

**BOOK REVIEW ESSAYS**

## Latin America's "Great Divergence": New Research on the Age of Revolution

Jesse Zarley

St. Joseph's College, US  
jzarley@sjcny.edu

---

This essay reviews the following works:

**Independence Lost: Lives on the Edge of the American Revolution.** By Kathleen DuVal. New York: Random House, 2015. Pp. ix + 464. \$18.00 paperback. ISBN: 9780812981209.

**Indian and Slave Royalists in the Age of Revolution: Reform, Revolution, and Royalism in the Northern Andes, 1780-1825.** By Marcela Echeverri. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016. Pp. xvi + 276 \$27.99 paperback. ISBN: 9781316018842.

**Freedom's Mirror: Cuba and Haiti in the Age of Revolution.** By Ada Ferrer. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014. Pp. xiv + 377. \$29.98 paperback. ISBN: 9781107697782.

**La restauración en la Nueva Granada (1815-1819).** By Daniel Gutiérrez Ardila. Bogotá: Universidad Externado de Colombia, 2016. Pp. ix + 300. \$11.99 paperback. ISBN: 9789587726725.

**A Great Fear: Luís de Onís and the Shadow War against Napoleon in Spanish America, 1808-1812.** By Timothy Hawkins. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2019. Pp. ix + 256. \$49.95 hardcover. ISBN: 9780817392130.

**Who Should Rule? Men of Arms, the Republic of Letters, and the Fall of the Spanish Empire.** By Mónica Ricketts. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017. Pp. xii + 314. \$78.00 hardcover. ISBN: 9780190494889.

**The Ideology of Creole Revolution: Imperialism and Independence in American and Latin American Political Thought.** By Joshua Simon. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016. Pp. ix + 284. \$32.00 paperback. ISBN: 9781316610961.

**Tides of Revolution: Information, Insurgencies, and the Crisis of Colonial Rule in Venezuela.** By Cristina Soriano. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2018. Pp. ix + 336. \$95.00 hardcover. ISBN: 9780826359858.

**Mexico City, 1808: Power, Sovereignty, and Silver in an Age of War and Revolution.** By John Tutino. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2018. Pp. x + 320. \$29.95 paperback. ISBN: 9780826360014.

**New Countries: Capitalism, Revolutions, and Nations in the Americas, 1750-1870.** Edited by John Tutino. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016. Pp. ix + 408. \$28.95 paperback. ISBN: 9780822361336.

---

One of the most enduring questions asked by students and observers of Latin America and the Caribbean has been how and when the region seemingly came to diverge so greatly from the "colossus of the north," the United States.<sup>1</sup> The question frequently involves an iteration of how Latin America "fell behind," or, in the words of nineteenth-century Mexican conservative politician and historian Lucas Alamán, moved from "infancy to decrepitude" (quoted in Simon, 172).<sup>2</sup> By 1900, the United States' meteoric rise from divided colonies to "empire of liberty" (or neoimperial power) at the expense of its western and southern neighbors was undeniable. However, recent research on the Age of Revolution emphasizes that in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries this outcome was far from preordained.

Ten recent studies shed light on three exciting new directions in Latin America's Age of Revolution. First, new American nations faced common challenges: liberalism, regionalism, and centralism, Atlantic capitalism, indigenous-controlled borderlands, and colonial hierarchies of race, gender, and ethnicity. Second, elite and popular expressions of loyalty to the Spanish monarchy (royalism) generated rather than dampened efforts to reform colonial rule. Finally, the failure to censor news and rumors of the French and Haitian revolutions, and Napoleon's invasion of the Iberian Peninsula, prompted imperial subjects to debate slavery, reform, and independence.

### From One, Many

The collection *New Countries*, edited by John Tutino, explores the common challenges faced by former and persistent European colonies from 1750 to 1870. The ten contributors examine cases in the Andes, Brazil, and the Caribbean basin (including the US and Central America). Each essay integrates the influence of Spanish liberalism and capitalism to create comparative resonances across divergent experiences.<sup>3</sup> Including Adam Rothman's essay on the US as a "rising empire" underscores how none of the new countries represented "the correct" path from colony to nation.

To emphasize common challenges across diverse political trajectories, the volume considers regions that fit uncomfortably in standard chronologies of the independence period (1800–1820s). Kirsten Schultz and David Sartorius each demonstrates how Brazil and Cuba also experienced debates over the economy, racial hierarchies, and political rights. Rather than aberrations, Cuba and Brazil, along with the United States, refused to abolish slavery. They thus shared a common trajectory by "[anchoring] a distinctive nineteenth-century Atlantic economy" rooted in slavery and overseas commerce as much of the hemisphere stagnated (Sartorius, in Tutino, 182). Brazil's status as the most economically dynamic and stable new country has been attributed to continuities in Bragança rule and slavery, which avoided a costly and prolonged independence war. Instead, Schultz argues we should look to eighteenth-century imperial reforms that placed the Brazilian Empire in a position to seize on the shifting Atlantic economy. Sartorius highlights Cuba's experiments with inclusionary politics and economic innovation despite its continued colonial status. This permits us to "unfix liberalism and capitalism from their association with the nation-state" (193) and reimagine Cuba's nineteenth century. Thus, we can see that even on the eve of Cuba's first war of independence (1868), Cuban creoles, like their mainland counterparts, found a "limited space for political deliberation to debate their status and the future of slavery."

