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HISTORIOGRAPHICAL REVIEWS

THE DISSOLUTION OF THE SPANISH ATLANTIC MONARCHY*

GABRIEL PAQUETTE
Trinity College, University of Cambridge

ABSTRACT. *The Spanish empire's vertiginous collapse in the first decades of the nineteenth century has long been a source of historiographical disputes. Historians seeking to explain the demise of Spain's dominion in the Americas and the emergence of independent nation-states have identified certain factors as decisive. Among these are: the coalescence of an anti-colonial, national consciousness among creoles; peninsular misrule and economic mismanagement; and the seismic effects of geopolitical upheaval, particularly the Napoleonic occupation of Spain. This historiographical review recapitulates established explanations, introduces a new wave of scholarship on the subject, and identifies topics that may be crucial for future research.*

The bicentenary of the 1808 Napoleonic occupation of the Iberian peninsula and the ascendancy of Atlantic history, with its focus on the connections between the old world and the new and their simultaneous placement under a single analytical lens, are two forces prodding historians of Spain and Latin America to undertake fresh research into the disaggregation of the transoceanic Spanish monarchy in the early nineteenth century.[1] Why did this resilient composite polity, the sturdy

Trinity College, Cambridge, CB2 1TQ gbp22@cam.ac.uk

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[1] For review articles written in English, of varying lengths, informed by an array of perspectives, and containing a superabundance of relevant references to the existing scholarly literature, consult Charles W. Arnade, Arthur P. Whitaker, and Bailey W. Diffie, 'Causes of the Spanish-American wars of independence', *Journal of Inter-American Studies*, 2 (1960), pp. 125–44; R. A. Humphreys, 'The historiography of the Spanish American revolutions', in Humphreys, *Tradition and revolt in Latin America and other essays* (London, 1969); William J. Callahan, 'The disintegration of the Spanish empire', *Latin American Research Review*, 17 (1982), pp. 284–92; Brian R. Hamnett, 'Process and pattern: a re-examination of the Ibero-American independence movements, 1808–1826', *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 29 (1997), pp. 279–328; Víctor M. Uribe-Uran, 'The enigma of Latin American independence: analyses of the last ten years', *Latin American Research Review*, 32 (1997), pp. 237–55; Jaime E. Rodríguez O., 'The emancipation of America', *American Historical Review*, 105 (2000), pp. 131–52; and Silke Hensel, 'Was there an age of revolution in Latin America? New literature on Latin American independence', *Latin American Research Review*, 38 (2003), pp. 237–49.

survivor of three centuries of incessant international warfare, the ruptures wrought by dynastic change, and relentless assaults from rival imperial states, dissolve in dramatic fashion and then reconstitute itself as self-sufficient fragments in less than two decades?[2] While it may be plausibly claimed that no historian has 'created a great theory of independence – no one has explained it away, no one has discovered a new liberator or uncovered a new revolution',[3] – recent scholarship has unearthed new evidence to support existing hypotheses, revealed the limitations of certain entrenched views, and employed innovative perspectives to yield fresh insights.[4] This historiographical review sketches the background of this historical episode, recapitulates earlier perspectives, surveys criticisms of those views, analyses recent approaches, and suggests several topics requiring further research. The emphasis, however, is on 'dissolution', instead of 'reconstitution', to the extent that these processes may be separated, and deals primarily with the period before 1815.

I

The significance of the year 1808 – when peninsular Spain suddenly found itself bankrupt, with its colonies adrift, bereft of naval power, its monarch abdicated, and its territory overrun by the army of its erstwhile ally – was not immediately apparent to contemporaries. Lord Byron might pity this 'kingless people for a nerveless state' and lament 'how sad will be [its] reckoning day',[5] but the political chaos unleashed and social dislocation wrought by a cataclysmic, six-year peninsular 'war of independence'[6] still lay in the future. This carnage was followed by the disruptive oscillation between nascent liberal and restored, enfeebled yet vengeful, absolutist regimes from 1810 until 1833.[7]

The events of 1808 were, however, a sharp discontinuity from the preceding decades' trajectory. The second half of the eighteenth century was marked by the

[2] Chris Storrs recently has shown just how sturdy Spain's military was in the late seventeenth century in *The resilience of the Spanish monarchy, 1665–1700* (Oxford, 2006).

[3] John Lynch, 'Spanish American independence in recent historiography', in Anthony McFarlane and Eduardo Posada-Carbó, eds., *Independence and revolution in Spanish America: perspectives and problems* (London, 1999), p. 41.

[4] John Lynch, *The Spanish-American revolutions, 1808–1826* (New York, NY, 1973); Richard Graham, *Independence in Latin America* (2 edn, New York, NY, 1994); and Tulio Halperín-Donghi, *Reforma y disolución de los imperios ibéricos* (Madrid, 1985).

[5] Lord Byron, 'Childe Harold's pilgrimage', canto I, stanzas 86 and 52, in *The works of Lord Byron* (rev. edn, London, 1899), II, pp. 78, 56.

[6] On the French Revolution's impact in Spain, see Richard Herr, *The eighteenth-century revolution in Spain* (Princeton, NJ, 1958); Raymond Carr, *Spain, 1808–1975* (2 edn, Oxford, 1982), pp. 72–120; and Jean-René Aymes, *España y la revolución francesa* (Barcelona, 1989); on the Peninsular War, see Charles Esdaile, *The peninsular war: a new history* (London, 2002), and *Fighting Napoleon: guerillas, bandits, and adventurers in Spain, 1808–1814* (New Haven, CT, and London, 2004).

