de Córdoba, (6 December 1896), HC 1425.5, ADC. See also Rodríguez Moyano, *Belmez en du documentos*, 263. Marin submitted his dissenting opinion in writing, dated 20 October 1896, drawing attention to the fact that Pueblonuevo's population "excede de 4,800," among other points.

ruled on was technical, not philosophical: could Madrid overturn a diligently signed resolution or accord executed properly at the local level? The answer was yes. Citing its “discretionary powers for compliance,” the Administration affirmed the Royal Order of 28 July 1894 that created Pueblonuevo del Terrible and left the question of Peñarroya’s status to await another day.⁶⁸

Conclusion

A borderlands study of mining and labor has recently argued that “transnational capital begot transnational workers.”⁶⁹ In Cordoba, the indisputably foreign SMMP appropriated the local moniker “Peñarroya,” and thereby inscribed, normalized, and disappeared its presence in the area. At the same time, the company’s technology, especially its small gauge railways, effectively mapped and scrambled any sense of place. Thus the petition to create Pueblonuevo del Terrible can be seen as a local effort to put a brake on this activity, and to contain and consolidate population and power on “Spanish” terms. Indeed, Belmez’s efforts to regulate and police public space came from a related impulse, to assert “true Catholic Spanishness” in the face of foreign influence.

In the years after 1887, however, Belmez fought an increasingly defensive fight. Local Spaniards there lost control over resources as smaller mining patent and lease holders sold out to the SMMP, which swallowed all coal operations by 1894.⁷⁰ The collapse of the *peseta* tied to the crisis in the Caribbean offers context for these land and resource encroachments by the French company. Belmez’s ability to protect its own people was also severely shaken in 1898 when an explosion at the mine Santa Isabel left 53 miners dead and a dozen injured.⁷¹ Lack of control found expression in hostility to foreigners, but Belmez’s rejection of migrants and outsiders was more convincing in the 1880s, when demographic change was sharp, wrenching, and new. By 1905, Pueblonuevo was becoming more Spanish and less international. With their own parish church established in 1890, Terribleses could celebrate the liturgical calendar and the life cycle events of its growing population without sponsorship or permission from Belmez.

As Belmez lost control over its largest hamlet, no one ever pointed a finger at the SMMP, which managed to ghost itself in the proceedings. Given the brutality of the Rio Tinto Company’s treatment of striking miners (notably, in 1888) the

⁶⁸ The case is summarized in *Jurisprudencia Administrativa*, book XVI (Madrid: Revista de Legislación, 1907): 839-843.

⁶⁹ Calderón, *Mexican Coal Mining Labor in Texas and Coahuila*, 214.

⁷⁰ *Rapport du Conseil D’Administration* (CHMB) 1893, passim, copy in Archives Nationales du Monde du Travail, Roubaix, France. See also López-Morell, *The House of Rothschild in Spain*, 229-237. Originally, the Compagnie Houillère et Métallurgique de Belmez focused on coal and the SMMP on lead. After 1894, they merged under the SMMP.

⁷¹ “La Catástrofe de la Mina Santa Isabel,” *Diario de Cordoba* (19 Marzo 1898) and “La Catástrofe de Belmez,” (21 Marzo 1898): 1.

miners and shopkeepers of Pueblonuevo may have clung, teeth gritted and fingers crossed, to their carefully worded petition in a bid for integration and political normalization. The final ruling of the Administration took place in a context of reform in Madrid intended to rein in *caciquismo* and “strengthen local life,” emancipating communities from the tutelage of the state.⁷² Indeed, all parties to this dispute may have tried to harness that wind and bend their sail in the direction of their local interest. In the end, however, the Terriblenses depended on Madrid to fully claim municipal status. For some, this dependence tainted Pueblonuevo’s origins as a deal cut by elites and foreigners over the heads and behind the backs of local authorities.

This story of town creation in Andalusia is entangled with the operation of transnational capital, but its Spanish protagonists engaged one another in the traditional language of family accommodation and neighborly concord. In the process, two distinct notions of place found expression: one involving land ownership and one involving purchase power from cash in the wage and commercial economy. Belmez lost ground as *matríz*, but the denouement of the story suggests less than a full victory for the Terriblenses. Rather, Pueblonuevo was born an orphan. Claiming the prestige of landownership, archaic maternity, and true Catholic Spanishness, Belmezanos and Peñarroyans abandoned the Terriblenses to the SMMP and when the company left in 1960, the population was orphaned again. The 2012 documentary film, *La Madre*, touches back on the gendered moral language of family relations to explain the fate of the *cuenca minera*, evoking feckless maternal abandonment or whorish duplicity (or both) on the part of the SMMP.⁷³ The creation story of Pueblonuevo del Terrible is a chapter in Spanish nationalist history in the sense that the state enforced its power in local a war of position that had been carried out in initially the language of family and faith. In contending with new global industrial reality, Spaniards stretched their local common sense to the breakpoint.

⁷² Orduña, *Municipios y provincias*, 509-512.

⁷³ “La Madre” (2012). <http://colectivobrumaria.com/la-madre-documental/>. See also the mining museum and industrial heritage site <http://fundacioncuencaaguadiato.org/patronato-2/>.

**Transnational Intimacies: Coloniality and the Environments of Travel
Writing in Portugal and Angola, c. 1900-1930**

Pedro Lopes de Almeida

Wa fula umbu kexi kwenda unyimenyime.
*[If you set a trap somewhere along your journey, you
should not walk backwards.]*

Chokwe proverb, Angola.

Se llega a un lugar sin haber partido de otro, sin
llegar.
*[You get to a place without having left another,
without arriving.]*

Silvina Ocampo

Timelines, Scales, Travel Writing, and Colonial Encounters

Around 1900 a complex set of events seems to recast the relationship between scales and politics in several places around the globe while, at the same time, the circulation of people, ideas, commodities and capital across these spaces spikes. In metropolitan Portugal and in the African colonies, travelers move around compelled by many different reasons, from scientific exploration to the prospection of natural resources, from military expeditions to leisure trips, from hunting journeys to photographic endeavors, to name but a few. Many such travelers record their impressions and notes, later to be published in their home countries as travel books. Aggregated, these books create a unique archive of movements and encounters that reflects perceptions of Otherness, but also representations of relative positions towards what was understood, within a framework of unequal actors, as ‘development,’ ‘progress,’ and ‘backwardness.’

I would like to introduce these notes by pointing toward a specific object that might illuminate my argument. The object (which can still be found today in some antique shops, libraries and bookstores) was sold neatly folded inside a green envelope, and had the appearance of a giant, ambitious colorful timeline, proposing to represent “the actual picture of the march of civilization.” Commercialized as the “*Histomap*,” it featured a temporal scale ranging from 2000 B.C. to approximately 1930, listing, side by side, the many “civilizations” [sic] that comprise “Human history,” each one ascribed a space proportional to its alleged importance in

political, economic and cultural value. The permanence and dissolution of these geographical spaces corresponded to enlarging and retracting flows of colors, forming fluid entangled bubbles that appear and disappear along the timescale. Among other striking features, two caught my attention when I first encountered the *Histomap*: African societies, nations, communities and tribes are completely absent from this representation, and Portugal practically disappears around 1900. Clearly dominating the bottom of the timeline, a large section in blue represented the United States of America. The *Histomap*, printed in 1931, embodied a certain understanding of the scales of time and history that forced me to go back to my own ideas about power, time, and geography.