Mapping new national boundaries and identities onto former colonial administrative units in the Andes and Central America represented another common challenge. Sarah Chambers and Erick Langer each navigates how newly independent creole leaders attempted (and frequently failed) to eliminate older networks of economic and cultural integration. For Chambers, Peruvian and Bolivian national leaders' efforts to draw national borders stood on shaky ground. They wrestled with two previous failed attempts to remap the Andes. First, the creation of the Viceroyalty of Río de la Plata had halved the Viceroyalty of Peru (1776). Second, the Spanish carried out revanchist violence against the Tupac Amaru, Tupac Katari, and Tomás Katari indigenous revolutionary movements to crush them and reassert control over the splintered Andes (1780–1781). Decades later Langer shows how independence movements in the region threatened regional markets and networks of trade. In the Chaco region of modern Bolivia, these networks had stretched from

<sup>1</sup> George Wheeler Hinman Jr., "The Colossus of the North," *North American Review* 226, no. 3 (1928): 273–280. The phrase may also originate in Nicaraguan revolutionary Augusto Cesar Sandino's "San Albino Manifesto," July 1, 1927, <https://www.latinamericanstudies.org/sandino/sandino7-1-27.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> Stephen Haber, ed., *How Latin America Fell Behind: Essays on the Economic Histories of Brazil and Mexico* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997).

<sup>3</sup> John Tutino, *Making a New World: Founding Capitalism in the Bajío and Spanish North America* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011); Roberto Breña, *El primer liberalismo español y los procesos de emancipación de América, 1808–1824: Una revisión historiográfica del liberalismo hispánico* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 2006).

Lima to Río de la Plata. Their volume of trade exceeded that of Potosí, and they were often dominated by indigenous and mestizo muleteers.<sup>4</sup> Langer reveals that these networks not only survived the dislocation of the independence wars but allowed the indigenous peoples who controlled the trade in the Chaco region of Bolivia to exercise previously unknown autonomy and authority.

In *The Ideology of Creole Revolution*, political scientist Joshua Simon adds another common thread in the Age of Revolution: the ideologies of the founding fathers, *próceres*, or, in his phrase, "patriotic political theorists."<sup>5</sup> His representatives include Alexander Hamilton (the United States), Simón Bolívar (Venezuela), and Lucas Alamán (Mexico). An adversarial attitude with imperial reformers and a contradictory mixture of "liberal, republican, imperial, and racist ideologies" united these seemingly antagonistic political figures and their movements (52). Additionally, creole revolutionaries shared similar institutional positions and interests in rights, constitutionalism, and territorial conquest (48). Simon contends that a laser focus on disagreements and different national and colonial contexts occlude overarching hemispheric continuities.

Creole revolutionaries' writings and published debates reveal how they aimed to overthrow imperial rule while keeping the privileges enjoyed by phenotypically white European-born elite men under foreign rule. At the center of their ideology were "analogous critiques of imperial rule ... comparable constitutions, and common ambitions for futures with one another and the rest of the world" (1). Their brand of an "anti-imperial imperialism" animated their defense of revolution, constitutional debates, and finally nascent inter-American and international foreign policy.

To tie together creole revolutionaries' common project despite different partisan political choices, Simon examines Hamilton's constitutionalism, Alamán's conservatism, and Bolívar's antidemocratic positions. He begins with Hamilton's career to demonstrate how creole revolutionary ideology extended beyond victory over empire to shape the new republics. Hamilton's familiarity with slavery, the Caribbean, commerce, David Hume's thought, and indigenous dispossession undergirded his constitutional belief in an empire of confederated states bound together by an elected monarch or president (67–69). For Mexico, Simon detects echoes of anti-imperial imperialism in Lucas Alamán's *Historia de Méjico*. The *Historia* is generally treated as a conservative treatise expressing longing for Spanish rule and opposition to independence. Simon argues that Alamán's valuation was contradictory. Spain erased an "ancient" past while also bequeathing social divisions, political practices, and customs that structured and threatened Mexico's inhabitants. Simon argues his positive evaluation of the Spanish legacy inspired Alamán's insistence on constitutional rule, a feature of creole revolutionary ideology. In South America, Bolívar advocated for authoritarian presidentialism and liberation through territorial conquest to create a confederated union. He also believed elite creoles should sit atop the social hierarchy denied by the Spanish and famously feared multiracial popular political participation (97). Simon suggests these characteristics fit into rather than departed from the creole revolutionary school of thought.

The late nineteenth-century US military designs on Spanish Cuba collided with the three-decade Cuban independence war to represent a break in this ideological unity. For Simon, Cuban José Martí's revolutionary nationalism establishes the ideological divergence between the US and Latin American creoles rather than explains it. While it is unclear whether ideological differences gave the US an advantage in overcoming regionalism and carrying out a peaceful transition of executive power, the case for a common analysis of creole ideology in the Age of Revolution is convincing (192).

Simon's revolutionaries were hardly the only European or creole individuals who struggled to maintain their class and caste privileges during the Age of Revolution. John Tutino, in his recent monograph *Mexico City, 1808*, regrounds the era's conflicts in a more traditional vein: the struggle to control colonial and postcolonial wealth, namely New Spanish silver. The Age of Revolution contributed to the destruction of silver mining in the Bajío region, which had tied together Atlantic and Pacific economies for decades. Tutino focuses on 1808, when Napoleon's invasion of Spain and Portugal set off a transatlantic competition for control of silver mining, instead of 1810, the year when the Hidalgo revolt launched New Spain's popular insurgency. Using previously unpublished archival sources and published political texts, Tutino demonstrates that Napoleon's grab had two unintended consequences. First, it precipitated a decade of civil war that ultimately broke silver capitalism. Second, it transformed the "regimes of power" on both sides of

<sup>4</sup> For an example in Chile, see Manuel Llorca-Jaña, "A Reappraisal of Mapuche Textile Production and Sheep Raising during the Nineteenth Century," *Historia* 47, no. 1 (2014): 91–111.