[7] For recent histories of the various conservative traditions in Spain, see Carlos Seco Serrano, *Historia del conservadurismo español: una línea política integradora en el siglo XIX* (Madrid, 2000); and Pedro Carlos González Cuevas, *Historia de las derechas españolas: de la ilustración a nuestros días* (Madrid, 2000).

vigorous expansion – bureaucratic, commercial, demographic, and territorial – of Spain's transatlantic monarchy. Contemporaries witnessed the accelerated incursion into Indian lands, the continuous exploration and spasmodic settlement of rustic peripheries from Patagonia to the Pacific north-west, and the military repossession of Florida, Louisiana, and the Mosquito Coast.[8] There were much-touted, crown-led attempts, known as the Bourbon reforms, to overhaul the navy, improve the army, modernize the colonial bureaucracy, revamp university education, enact a less-regulated trade regime, boost mineral yields, and wrest control over church property and patronage.[9] Remarkable, too, was urban, mercantile, and agricultural growth on the Caribbean coast and Atlantic littoral, sparked by upsurges in export-led production and galvanized by the dramatic influx of African slaves, particularly explosive in Caracas, Havana, and Buenos Aires and their hinterlands.[10] Demographic growth was magnificent, aided in part by population expansion, migration inducement, and frontier settlement schemes sponsored by the crown.[11] In Argentina and Cuba, for example, per capita GDP was 102 per cent and 112 per cent, respectively, of the United States' level in 1800.[12] Furthermore, the average value of exports from Spain to America was

[8] On Indian policy and its intersection with other Bourbon reform initiatives, David J. Weber, *Bárbaros: Spaniards and their savages in the age of enlightenment* (New Haven, CT, and London, 2005).

[9] Major studies of the Bourbon reforms written in Spanish include: Antonio Álvarez de Morales, *Pensamiento político y jurídico de Campomanes* (Madrid, 1989); José Carlos Chiaramonte, *La ilustración en el Rio de la Plata* (Buenos Aires, 1989); Antonio Domínguez Ortíz, *Sociedad y estado en el siglo XVIII español* (Barcelona, 1976), and *Carlos III y la España de la ilustración* (Madrid, 1988); Ricardo García Cárcel, ed., *Historia de España siglo XVIII: la España de los Borbones* (Madrid, 2002); Agustín Guimerá, ed., *El reformismo borbónico: una visión interdisciplinar* (Madrid, 1996); Francisco Sánchez-Blanco, *El absolutismo y las luces en el reinado de Carlos III* (Madrid, 2002); and Víctor Peralta Ruiz, *Patrones, clientes y amigos: el poder burocrático indiano en la España del siglo XVIII* (Madrid, 2006); major studies in English include Kenneth Andrien, *The kingdom of Quito, 1690–1830: the state and regional economic development* (Cambridge, 1995); Jacques Barbier, *Reform and politics in Bourbon Chile, 1755–1796* (Ottowa, 1980); David Brading, *Miners and merchants in Bourbon Mexico, 1763–1810* (Cambridge, 1971), and Brading, 'Bourbon Spain and its American empire', in Leslie Bethell, ed., *The Cambridge History of Latin America* (11 vols., Cambridge, 1984), 1; John Fisher, *Bourbon Peru, 1750–1824* (Liverpool, 2003); Herr, *The eighteenth-century revolution*; John Lynch, *Spanish colonial administration, 1782–1810: the intendant system in the viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata* (London, 1958), and *Bourbon Spain, 1700–1808* (Oxford, 1989); Anthony McFarlane, *Colombia before independence: economy, society and politics under Bourbon rule* (Cambridge, 1993); Charles Noel, 'Charles III of Spain', in H. M. Scott, ed., *Enlightened absolutism: reform and reformers in late eighteenth-century Europe* (Basingstoke, 1990); and Stanley Stein and Barbara Stein, *Apogee of empire: Spain and New Spain in the age of Charles III, 1759–1789* (Baltimore, MD, and London, 2003).

[10] For Buenos Aires, see Jeremy Adelman, *Republic of capital: Buenos Aires and the legal transformation of the Atlantic world* (Stanford, CA, 1999); for Caracas, P. Michael McKinley, *Pre-revolutionary Caracas: politics, economy, and society, 1777–1811* (Cambridge, 1985); for Havana, Allan Kuethe, *Cuba, 1753–1815: crown, military, and society* (Knoxville, TN, 1986); and Sherry Johnson, *The social transformation of eighteenth-century Cuba* (Gainesville, FL, 2001).

[11] On these schemes, see Manuel Lucena-Giraldo, 'Las nuevas poblaciones de Cartagena de Indias, 1774–1794', *Revista de Indias*, 53 (1993), pp. 761–81.

[12] John H. Coatsworth, 'Economic and institutional trajectories in nineteenth-century Latin America', in Coatsworth and Alan M. Taylor, eds., *Latin America and the world since 1800* (Cambridge, MA, 1998), p. 26.

400 per cent higher in 1796 than it had been in 1778.[13] The Spanish monarchy, then, seemed poised to rejoin the first rank of European powers.

The political buoyancy and burgeoning prosperity, however, must not be overstated. Travelling in Extremadura in the 1790s, Robert Southey suggested that if Charles IV possessed 'one solitary spark of sense or humanity', he must have been 'seriously grieved to see the wretched state of his dominions'.[14] Hyperbole aside, Southey rightly diagnosed the monarchy's fragility, originating in part from imperial overstretch. The ambitious minister of Indies, for example, sounded uncharacteristically deflated when he warned, in 1779, that to supply all the troops, military supplies, and fortifications that the peninsula and its ultramarine territories required would be an 'impossible enterprise', even if the crown had at its 'disposal all the treasures, armies and storehouses of Europe'.[15] Moreover, the techniques employed to raise revenue and consolidate centralized control sparked tax riots and broader undercurrents of resistance across Spanish America, culminating in the Túpac Amaru revolt in Peru and *Comunero* uprising in New Granada (modern Colombia) in the early 1780s.