<sup>5</sup> David Brading, *The First America: The Spanish Monarchy, Creole Patriots, and the Liberal State, 1492–1867* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 293–313; and Benedict Anderson, "Creole Pioneers," in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (New York: Verso, 1991), 47–66.

the Spanish Atlantic from one based on consultation and judicial mediation to more naked coercion and military force (xii).

Tutino meticulously reconstructs the class and economic factions that built and maintained the "Silver Metropolis" (Mexico City) during the eighteenth century to set the stage for the tumultuous events of 1808. He documents Napoleon's coveting of New Spanish silver in an 1800 treaty obligation when the two empires were allied against the British and Toussaint L'Ouverture over Saint-Domingue. Between 1805 and 1809, New Spain managed to pay some 10.5 million pesos back to the Crown and its creditors (159). Despite these onerous demands, local and regional power blocs, which included the Spanish viceroy don José Iturrigaray, silver and landed oligarchs, urban professionals, the Church, and popular sectors, avoided a social or political crisis. Silver's soaring profitability no doubt aided the process: revenues averaged some 23 million pesos annually during this time.

While Napoleon's treaty demands temporarily unified New Spain's prosperous provincial elites and silver merchants for repayment, his role in the abdication of Carlos IV and imprisonment of Fernando VII deeply divided them. The *Gaceta de Madrid* reported Carlos's abdication on June 9, 1808. Uncertainty traveled quickly with it. Between June and July, elites quickly determined that in the absence of a sovereign, older institutions and power blocs would continue to rule the Mexico City council (174). Then word arrived of Fernando's ascension to the throne. It sparked massive demonstrations of loyalty from Mexico City's residents. As many as fifty thousand took to the streets to proclaim their loyalty to Fernando, el Deseado, and marched with his portrait to the viceroy's palace, where Iturrigaray displayed it on the balcony. The local elite had to balance their desire for continuity and stability with popular demands for a return to a "classic Spanish understanding of sovereignty," the *pueblos* or Spanish towns. An August military coup that arrested the viceroy in the name of all the city's residents ended the balancing act. For Tutino, these events marked the earliest sign of the fusion of armed power and popular sovereignty that would be replicated across the hemisphere.

Tutino suggests that in 1808 we can see the earliest signs of the rift in imperial politics from those of mediation based in legal institutions to one in which loyalist and liberal ideas became infused with military force and coercion. The military leader of Mexico City embodied this change. Field Marshall don Pedro Garibay came to power through "a militarized ascension aimed to end mediations" (206). The link between silver and new modes of rule underscores the entanglement of economic concerns (and postcolonial struggles for economic development) with liberalism and loyalism in the Americas.

This transition from imperial mediation to exclusionary popular sovereignty and force as the ascendant mode of rule can be seen even more sharply in the interethnic and indigenous borderlands of the Americas. For centuries, indigenous polities defended and defined the terms of rule by force, treaties, and diplomacy.<sup>6</sup> Historians of these borderlands, like historians of gender in Latin America, have questioned whether the transition from colonies to nations represented a step forward for all parties in the Americas.<sup>7</sup> Kathleen DuVal's *Independence Lost* addresses this dynamic by retelling the story of the American (US) Revolution from the Gulf Coast (xiv). She intentionally decenters creole revolutionaries and British loyalists to offer a history "without minutemen, without founding fathers, [and] without rebels" (xiv). Instead, DuVal's chapters focus on the lives of eight individuals: a British slave, a Chickasaw diplomatic leader, a New Orleans merchant family, a half-Scottish Creek negotiator, a Cajun refugee, and a Scottish loyalist couple. Additionally, it takes place on the eve of Spain's siege of Pensacola on March 9, 1781, to push against the narrow focus on the Thirteen Colonies (xiii).<sup>8</sup> She argues that US independence came at others' expense. It restricted then eliminated interethnic interdependencies and independences negotiated and experienced by imperial subjects, slaves, and sovereign indigenous peoples that had knit together colonial North America east of the Mississippi.

During the Age of Revolution, European powers sought alliances with indigenous groups against their rebellious subjects and imperial rivals. For example, Spanish King Carlos III personally oversaw efforts to

<sup>6</sup> Jimena Pichinao Huenchuleo, "Los parlamentos hispano-Mapuche como escenario de negociación simbólico-político durante la colonia," in *Ta ñiñ xipa rakizuameluwün: Historia, colonialismo y resistencia desde el país Mapuche* (Temuco, Chile: Comunidad de Historia Mapuche, 2013), 25–42; and Gertrudis Payás Puignaru, José Manuel Zavala Cepeda, and Ramón Curivil Paillavil, "La palabra 'parlamento' y su equivalente en mapudungun en los ámbitos colonial y republicano: Un estudio sobre fuentes chilenas bilingües y de traducción," *Historia* 47, no. 2 (2014): 355–373.

<sup>7</sup> Elizabeth Dore, "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back: Gender and the State in the Long Nineteenth Century," in *Hidden Histories of Gender and the State in Latin America*, ed. Elizabeth Dore and Maxine Molyneux (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), 3–32.

<sup>8</sup> Alan Taylor, *American Colonies* (New York: Penguin, 2001); Eliga H. Gould, *Among the Powers of the Earth: The American Revolution and the Making of New World Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

reverse Spanish losses at the hands of the British in the Seven Years' War. He ordered Minister of the Indies José de Gálvez to quadruple spending in New Orleans and prepare attacks on Mobile and Pensacola (126–127). This involved engagement with the independent Creek, Chickasaw, and Choctaw peoples to reassert dominance over the lower Mississippi and Gulf region. DuVal finds the Spanish and British empires competed fiercely (but often incompetently) for their support. In fact, British West Florida's illegal Mississippi trade, recruitment of Indian allies, and the presence of British warships near New Orleans served as pretext for Spain's 1779 declaration of war.

*Independence Lost* demonstrates the importance of internal Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Creek debates over diplomatic and military responses to the British, rebels, and Spanish to the emergence of the United States. Of particular interest to ethnohistorians is DuVal's analysis of the death of longtime British superintendent of Indian Affairs John Stuart in 1779. In doing so, she elucidates how interethnic frontier diplomacy represented a crucial feature tying together the Americas during the Age of Revolution.<sup>9</sup>

## Rethinking Royalism

In recent years, historians have moved away from treating loyalty to the Spanish monarchy during the wars of independence as an inherently conservative project. Instead, they foreground the genuine and contentious politics of popular royalism and Spanish liberalism.<sup>10</sup> In a study of the royalist region Popoyán in present-day Colombia, Marcela Echeverri places the legal dimensions of loyalty to Spain at the center of the indigenous and slave engagement with the Age of Revolution in the Northern Andes (10). Popoyán serves as an excellent test case. Bourbon reformers, indigenous communities and commercial networks, and struggles between slaves and their pro-independence creole gold-mining owners all shaped the region.

To understand loyalism, Echeverri narrates the intimate knowledge that indigenous caciques and slaves had of Spanish legal culture and the importance of royal justice to their identities and claims-making strategies. These characteristics flow from a wealth of criminal documents, as well as speeches, pamphlets, and wartime correspondence found in Ecuador, Colombia, Spain, and the US. The criminal cases in particular permit Echeverri to challenge two trends in Colombian history: Nationalist and revolution-centered narratives that either ignore loyalty to Spain, or treat it an exclusively elite and anti- or counterrevolutionary project. Instead, she illuminates the "dynamism, creativity, and change intrinsic to [Bourbon] monarchical political culture" and the importance of legal subjectivities and identities for the study of indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples in the independence era (8).

Focusing on Popoyán, a royalist stronghold with Pacific lowlands and north Andean highlands, contrasts with most case studies of the Age of Revolution as it permits an analysis of indigenous alongside Afro-diasporic politics. Popoyán's highland Pasto district contained well-entrenched *pueblos de indios* ruled by Spanish-recognized caciques charged with tribute collection and legal defense of commoners. An African slave system centered in Barbacoas dominated the province's Pacific coastal lowlands. Barbacoas stood out from much of the Caribbean basin for the importance of gold mining over plantation agriculture, and the near-total dependence on an internal slave market instead of the increasingly besieged transatlantic trade. When studied in comparison, these districts reveal new parallels and divergences with other regions under royalist and patriot control across the hemisphere.

Highland indigenous caciques used discourses of royal justice that rested on the Spanish legal belief in Indian "rusticity" and "ignorance" to ameliorate commoner and Spanish violence. For example, in May 1800, Los Pastos provincial Indians descended on the Indian town of Túquerres, burned the *aguardiente* monopoly building, and killed the *corregidor* and his brother (62). The criminal inquest that followed ordered jailed and flogged thirteen men and women and the execution of three others, which royal officials carried out in 1802. Caciques defended the participants by appealing to Spanish paternal belief of Indians as *miserables* (wretched people) incapable of plotting such an elaborate and targeted revolt. As in much of Spanish America, growing hostility toward the Bourbon Reforms did produce localized anti-Spanish violence. In Los Pastos, the sparks were new tithe demands for food, children, and other necessities, and the corrupt use of royal monopolies by the *corregidor* and his brother during the 1780s and 1790s. But violence never reached

<sup>9</sup> David J. Weber, *Bárbaros: Spaniards and Their Savages in the Age of Enlightenment* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005); and José Manuel Zavala Cepeda, *Los Mapuches del siglo XVIII: Dinámica interétnica y estrategias de resistencia* (Temuco: Ediciones Universidad Católica de Temuco, 2011).

<sup>10</sup> On slave loyalty see David Sartorius, *Ever Faithful: Race, Loyalty, and the Ends of Empire in Spanish Cuba* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013); María Elena Díaz, *The Virgin, the King, and the Royal Slaves of El Cobre: Negotiating Freedom in Colonial Cuba, 1670–1780* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001).

the scale of the Tupac Amaru insurgency around Cusco. The aftermath in Los Pastos only entrenched the importance of royal justice in organizing the meaning of Indianness in relation to the Crown.

Echeverri found an unprecedented example, within the next decade, of a Spanish-Indian alliance to repress the creole insurrection in Popoyán (151). Popoyán Indians joined the Spanish militias not simply as junior partners or as cannon fodder, but as defenders of the sovereignty of King Ferdinand VII framed by their own understandings of royal justice. Thus, the Iberian crisis, which sparked an anti-Spanish creole insurgency, a restoration of royal authority (1815–1819), and eventually independence, failed to erode a dynamic and changing Indian royalism rooted in legal institutions and discourses.

In roughly consonant fashion, Echeverri traces how legal discourses and identities shaped the political actions of African slaves and free creoles of color, and their openness to the royalist cause against slave-owning creole gold miners. This slave royalism had roots in Spanish efforts to regulate slavery in the colonies. Much like France's efforts to limit owner abuses in Saint-Domingue with the Code Noir, Spain issued the "Instrucción sobre la educación, trato y ocupaciones de los esclavos" in the 1780s. Slaveowner opposition throughout Spanish America resulted in its revocation in 1794 (98). Nevertheless, slaves in coastal Barbacoas continued to rely on the language of the Instrucción to combat abuses in the gold mines. In a fascinating twist, Echeverri describes in detail how slaves understood the mining gangs (*cuadrillas*) and their captains to function as rough legal analogs to the Indian communities and their caciques (102). In addition to challenging abuses collectively as *cuadrillas*, slaves demanded their right to self-purchase given the extensive cash economy flowing from gold-mining enterprises.