The triumph of the Franco-Spanish alliance in its war against Britain (1778–83), taken alone, might have justified the continued implementation of these new fiscal and administrative policies. It represented, however, an isolated and ephemeral geopolitical success among numerous setbacks. These included: a misguided and belated intervention in the Seven Years War (1761–3), resulting in the temporary loss of Cuba and the Philippines;[16] the forfeiture of the Falklands (Malvinas) to Britain (1771); brazen, but ultimately futile, efforts to reacquire Gibraltar (1781–2); profligate, low-intensity military stalemates with Portugal both in Europe and in the borderlands of the Banda Oriental (1762, 1776, and 1801); a disastrous military expedition to Algiers (1775); and Britain's seizure of Trinidad (1797), followed by its brief occupation of Buenos Aires (1806). Moreover, the deleterious economic impact of the French Revolutionary wars on Spain's oceanic commerce, symbolized by the British blockade of its principal port of Cádiz from 1796, the decimation of the fleet at St Vincent (1797), followed by its ultimate devastation at Trafalgar (1805), meant that the 'metropolis was now virtually eliminated from the Atlantic'.[17]

This predicament was exacerbated by the Madrid treasury's reliance on American revenues, which comprised a fifth of total receipts between 1784 and 1805.[18] Mounting fiscal problems induced the abrupt reversal of its modest tariff

[13] John Lynch, 'Origins of Spanish American independence', in Leslie Bethell, ed., *The independence of Latin America* (Cambridge, 1987), p. 14.

[14] Robert Southey, *Letters written during a short residence in Spain and Portugal* (2 edn, Bristol, 1799), p. 179.

[15] José de Gálvez, quoted in Weber, *Bárbaros*, p. 162.

[16] On one important aspect of the imperial response after the recovery of Havana, see Evelyn Powell Jennings, 'War as the "forcing house of change": state slavery in late-eighteenth-century Cuba', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 63 (2005), pp. 411–40.

[17] Lynch, 'Origins', p. 22.

[18] J. H. Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic world: Britain and Spain in America, 1492–1830* (London and New Haven, CT, 2006), p. 374; for slightly higher estimates, particularly after 1800, see Carlos Marichal,

schedule, and the effective commercial tax rate in colonial trade leapt from about 16 per cent in 1792 to almost 33 per cent in 1807.[19] Throughout the monarchy, the crown decreed a massive disentailment and then sequestration of church property, appropriating its charity income in 1804 in an effort to boost flagging state revenues as financial obligations mounted.[20] The dislocation caused by war provoked rampant contraband and the violation of royal monopolies in the Americas: in 1810, the *consulado* of Cartagena, for example, reported that 80 per cent of merchandise entering Caribbean New Granada was smuggled in whereas two-thirds of liquor was produced illegally, thus making a mockery of state monopolies.[21] In a last-gasp attempt to stave off collapse, the crown resorted to desperate trade decrees which opened American ports to merchants of neutral nations, thus breaking decisively with its vigorous defence of colonial monopoly. This bleak picture of military and commercial enervation, then, balances the tremendous dynamism within the monarchy itself.

Economic crisis was accompanied by political turmoil. The accession of Ferdinand VII, following the hasty abdication of his father, Charles IV, was nullified by Napoleon at Bayonne. There the young king and his father, still clinging confusedly to a now exceedingly tenuous title to his former throne, renounced their dynasty's claim in exchange for a guarantee of Spain's territorial integrity and generous pensions during a comfortable exile.[22] Reports of these events, though not of the sinecure, triggered uprisings across Spain. New structures of government, provincial *juntas*, proliferated, seemingly spontaneously. On the peninsula, these *juntas* soon recognized the primacy of a *Junta Central*. Its members confronted questions upon whose answer hinged the fate of the realm: was Ferdinand's abdication legitimate? Did sovereignty 'return' to the community that had transferred it, in the distant past, to the crown? Invoking *vacatio regis*, it claimed that sovereignty reverted to the original holders who, in turn, deposited it in a central body until the restitution of the rightful king. This action served to nullify the transfer of sovereignty to the Bonapartes and empowered the *Junta Central*, in Ferdinand's name, to organize an inchoate, if ubiquitous, resistance to the French army.

A spate of drastic military defeats forestalled debates over legitimacy and sovereignty and compelled the *Junta Central* to retreat to the Andalusian port of

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'Beneficios y costes fiscales del colonialismo: las remesas americanas a España, 1760–1814', *Revista de Historia Económica*, 15 (1997), pp. 475–505.

[19] David Ringrose, *Spain, Europe, and the 'Spanish miracle', 1700–1900* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 122.

[20] See Richard Herr, *Rural change and royal finance in Spain at the end of the Old Regime* (Berkeley, CA, 1989).

[21] Aline Helg, *Liberty and equality in Caribbean Colombia, 1770–1835* (Chapel Hill, NC, and London, 2004), p. 74; on the global impact of prices on war, including those in Spanish America, see Kevin H. O'Rourke, 'The worldwide impact of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, 1793–1815', *Journal of Global History*, 1 (2006), pp. 123–49.

[22] Charles Esdaile, *Spain in the liberal age: from constitution to civil war, 1808–1939* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 12–17; Ferdinand was bundled off to Talleyrand's estate Valencay while Charles and María Luisa eventually were sent to Italy.

Cádiz, now defended, instead of blockaded, by the British fleet. There it ceded power to a Council of the Regency which, in turn, convoked a *Cortes*, a unicameral legislature composed of deputies drawn from the entire monarchy, to deliberate on the future of besieged and anarchy-plagued Spain. The *Cortes* convened in 1810 and its first act was to declare itself the embodiment as well as possessor of national sovereignty. It framed and promulgated a constitution in 1812, which held the monarchy sacrosanct but deposited real power in a unicameral legislature. Had its articles been implemented fully, the 1812 Constitution might have precipitated a radical transformation in both Spain and America. It mandated the abolition of the Inquisition, Indian tribute, forced labour, and seigneurial institutions. It declared a universal state, in lieu of multiple overlapping and clashing jurisdictions, with laws before which all citizens were equal and bound. Broad, but not universal, male suffrage was decreed.[23]

The promulgation of this constitution, however, failed to quell rebellion in the Americas. Following the restoration of Ferdinand VII in 1814, it was indefinitely suspended and replaced by a renewed pact between the 'altar and the throne'.[24] Ferdinand authorized a campaign to subdue the American revolts, including the despatch of a 10,000 strong army of reconquest in early 1815.