For example, in 1809, when pro-independence insurgents marched north from Quito, the Spanish governor Miguel Tacón desperately reached out to the enslaved to enter the loyalist ranks. Echeverri suggests slaves mobilized in defense of the province in a similar framework from which they had challenged mine owners in the previous decades: "to create families, to gain legal recognition of their communities, to procure ... rights within the monarchical context, and expand their control over the territory in which they lived" (157). In Popoyán, slaves did not abandon the Spanish legal regime by equating the patriot or revolutionary cause with freedom. They sought to improve their circumstances within it. Slaves and Indians thus clung dearly to legal identities and institutions, while struggling to redefine them, in a context of the breakdown and disintegration of colonial order.

The politics of the martial restoration of monarchical rule during the Age of Revolution represents an additional basis for reconsidering royalism. After the restoration of Ferdinand VII to the Spanish throne in 1814, he abrogated the liberal 1812 Cádiz constitution and ordered the reassertion of rule over the juntas in the Americas. In this vein, Daniel Gutiérrez Ardila issues a clarion call for a rigorous historical examination of the Kingdom of Nueva Granada's experiences with the reassertion of Spanish monarchical rule between 1815 and 1819. He challenges the national histories of regions like Chile and Venezuela, which also witnessed Spanish restoration. For two centuries, he argues, they have repeated patriotic propaganda characterizing the Spanish expeditionary armies as carrying out a violent Reconquista.<sup>11</sup> Deliberately echoing Black Legend claims about the first Spanish conquest, patriots emphasized cruelty and pillaging and fixated "on [patriot] martyrdom" (37). Instead, Gutiérrez finds the Spanish exercised more diverse forms of violence than wanton executions to erase the revolutionary legacy. For this reason, Gutiérrez treats the period as one of *restauración* (restoration) of rule rather than Reconquista (brutal pillaging and enslavement). Restoration permits a wider lens for examining the contentious politics of pacification, negotiation, and vengeance that both allowed a swift Spanish occupation and sowed the seeds of popular rejection of Ferdinand for Bolívar's eventual liberation (280).

Drawing on Spanish correspondence, legal cases against suspected and actual insurgents, and local Granadian newspapers, Gutiérrez uncovers how courts and legal procedures, rather than extralegal measures, served as institutions for handling counterrevolutionary behavior. Leader of the Spanish expedition Pablo Morillo's first acts were to prevent the bloodshed and pillage that took place in Venezuela by creating courts, councils, and tribunals to judge crimes of disloyalty. These sources reveal that punishments of financial forfeiture, imprisonment, forced labor, and internal exile far outnumbered executions.

That the restoration was less bloody than patriotic history contends did not imply near universal acceptance of Ferdinand's return to rule. Gutiérrez uncovers a simmering anti-Spanish sentiment that predated the 1815 Spanish seizure of Cartagena and Nueva Granada and legal persecution of insurgents. Evidence of

<sup>11</sup> See for example José Manuel Restrepo, *Historia de la revolución de la República de Colombia en la América Meridional* (Besanzon: Imprenta de José Jacquín, 1858); and Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna, *La guerra a muerte: Memoria sobre las últimas campañas de la Independencia de Chile: 1819–1824* (Santiago: Imprenta Nacional, 1868).

this sentiment took the form of symbolic regicide against Ferdinand VII and his family. The destruction (quartering, beheading, burning) of Ferdinand's imagery from 1813 to the early 1820s represented an inversion of the centuries-old importance of the "King's Living Image" for understandings of Spanish rule and vassalage. During the late Bourbon period, reproductions of Carlos IV and Fernando VII were ubiquitous in Nueva Granada.<sup>12</sup> As early as 1813, scattered references to individuals charged with destroying royal images remain extant despite patriot efforts to burn the letters and documentation of their short-lived rule. In one instance, two individuals were tried and executed for shooting and burning a portrait of Fernando to *vivas* and applause (210). These acts, Gutiérrez finds, combined with the friction generated by the restoration regime, quickly eroded support for the monarchy and created openings for Granadian newspapers to embrace the language of Bolívar's forces as liberators.

The interregnum between the first patriot government and its return some five years later as a liberation force must be understood as more than a backlash to wanton physical Spanish violence, but instead as the product of the complicated implementation of restorationist politics, dispersed popular anti-royalism, and variegated violence in Nueva Granada. Consequently, future research should consider the period of royal restorations as a central feature of the Age of Revolution.<sup>13</sup>

Pivoting away from Indian and African politics of royalism and military restoration, Mónica Ricketts's *Who Should Rule?* examines how the character and agents of Spanish royal authority and Hispanic liberalism changed in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in Spain and Peru. Ricketts focuses on the intellectual and institutional strife created by the rise to prominence of lettered men, or *letrados*, and military men. The transformation of these men into a new class of administrators, ministers, and governors redefined Spanish liberalism, and by extension, the modern language and practice of politics. She reconstructs the trajectories of these groups by scouring archives, rare books, newspapers, and periodicals from across Peru, Spain, the US, and London.

The Bourbon victory in the War of Spanish Succession in 1713 not only inaugurated a dynastic change but ushered in a scouring away of Hapsburg administrative and military traditions in the peninsula and the Indies. Emphasizing professionalization and expanding education and service defending the empire, Ricketts contends that the Bourbons redefined "merit" from a condition or status linked to ancestry, blood, or inheritance, to "talent, good training, and skill" (2). They prioritized training, useful knowledge, and deeds: lawyers and writers would produce legislation to transform the empire, officers would command its defense. *Letrados* and lawyers would be the vanguard in eliminating Hapsburg corporate culture, which treated politics as a secret or private affair.

For example, *limeño* protector de indios and *audiencia* lawyer José Baquíjano y Carrillo (1751–1817) revolutionized the classic panegyric speech. Dating back to Rome, the *panegiristas* gave public speeches intended to flatter or exalt. In 1781, Baquíjano gave the first of these transformed speeches in the Viceroyalty of Peru to welcome the new viceroy Agustín de Jáuregui. Barely three months after the violent suppression of the Tupac Amaru II rebellion, which still raged across Lake Titicaca, Baquíjano refused to paint the viceroy as a hero. While enumerating Jáuregui's achievements as governor of Chile and recommending he surround himself with virtuous men, he decried the oppression of Indians in Chile and those of the *visitador* (royal inspector) Antonio de Areche (86–87). The speech was published and caused a public scandal in Peru. Royal authorities felt obligated to produce a public, printed rebuttal (*refutación*) to defend their honor. Though the Crown finally ordered the confiscation of Baquíjano's text in 1783, it clearly marked the changing role of *letrados* in the empire.

Ultimately, the book finds that military men won out, finding more space, support, and maneuverability during the crisis of Spanish rule, while *letrados* were restricted to "state-protected spaces" such as press clubs, schools, and academies. Given Bourbon Spain's inter-imperial wars and fear of invasion in the Americas, this may seem unsurprising. Ricketts's choice of Peru as a case study parallel to Spain also reinforces this point. Rather than treat Peru as a backward royalist stronghold, she shows how the twin eighteenth-century fears of foreign invasion and indigenous uprisings created an opportunity to witness the increased role for military men at the expense of *letrados*. The book refuses, however, to view this development as the victory of seemingly illiberal military officers and the defeat of liberal, enlightened men of letters. Instead, what must be redefined is Spanish liberalism, and liberalism in general. Ricketts concludes that Spain's liberalism (quite presciently) not only accommodated a concern for military power, but due to circumstances, developed

<sup>12</sup> Alejandro Cañeque, *The King's Living Image: The Culture and Politics of Viceregal Power in Colonial Mexico* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

<sup>13</sup> On Chile, see Sarah C. Chambers, *Families in War and Peace: Chile from Colony to Nation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015).

and bequeathed to modern politics a focus on military leadership and defense. Evidence of the prestige and power of generals, officers, caudillos, and armed men on horseback, from George Washington to Juan Manuel de Rosas, abound across the early republican American political landscape.

### Fear of a French Planet

The maritime networks of news and whispers that bombarded the ports of the Americas represents another salient feature entangling the events of the Age of Revolution.<sup>14</sup> Atlantic empires unsuccessfully fought to stem and censor the flow of republican news and writings, while slave societies in the circum-Caribbean tenaciously fought to stem word of the Haitian Revolution. Uncertain royal authority generated by Napoleon's invasion of Spain and Portugal and the four-year absence of a monarch further complicated these efforts.

The relationship between Haiti's radical abolition and independence and Cuba's slavery-fueled boom exemplified these dynamics. If Haiti represented perhaps the highest victory of universal freedom, Ada Ferrer demonstrates in *Freedom's Mirror* how, roughly fifty miles away, Cubans witnessed freedom's denial. As slaves and former slaves destroyed the French plantation regime in Saint-Domingue, Cuban planters launched a revolutionary expansion of sugar and slavery. These planters also weathered the tide of pro-independence movements sweeping across Spanish America. Through an exhaustive scouring of newspapers and legal, administrative, and military archival records in Europe and the Caribbean, it becomes clear fear of another Haiti alone insufficiently explains why Cuba remained a slave colony decades after the rest of the hemisphere. Ferrer uncovers how the aftershocks of Haiti's revolution and its existence in a sea of slave colonies shaped the politics of loyalty and sugar in Cuba. She centers on figures such as the architect of Cuba's sugar boom Francisco Arango, Haitian Emperor Jean-Jacques Dessalines, and antislavery and anticolonial black Cuban José Antonio Aponte.

Ferrer paints a contradictory picture of Cuban planters. They fought the spread of slave insurgency through blockades, new laws, and force. But, in the name of profit, they subtly undermined Spanish efforts to restrict the slave trade and meddle in master-slave relations at every turn. In fact, for planters, Haiti served as "a flexible notion and image, invoked strategically" to defend slavery's perpetuation in Cuba. During the revolution, it served as evidence of an opportunity to fill the vacuum in the sugar economy; after, a justification to postpone abolition lest they encourage a repeat (15).

For Ferrer, Cuban planters struggled to balance embracing sugar, remaining loyal to Spain against the tide of anticolonial movements, and suppressing the discursive and material reverberations of the Haitian Revolution. Cuban planters and colonists tried to silence word of slave revolt spread by fleeing French colonists and sailors. Spain, however, delighted in their rival France's misfortunes. The *Gaceta de Madrid*, which circulated in Havana, published frequent blow-by-blow accounts of the victory of the slave armies in Saint-Domingue. In response, planters used the language of contagion and quarantine to physically impede news and bodies from potentially infecting slaves in Cuba. Ships suspected of harboring French slaves were held in port while Cuban authorities and planters "mobilized images of racial apocalypse to suppress any threat to their power" (338). Nevertheless, Cuba planters themselves, eager to increase sugar production, circumvented the quarantine to gain access to slaves as quickly as possible. At the same time, planters grew to fear Cuban officers and soldiers who traveled to Spanish Santo Domingo during the time of their alliance with Toussaint L'Ouverture. Their contact with black auxiliaries and former French slaves created a new vector for news of the revolution to reach Cuba.