In the meantime, a species of civil war intensified in the New World. The Spanish national government defended its legitimacy against the local and provincial *juntas* which had sprung up, as in the peninsula, in the aftermath of the Bayonne abdications. But the conflict also brought long-simmering rivalries to a boil. It pitted capitals against provinces, rival elites against one another, and the towns against the countryside, dynamics which prefigured those of the early national period. By 1820, with Madrid's military strategy in tatters and rebel efforts increasingly co-ordinated, Simón Bolívar was emboldened to ask a royalist general, Gabriel de Torres, 'do you still imagine that decrepit and corrupt Spain could govern this modern world?'[25]

The Liberator's conclusion soon became generally accepted. Following the brief restoration of the constitutional monarchy, *El trienio liberal* (1820–3),[26] further political chaos engulfed the peninsula and decisive setbacks on American battlefields, culminating with the rout at Ayacucho (December 1824), encouraged European powers to recognize *de jure* the independence that the nascent Spanish American states enjoyed *de facto*. Truncated Spain, toiling again under a reinvigorated absolutism, prepared for its *década ominosa*, shorn of all but a few of its ultramarine limbs.[27]

[23] Rodríguez O., 'Emancipation', p. 144.

[24] Rafael Sánchez Mantero, *Fernando VII* (Madrid, 2001); see also Javier Herrero, *Los orígenes del pensamiento reaccionario Español* (Madrid, 1988).

[25] Quoted in Rebecca Earle, 'The Spanish political crisis of 1820 and the loss of New Granada', *Colonial Latin American Historical Review*, 3 (1994), p. 279.

[26] Alberto Gil Novales, *El trienio liberal* (Madrid, 1980).

[27] Josep Fontana, *De en medio del tiempo: la segunda restauración Española, 1823–1834* (Barcelona, 2006).

II

The nomenclature employed to describe this episode varies considerably, a reflection of the divergent interpretations developed by historians. These differences are shaped by geographical focus, ideological affiliation, and the selection of chronological parameters. Those who study Spanish America's 'revolutions' stress complex, long-term social, intellectual, political, and military processes which culminated in the rejection of Spanish rule and its expulsion from the Americas. 'Emancipation' is a term chosen by those interested in the coalescence and diffusion of separatist, protean national or even sub-national identities, which preceded the overthrow of a deleterious Spanish yoke, and the formation of fully fledged nation-states. 'Independence' is the concept preferred by historians who emphasize the severance of institutional bonds linking Spain and America and the protracted formation of new polities, often in wider geopolitical and economic context.[28]

Historians of Spain, by contrast, tend to refer to the vertiginous 'collapse' of the American empire, often attributed to the turmoil wrought by the peninsular war which decapitated the monarchy and paralysed its administrative limbs. Still in circulation, though decreasingly fashionable, allusion to the 'loss of America' highlights the agency, particularly the failures, of both peninsular liberal constitutionalists and conservative absolutists in widening the breach between the two shores of the Atlantic in the decades after 1808.[29] Still other accounts downplay the contraction of Spain, underscoring the harmful impact of colonies on the peninsula's economy, [30] or ignore it altogether in favour of the more uplifting narratives of the blossoming of constitutional monarchy and representative government within the context of its steady integration into Europe's economy during the nineteenth century. In this article, the terms 'dissolution', 'disintegration', and 'disaggregation' are preferred because they reflect the central thrust of recent scholarship, distinguished by its repudiation of teleological accounts of the transition from colony to fully fledged nation and its emphasis on the sudden

[28] This paragraph draws heavily on François-Xavier Guerra, 'Lógicas y ritmos de las revoluciones hispánicas', in Guerra, ed., *Revoluciones hispánicas: independencias americanas y liberalismo Español* (Madrid, 1995), p. 15; for a classic work on the independence period in national context, see Jaime Eyzaguirre, *Ideario y ruta de la emancipación chilena* (Santiago, 1957); for a more general overview, which rightly deserves its reputation as the standard account, see Lynch, *The Spanish American revolutions*; for Guerra's first major revisionist statement, see *Modernidad e independencias: ensayos sobre las revoluciones hispánicas* (Madrid, 1992).

[29] Timothy Anna, *Spain and the loss of America* (Lincoln, NE, 1983); Anna, 'Spain and the breakdown of the imperial ethos: the problem of equality', in David Armitage, ed., *Theories of empire, 1450–1800* (Aldershot, 1998).

[30] P. K. O'Brien notes that Spanish and Portuguese historians 'tend to foreground the negative effects [of empire] and to emphasize how constricting institutional developments, attenuated backward and forward linkages to domestic production, and baneful externalities operated to restrain economic growth'; see O'Brien, 'The global economic history of European overseas expansion', in Victor Bulmer-Thomas, John H. Coatsworth, and Roberto Cortés Conde, eds., *The Cambridge economic history of Latin America* (2 vols., Cambridge, 2006), I, p. 12.

unravelling of imperial unity instead of the 'long-run process of alienation' of Americans from Spanish rule.[31]

To these differences concerning the nature of the transformation, the character of the entity which metamorphosed remains a contentious topic. There is controversy whether the term 'empire' misrepresents the nature of this trans-oceanic polity. Strong arguments have been made which serve to portray this entity as one composed of kingdoms, not colonies, each an 'equal and integral part of the Spanish crown', which together formed a 'heterogeneous confederation'.[32] Anthony Pagden has gone so far as to argue that these 'quasi-autonomous kingdoms' were no different, 'whatever the realities of their legal status, from Aragon, Naples or the Netherlands'.[33] Shades of opinion on this matter notwithstanding, there existed few lateral linkages joining the respective kingdoms to one another. Each was bound by separate, vertical allegiances to the crown. The *Gazeta de Buenos Ayres*, for example, made this point about the Río de la Plata's connection to New Spain in 1810: 'we have no more relations with that people than with Russia or Tartary'. [34]