Despite planter efforts to both silence and blockade word of black emperors and republics, solidarities and radical Atlantic black imaginaries did take root in Havana. Ferrer offers a distinct reading of perhaps the most puzzling and threatening crack in Cuba's *cordon sanitaire* toward revolutionary Haiti—the 1812 Aponte rebellion. One of the most startling occurrences in the conspiracy was a participant impersonating Haitian leader Jean-François. Additionally, Ferrer finds four specific events outside of Haiti that set in motion the dissident movement in which Aponte organized: news of abolition proposals in Cádiz, England's increased efforts to suppress the slave trade, the coronation of Henri Christophe, and the arrival in Havana of several of Jean-François's black auxiliaries (281). These findings allow Ferrer to move beyond the question of Haiti's "influence" to examine the contradictory solidarities and setbacks generated by the self-activity of slaves and free people of color in Haiti and Cuba.

<sup>14</sup> Julius Scott, *A Common Wind: Afro-American Organization in the Revolution against Slavery* (London: Verso, 2018); Jane G. Landers, *Atlantic Creoles in the Age of Revolutions* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010); Sara E. Johnson, *The Fear of French Negroes: Transcolonial Collaboration in the Revolutionary Americas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

News of French and Haitian revolutionary waves also rocked Caribbean societies less dependent on slavery. In *Tides of Revolution*, Cristina Soriano explores how the calls for liberty and equality between 1789 and 1808 “[disturbed] the tranquility” of the Captaincy General of Venezuela (2). Despite Venezuela’s lack of a printing press—a quintessential feature of Andersonian nationalism—she shows how Venezuelans of many racial and class backgrounds received and exchanged information and created and fought for political communities. In fact, the book’s major contribution (and argument) stems from late colonial Venezuela’s apparent absence of “formal centers of debate,” such as printing houses, literate societies, and bookshops. Using neglected Venezuelan, Spanish, and US sources such as contraband books, pasquinades, pamphlets, and songs, she reconstructs the development of what she terms “semiliterate forms of knowledge,” including rumor, visual media, and orality. These types of media and modes of communication created wider networks and spaces to debate monarchy, slavery, and racial hierarchies (3–6). These spaces, rather than an exclusive “lettered” public sphere, contributed to Venezuelans’ early embrace of the title *españoles americanos* (Spanish Americans) and declarations of independence from Spain in 1808.

The book is divided into two parts: “Media” and “Movements.” The first examines different types of media and how they contributed to the creation of semiliterate forms of knowledge, while the second looks at the political volatility sparked by the exchange of such knowledge. The book analyses extant and circumstantial sources such as private library inventories from Caracas and references to smuggled newspapers. These sources reveal the ineffectiveness of efforts by the Catholic Church and the Spanish monarchy to ban books and censor information. The “revolutionary disease” from revolutionary France and subsequently the French Caribbean spread to Venezuela.

Through formal and informal means, Venezuelans consumed and debated these events. Some elite and middling *pardos*, for instance, banned from access to public education, simply hired private tutors for their children. Other *pardo* and *moreno* children from poorer backgrounds living in urban settings, Soriano finds, still managed to obtain basic instruction and literacy (43–44). Orality and the circulation of incendiary visual sources also contributed to the political repertoire.<sup>15</sup> For example, as in the Francophone Caribbean, Spanish slave masters violently rejected the promulgation of the Código Negro in 1789, an law analogous to the French Code Noir, which sought to regulate slave masters’ treatment of and control over slaves. Yet, within a year, an anonymous *caraqueño* circulated a pasquinade that stated, “We are summoned on the Royal Decree that has come from Our Majesty in favor of us, the slaves.” It included a drawing of a black man holding a machete and a severed white man’s head (48–49). Beyond antagonizing and frightening white Venezuelans, Soriano uncovers an additional dimension to their dispersion: these messages were read aloud and transformed for circulation into other genres such as songs and poems. Thus symbols, words, and news of Atlantic events and anxieties reached and were interpreted by a wider range of socioracial groups than the typical lettered colonial middling and elite sectors.

Soriano connects her reconstruction of the types of media that produced semiliterate knowledge networks to discrete political events such as the 1795 Coro slave revolt, the 1797 La Guaira conspiracy, and the fear of black Caribbean corsairs along the Caribbean coast of Maracaibo. For instance, the Coro revolt *expediente* (case file) reveals wide access to semiliterate forms of knowledge of Caribbean and French events despite Spanish repression of the revolt and disinterest in recording the testimony of the slave participants. In the expediente’s pages, Coro’s residents—slave and free—fashioned the unfolding events in Saint-Domingue into a “familiar point of reference” rather than simply a direct inspiration or model (121). For colonial officials, the leader José Leonardo Chirino’s actions reeked of republicanism. For white planters, he represented the possibility of their extermination and destruction of their plantations. But for slaves and free blacks, the specter of slave revolution and abolition may have been a bargaining chip to reform abusive administrative customs and abolish onerous tax burdens. While the Coro revolt turned the region into a royalist stronghold, the colonial elite balanced repression with moderate reforms.

If Soriano enriches our understanding of the impact of the circulation of liberty and equality in South America’s Caribbean coasts, Timothy Hawkins takes on Spanish ambassador to the US Luis de Onís’s “Talkin’ John Birch Paranoid Blues”—type shadow war against Napoleon’s influence in the Americas. In *A Great Fear*, Hawkins demonstrates that Napoleon’s occupation of Spain (1808–1812) created a “profound anxiety” in Spanish colonial administrators over possible French-inspired insurrections linked to suspicious *afrancesados* (Francophile Spanish and creoles). Focusing primarily on sources related to Spanish diplomatic maneuvering in the eastern United States, Hawkins uncovers little if any evidence of actual Napoleonic subversion. Nevertheless, heavy-handed Spanish administrative responses to threats of French subversion

<sup>15</sup> Peter Guardino, *The Time of Liberty: Popular Political Culture in Oaxaca, 1750–1850* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005).

were tantamount to a hemispheric counterespionage campaign. This transatlantic "climate of fear" at first served as a rallying cry for the empire. But it ultimately eroded the Spanish Bourbons' institutional legitimacy, alienated loyal subjects, and contributed to the outbreak of the independence wars.