But this notion of pre-independence atomization must not be pushed too far. The constellation of territories was held together by deeply entrenched religious, linguistic, and cultural bonds.[35] Furthermore, there existed a shared political culture which flourished from the advent of Spanish colonialism. The debate, however, concerns whether the Bourbon reformers altered this entrenched yet delicate system and the extent of this change. Under Charles III (r. 1759–88), some historians claim, crown officials began to refer to the jurisdictional units of Spanish America as *colonias*, a term borrowed from England and France, instead of the traditional *reinos*.[36] In 1809, the *Junta Central* alluded indirectly to this shift when it declared that the 'vast and valuable kingdoms that Spain possesses in the Indies are not colonies or factories like those of other nations, but rather an integral and essential part of the monarchy'.[37] In order to assess this and related debates, it is useful to survey the prevailing explanations for the transatlantic monarchy's dissolution.

In spite of differences in terminology and emphasis, most explanations have until recently clustered around four overlapping, but not mutually exclusive, themes: first, the impact of the Bourbon reforms in both corroding the legitimacy of Spanish rule and pushing Americans to seek independence; second, the rise of a proto-national consciousness or identity as a precondition of the rupture with peninsular Spain; third, the role of 'enlightenment' thought as a destabilizing

[31] Lynch, *Spanish American revolutions*, p. 1.

[32] Jaime E. Rodríguez O., *The independence of Spanish America* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 1–2.

[33] Anthony Pagden, *Spanish imperialism and the political imagination: studies in European and Spanish American social and political theory, 1513–1830* (New Haven, CT, and London, 1990), p. 91.

[34] Quoted in Rodríguez O., *Independence*, p. 19.

[35] José María Portillo Valdés, *Crisis atlántica: autonomía e independencia en la crisis de la monarquía hispana* (Madrid, 2006), p. 46.

[36] Rodríguez O., *Independence*, p. 19.

[37] Quoted in Guerra 'Lógicas', p. 27.

force which underpinned the eventual schism; and fourth, the spectre of domestic social revolution – as a result of demographic shifts, economic changes, and crown policy – as an incentive for political separation led by nervous elites. Any account of this complex, multi-faceted process of dissolution necessarily is multi-causal in approach. Generally speaking, borrowing Lawrence Stone's categories, it may be argued that long-term preconditions and medium-term precipitants, instead of short-term triggers, have most interested historians seeking to explain the rupture between the Atlantic's two shores.[38] There has been general agreement that the triggers were the French occupation of the peninsula and the clumsy abdication of the Bourbon monarchs. It is the complex interaction of precipitants and preconditions, then, which have sparked debates among historians.

The crown's ambitious and comprehensive programme of political and economic renewal, which gathered momentum after Charles III's accession in 1759, often termed the Bourbon reforms, has been depicted as a major factor in the dissolution of the Spanish monarchy. Reform prompted imperial disintegration because it undermined the foundation of the crown's legitimacy in America. Royal policy-makers and agents 'displayed an intolerant disdain for Post-Tridentine Habsburg culture' and were imbued with a 'secular, utilitarian spirit which dismissed the former thesis of Spain's providential mission in the world as an illusion'.[39] Furthermore, the new emphasis on economic prosperity, with commerce as its motor, led to a 'shift toward a material justification of authority' which undermined the 'abstract spiritual and moral purpose of the state', made it 'responsible for definite measurable performance', and established a 'new form of political legitimacy'.[40] The accent on commerce was disruptive in other ways, requiring the substitution of aristocratic mores premised on honour by those based on trust. Furthermore, less regulated trade, reluctantly permitted as a temporary expedient to bolster the economy, threatened the religious, political, and cultural integrity of the empire and exposed it to nefarious, potentially heretical, foreign influences.[41]

[38] Terminology borrowed from Lawrence Stone, *The causes of the English revolution, 1529–1642* (London, 1972), p. 57. I thank David Brading for his suggestion that I consult Stone's book in this context.

[39] David Brading, 'The Catholic monarchy', in Serge Gruzinski and Nathan Wachtel, eds., *Le nouveau monde: mondes nouveaux: l'experience americaine* (Paris, 1996), pp. 401–2.

[40] Colin M. MacLachlan, *Spain's empire in the New World: the role of ideas in institutional and social change* (Berkeley, CA, 1988), pp. 67, 126; John Leddy Phelan, *The people and the king: the Comunero revolution in Colombia, 1781* (Madison, WI, 1978), p. 244.

[41] Anthony Pagden, 'Liberty, honour, and *comercio libre*: the structure of the debates over the state of the Spanish empire in the eighteenth century', in Pagden, *The uncertainties of empire: essays in Iberian and Ibero-Atlantic history* (Aldershot, 1994), pp. 8, 18; for a claim that the introduction of liberal ideas produced a destabilizing effect by undermining the legitimacy of traditional authoritarian modes of politics, see Richard Morse, 'Toward a theory of Spanish American politics', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 15 (1954), pp. 71–93.

If new ideals and principles spoilt the spiritual adhesive which attached the individual ultramarine kingdoms to the peninsula, the stable Habsburg pact also was abrogated by aggressive policy. A 'new reliance on executive decree and military sanction'[42] contaminated a political culture predicated on the symbiosis-generating trinity of compromise, negotiation, and mutual concessions. This older society, composed of corporations, was distinguished by its overlapping jurisdictions, special privileges, and ancient immunities. It was transformed by the Bourbons: 'the sole object of loyalty was henceforth to be the unified nation-state – the *cuerpo unido de nación* – embodied in the person of the monarch'.[43] The older, looser amalgamated corporate identity was repudiated.

But if historians have reached agreement, for the most part, concerning the spirit that animated the Bourbon reforms, they have reached three, competing conclusions about their efficacy: a first group of historians hail the extensive accomplishments of the reformers. Though the Caroline period represented a 'fragile equipoise', it witnessed the creation of a 'salaried bureaucracy, supported by an extensive army of guards, [which] enabled the Spanish monarchy to reap an extraordinary fiscal harvest from the expansion of economic activity effected by its commercial reforms and its encouragement of colonial exports'.[44] In the short run, at least, royal officials were 'remarkably successful' in raising revenue through new tax levies, establishing more efficient collection procedures, and imposing royal monopolies.[45] Authority was centralized and contraband declined in some regions.[46] This 'overhaul of imperial government' included the creation of new viceroyalties and the appointment of intendants, the 'prime agents of absolutism', among other innovations.[47] In spite of lingering minor disagreements about their scope, scale, and legacy, this first cohort of historians maintains that the Bourbon reformers rationalized administration, exacted higher revenues, and consolidated political and economic control.

A second group of historians repudiates this rather flattering portrait of the Bourbon reformers and their policies. They deride the 'pervasive myth' of the era as one of 'unhindered progress' which 'awakened Spain and its imperial possessions from their Habsburg slumber'.[48] The reformers, it is argued, were 'constantly beset by difficulties', 'proceeded fitfully', 'inefficiently applied' their lofty principles, and experienced 'reversals of policy and long periods of

[42] Brading, 'The Catholic monarchy'.

[43] Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic world*.

[44] Brading, 'Bourbon Spain and its American empire', pp. 439, 395, 408.

[45] Andrien, *The kingdom of Quito*, pp. 190–1; Andrien points out, however, that, in the long run, such 'predatory' policies 'disrupted business, trade and capital accumulation'.

[46] Miles Wortman, *Government and society in Central America, 1680–1840* (New York, NY, 1982), pp. 129, 170.

[47] John Lynch, 'The institutional framework of colonial Spanish America', *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 24 (1992), p. 79.

[48] J. R. Fisher, A. J. Kuethe, and A. McFarlane, 'Introduction', in their *Reform and insurrection in Bourbon New Granada and Peru* (Baton Rouge, LA, and London, 1990), pp. 1, 4.

inaction'.[49] Because the crown refused to 'tamper with the traditional social structure', it only produced a 'limited and largely superficial renovation'.[50] Reform, according to this second perspective, was a belated reaction to the exigencies of 'defensive modernization' galvanized by the 'external stimulus' of geopolitical threats to the Spanish American empire.[51] It amounted to 'calibrated adjustment, methodical incrementalism, never radical change or restructuring'.[52] Such tentative half-measures reflect a state which remained 'weak by European standards. It delegated functions, tolerated high levels of illicit violence, [and] failed to consolidate territory'.[53] The crown's incapacity, revealed starkly at the municipal level, to implement the reform it undertook suggests that, 'for all the centuries of expanding royal authority, Spain remained in many ways a federation of self-governing municipalities.'[54] The Bourbon reforms, then, failed to revive Spain's Atlantic Empire.

Those historians who espouse a third perspective acknowledge the formidable growth of the colonial economy in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. They deny, however, that state-sponsored reforms were instrumental to this prosperity. The thesis of 'institutional intentionality' resulted from the Bourbon 'strategem of propaganda', which claimed credit for results to which state action had not contributed directly.[55] If anything, it is argued, the late colonial economy flourished in spite of a reform programme whose sole goal was the benefit of the metropolis. Tax payers in Bourbon Mexico, for example, parted with between 40 and 70 per cent more of their money than their metropolitan counterparts.[56] Instead of reforms, it is argued, what 'proliferated were *proyectos*, the majority of which never came to fruition'.[57] This latter cohort of historians, then, remains sceptical of the crown's efficacy and the extent to which it realized the grandiose objectives it envisaged, regardless of whether general prosperity coincided with its policy ventures.

Strangely, this strikingly low appraisal of the Bourbon reforms has produced a limited impact on the analysis of the late colonial rebellions and the eventual

[49] McFarlane, *Colombia Before independence*, pp. 2–3, 119.

[50] Peggy K. Liss, *Atlantic empires: the network of trade and revolution, 1713–1826* (Baltimore, MD, and London, 1983), p. 74; William J. Callahan, *Church, politics, and society in Spain, 1750–1874* (London and Cambridge, MA, 1984), p. 4.

[51] Stanley Stein and Barbara Stein, *The colonial heritage of Latin America: essays on economic dependence in perspective* (New York, NY, 1970), pp. 92–3, 103–4.

[52] Stein and Stein, *Apogee of empire*, p. 26.

[53] John Coatsworth, 'The limits of colonial absolutism: the state in eighteenth-century Mexico', in Karen Spalding, ed., *Essays in the political, economic, and social history of colonial Latin America* (Newark, DE, 1982), p. 36.

[54] Herr, *Rural change*, p. 44.

[55] Antonio García-Baquero González, '¿De la mina a la plantación? La nueva estructura del tráfico de importación de la carrera de Indias en la segunda mitad del siglo XVIII', in his *El comercio colonial en la época del absolutismo ilustrado: problemas y debates* (Granada, 2003), p. 102.

[56] Leando Prados de la Escosura, 'The economic consequences of independence in Latin America', in Bulmer-Thomas, Coatsworth, and Conde, eds., *Cambridge economic history*, p. 480.

[57] Mauro Hernández Benítez, 'Carlos III: un mito progresista', in *Carlos III, Madrid y la ilustración* (Madrid, 1988), pp. 8, 22.

dissolution of the Spanish monarchy.[58] The core claim is that the uprisings were sparked by a rejuvenated absolutist government bent on fiscal exaction or restructuring government in ways unfavourable to long-ensconced elites. The combative response to state policies, in turn, presaged a broader anti-colonial conspiracy and revolt several decades later. The assumption, of course, is that the crown *was* up to something new, even if it was not especially benevolent, and that its actions produced *enough* of an effect to instigate unprecedented levels of protest from many sectors of society.