Napoleon's takeover of the Iberian Peninsula injected a large dose of confusion and misinformation into the already swirling currents produced by the earlier French and Haitian revolutions. For Spain's colonial governors and diplomats, the United States' neutrality toward Napoleon only heightened these anxieties given their contiguous territories in North America. They shared three amorphous borders (west and northwest of Spanish Baton Rouge; West Florida near New Orleans; and the East Florida settlement of St. Augustine near Georgia).

Hawkins first examines these fears through the eyes of King Carlos VI's highest ranking representative to the US, Valentín de Foronda. Foronda received his appointment in summer 1807, a year before Napoleon forced the king's abdication at Bayonne. By August 1808, Foronda's goals went from issuing passports for American vessels bound for Gibraltar to giving the US formal notice that his king had renounced his claim to the throne. When Napoleon placed his brother on the Spanish throne, however, Thomas Jefferson, and subsequently James Madison, refused recognition of both Joseph and the Junta Central, which claimed to rule in the name of Ferdinand VII (54–55). In June 1809, the Spanish Junta Central replaced Foronda, who had failed to win outright American support for Spanish sovereignty and condemnation of the French.

The majority of Hawkins's study, however, follows the career of Foronda's replacement, Luis de Onís, who embodied the Spanish colonial bureaucracy's growing obsession with real and imagined French designs on Spanish territories. Onís studied law, philosophy, and rhetoric at Salamanca, and served as a diplomat in Saxony for years. He had been part of Ferdinand's and Carlos's "negotiations" with Napoleon at Bayonne and served on Spain's Junta Central before being appointed as ambassador and minister plenipotentiary to the US. Upon arrival, however, the Madison administration refused to recognize Onís's diplomatic credentials, which remained unaccredited until December 1815. This set Onís on the hunt for shadowy French influence and emissaries lurking around the corridors of power. In a December 1810 letter he opined, "Napoleon does not desist in his efforts to bring revolution to the lands of His Majesty in America and, in accordance with this goal, he continues to ship spies and emissaries to this country" (100). Perhaps most ironically, Hawkins finds that as the Napoleonic threat that had gripped Onís and Spanish colonial administrators receded after 1812, the United States emerged as the more clear and present threat to Spain's North American possessions.

## Conclusion

During the Age of Revolution, Latin and North Americans confronted a common set of obstacles. Students and observers of Latin America need not accept descriptions of US exceptionalism in the face of arthritic and stifling Bourbon Spanish political culture and its legacies. Tutino's edited collection and his monograph firmly establish that if anything, the new countries in the Americas, North and South, confronted strikingly similar political, economic, and cultural challenges grounded in a period of ascendant capitalism and the language of Spanish and North Atlantic liberalism. Simon's and Ricketts's books both re-center the history of ideas (and the actions they spurred). They consider the dynamic ideological debates over competing political projects of imperial reform and creole revolution that were hemispheric and Atlantic in scope. DuVal exposes another critical hemispheric feature of the Age of Revolution: the fate and role of the intimate interethnic politics and pacts formed along the indigenous borderlands of the Spanish, British, and French empires.

Gutiérrez Ardila and Echeverri both offer new interpretations of royalism—political and legal loyalty to the Spanish Crown—in Nueva Granada as a dynamic, popular identity, not a proto-conservative elite scheme. In turn, they ask us to reconsider how slaves, indigenous peoples, and other subjects navigated corrupt Spanish administrators, creole slave owners and revolutionary armies, and militarily restored royal rule.

Finally, the books by Ferrer, Hawkins, and Soriano emphasize the importance of circulating rumors and news of citizen and slave revolutions in France and the Caribbean and Napoleon's invasion of the Iberian Peninsula. Respectively, they narrate how these events spurred Cuba's sugar boom; Spain's counterespionage campaign against French subversion, which weakened its institutional legitimacy; and the creation of alternative, multiracial public spheres in Venezuela.

## Author Information

Jesse Zarley is assistant professor of history at Saint Joseph's College (Long Island campus). He is the contributing editor on Colonial Chile and Nueva Granada for volume 74 of the *Handbook of Latin American Studies*. He received his PhD from the University of Maryland, College Park, in 2017, and has previously

taught at Macalester College and the University of Mary Washington. He has been a Fulbright IIE Fellow in Chile, a Social Science Research Council International Dissertation Research Fellow in Chile and Argentina, and a Mellon/ACLS Dissertation Completion Fellow. His work looks at the transnational borderlands politics of the Mapuche people in the southern Andes during the Age of Revolution, considering how indigenous diplomatic rituals shaped encounters with the Spanish empire and the new nations of Chile and the United Provinces of Río de la Plata. Zarley is the author of "Between the Lof and the Liberators: Mapuche Authority in Chile's Guerra a Muerte (1819–1825)," published in the journal *Ethnohistory* in 2019, and an Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Latin American History entry entitled "José de San Martín and Indigenous Relations in the South Andean Borderlands," also published in 2019.

**How to cite this article:** Zarley, Jesse. 2020. Latin America's "Great Divergence": New Research on the Age of Revolution. *Latin American Research Review* 55(1), pp. 148–158. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25222/larr.1156>

**Submitted:** 17 October 2019

**Accepted:** 02 December 2019

**Published:** 19 March 2020

**Copyright:** © 2020 The Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC-BY 4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited. See <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

**LARR**

*Latin American Research Review* is a peer-reviewed open access journal published by the Latin American Studies Association.

**OPEN ACCESS** 