There is little doubt that administrative centralization and revamped fiscal strategies engendered widespread disaffection and instigated resistance, particularly in the robust indigenous communities of the Andes. Indian tribute levels shot up: in La Paz, for example, crown income rose six-fold between 1750 and 1800.[59] There were more than 100 uprisings by native Indian peoples between 1720 and 1790.[60] Some historians have endowed these protests with special historical significance. Far more than a 'failed antecedent', 'precursor' or 'backward-looking restorationist project', one historian has argued, the Túpac Amaru revolt, the largest and most influential of all uprisings, led by José Gabriel Condorcanqui, 'embodied … neo-Inca nationalism' which was 'used to demand equal rights' and 'overthrow colonialism'.[61]

Creoles, too, were distraught, because they continued to 'conceive of themselves as members of a composite monarchy at a time when this notion had become anathema to the crown'.[62] One historian argued that Bourbon efforts to 'abolish the "unwritten constitution" whose cornerstones were creole participation in the bureaucracy and government by compromise and negotiation' caused open resistance, including the major *Comunero* revolt.[63] The extirpation of Americans from institutions which governed each *reino*, particularly the *Audiencia*, and their replacement by peninsular officials, often of military background, symbolized the disregard for the tacit compact which sustained the elites' alliance with the crown.[64] These were clashes, with myriad seventeenth-century

[58] There is a vast literature on resistance and revolt in the late eighteenth century which has greatly enhanced scholarly understanding: Kenneth Andrien, 'Economic crisis, taxes and the Quito insurrection of 1765', *Past and Present*, 129 (1990), pp. 104–31; Anthony McFarlane, 'Rebellions in late colonial Spanish America: a comparative perspective', *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, 14 (1995), pp. 313–38; Phelan, *The people and the king*; and, recently, Sergio Serulnikov, *Subverting colonial authority: challenges to Spanish rule in the eighteenth-century southern Andes* (Durham, NC, and London, 2003).

[59] Sinclair Thomson, *We alone will rule: native Andean politics in the age of insurgency* (Madison, WI, 2002), p. 247.

[60] Steve J. Stern, 'The age of Andean insurrection, 1742–1782: a reappraisal', in Stern, ed., *Resistance, rebellion and consciousness in the Andean peasant world, 18th–20th centuries* (London and Madison, WI, 1987), p. 34.

[61] Charles F. Walker, *Smoldering ashes: Cuzco and the creation of republican Peru, 1780–1840* (Durham, NC, 1999), pp. 21–5.

[62] Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic world*, p. 319.

[63] Phelan, *The people and the king*, pp. xviii, 7, 17, 239.

[64] M. A. Burkholder and D. S. Chandler, *From impotence to authority: the Spanish crown and the American Audiencias, 1687–1808* (London, 1977); Phelan, *The people and the king*, p. 17; for a review article which

antecedents, between imperial cravings for centralization and colonial aspirations for greater autonomy to conduct their own affairs.[65]

The transformation of political legitimacy triggered instability. Not only were creoles removed from the colonial bureaucracy, but the Americas were flooded with peninsular lawyers, accountants, and soldiers brought in to expedite the 'revolution in government'.[66] Emphasizing the attenuation of elite–crown co-operation, one scholar places state failure, not disruptive ambition or successful encroachment, at the heart of the analysis. Stressing elite competition within a 'neo-patrimonial political culture', whose main mechanism is the 'monarch who dispenses favours' to private economic interests, he argues that the collapse of peninsular authority and its dense patronage networks in 1808 ushered in an intra-elite 'competition for power'.[67] In spite of many shades of opinion, then, the prevailing view correlates the Bourbon reforms and discontent in America.

A second overarching explanation for the dissolution of the Spanish monarchy involves incipient nationalism and the 'emergence of an identity', embedded in a 'separate community within a separate culture', as a 'precondition of revolution'.[68] This view, naturally, intersects with the debate concerning the Bourbon reforms: did these efforts generate an irreconcilable antagonism between the groups and create an atmosphere conducive to political schism?[69] While all historical discussions of identity formation answer this question in the affirmative, they attribute varying levels of importance to it.

The sturdiest thesis concerns 'creole patriotism'. Drawing primarily on evidence from New Spain (Mexico), David Brading cogently argued that a new identity gradually emerged and ultimately became 'transmuted into the insurgent ideology of Mexican nationalism'. It was employed by the clerical leadership, who were suspicious of new-fangled doctrines such as popular sovereignty, and supplemented the already universal and fervent veneration of Our Lady of Guadalupe with an appeal to the classical history of pre-conquest Mexico, now on the cusp of recovering its liberty. In order to rally an uneasy, heterogeneous coalition of creoles, *castas*, and Indians against Spain and to justify independence, nationalist ideology drew on an 'idiosyncratic blend of Marian devotion,

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casts doubt on the link between creole resentment and independence movements, see Callahan, 'The disintegration of the Spanish empire', pp. 287–91.

[65] On seventeenth-century debates about state efforts to 'intensify royal control and raise more revenue', see Cayetana Alvarez de Toledo, *Politics and reform in Spain and viceregal Mexico: the life and thought of Juan de Palafox, 1600–1659* (Oxford, 2004), p. viii.

[66] David Brading, *The first America: the Spanish monarchy, creole patriots, and the liberal state, 1492–1867* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 477.

[67] Jorge I. Domínguez, *Insurrection or loyalty: the breakdown of the Spanish American empire* (London and Cambridge, MA, 1980), pp. 2, 82, 253–5; for a critique of the importance of patrimonialism, see Jay Kinsbruner, *The Spanish-American independence movement* (Malabar, FL, 1973), pp. 45–6.

[68] Anthony Pagden and Nicholas Canny, 'Afterword: from identity to independence', in Canny and Pagden, eds., *Colonial identity in the Atlantic world, 1500–1800* (Princeton, NJ, 1987), pp. 275, 278; also see Pagden, 'Identity formation in Spanish America' in the same volume.

[69] A view taken by Lynch, 'Origins', p. 27.

anti-*españolismo* and neo-Aztecism'.[70] In this way, it resorted to the rhetoric of liberty, *patria*, and regeneration, not revolution and radical change.[71] This ideology was fluid, capable of integrating diverse, superficially anomalous ideas, including, most crucially, those drawn from classical republicanism. Other influential explanations with nation-state formation at their core invoke the concept of an 'imagined political community', both 'inherently limited and sovereign', emerging as a result of a burgeoning periodical press which made the coalescence of a separate, geographically rooted identity, based loosely on topographically influenced administrative divisions, possible.[72]

Entwined with questions about the origins of national identity is a debate concerning the enlightenment's role in the Spanish monarchy's dissolution. In the traditional narrative, new-fangled ideas and patterns of thought inspired and guided creoles, functioned as an agent of decomposition, and subverted Spanish rule due to their anti-clerical and anti-absolutist tendencies.[73] In this sense, to invoke again Stone's terminology, they were represented as both preconditions and precipitants. Until recently, however, the Spanish Atlantic enlightenment was considered meekly derivative and imitative of foreign models. It failed to measure up to French or North American antecedents and produced neither bourgeois economic order nor liberal democracy.[74]

[70] David Brading, *Classical republicanism and creole patriotism: Simón Bolívar (1783–1830) and the Spanish American revolutions* (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 1, 7; Brading, *The origins of Mexican nationalism* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 50, 54; for a full description of development of creole patriotism and its transmutation into incipient nationalism, see Brading, *The first America*, chs. 12–27; see also Brading, *Mexican phoenix: our lady of Guadalupe: image and tradition across five centuries* (Cambridge, 2003); Rebecca Earle, while noting that creole patriotism 'did not occur everywhere in Spanish America', observes that 'it is striking that even in areas which seemed to offer little scope for celebrating a glorious Indian past, creole leaders managed to develop a pro-Indian rhetoric in support of Independence'. See her 'Creole patriotism and the myth of the "loyal Indian"', *Past and Present*, 172 (2001), pp. 129–30.

[71] As Brading explains, patriot republicans in Mexico desired independence, but they were concerned primarily with a form of constitutional rule that guaranteed political liberty and individual rights. See Brading, 'El patriotismo criollo y la nación mexicana', in *Cinco miradas británicas a la historia de México* (Mexico City, 2000), p. 109.

[72] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (rev. edn, London and New York, NY, 1991), p. 6. Anderson claims that 'pilgrim creole functionaries and provincial creole printmen played the decisive historical role' in providing a 'framework for a new consciousness'.

[73] An articulation of this orthodoxy may be found in Simon Collier, *Ideas and politics of Chilean independence, 1808–1833* (Cambridge, 1967): 'what cannot be doubted is that the modern principles elaborated by the great enlightenment thinkers on both sides of the Atlantic formed the main source from which the creole generation of 1810–33 drew its inspiration', p. 168; some standard accounts place very little emphasis on 'ideology' as a 'cause' of Spanish American revolutions and instead emphasize the role of 'creole-peninsular rivalry' and 'internal and external economic pressures'. See, for example, David Bushnell, 'The independence of Spanish South America', in Bethell, ed., *The independence of Latin America*, p. 105.

[74] C. W. Crawley, 'French and English influences in the *Cortes* of Cádiz, 1810–1814', *Cambridge Historical Journal*, 6 (1939), p. 206; Warren Diem, 'Las fuentes de la constitución de Cádiz', in María Isabel Arraizu et al., eds., *Estudios sobre las Cortes de Cádiz* (Pamplona, 1967), p. 390; for a critique of historical narratives that emphasize Spanish American 'failure', see Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, *Puritan conquistadors: iberianizing the Atlantic, 1550–1700* (Stanford, CA, 2006).

Nevertheless, independence often has been considered part of a broader 'age of democratic revolutions', even if it has been denigrated as a derivative and belated version of events in North America and Europe. There is abundant evidence to support such a claim: in 1781, a perspicacious crown official fretted that an independent United States would 'serve as the inspiration and model for the rest of that part of the world'.[75] In 1794, a group of creoles in New Granada were arrested in possession of the 'Constitution of Philadelphia'; in 1795, the secretary of Quito's Economic Society was imprisoned for sedition; in 1797, the conspiracy of La Guaira appealed to ideals of equality and liberty. Scattered across the Atlantic, from Philadelphia to London, were aspiring revolutionaries – Francisco de Miranda and Mariano Moreno among them – who awaited an opportunity to implement their republican ideals.[76] Traditionally, these figures are conceived of as the noble 'precursors' who wielded new doctrines to combat despotism and to dissipate the lugubrious legacy of three centuries of Spanish rule.

Historiography in peninsular Spain, however, was nourished by a different soil and this difference partially explains the divergent relation between enlightenment and imperial dissolution articulated there. Beginning with Andrés Muriel in the late 1830s, conservative historians lamented the 'excessive fondness for innovation', 'enchantment by vague and abstract theories, seductive in appearance yet nefarious in practice', of the enlightenment. They blamed the French Revolution and its 'contagion of ideas' for Spain's demise.[77] The 'ruinous consequences' wrought by 'Encyclopedism' gave rise to the historiographical, as well as popular, dichotomy of the 'two Spains': a laudable one, rooted in pristine peninsular tradition, and its nefarious counterpart, inspired by sinister foreign influences.[78]

Historians of France, by contrast, long ago modified Daniel Mornet's thesis that enlightenment thought was a precondition for monarchy's crisis as France lurched toward revolution.[79] Nevertheless, in the historiography of the Spanish Atlantic monarchy's demise, just as in France, enlightenment and revolution long remained 'two terms joined together in recurrent cycles of retrospective polemic'.[80] Whereas conservatives bewailed the disastrous impact of enlightened ideas, liberal historians arrived at the opposite conclusion while sharing the same

[75] Francisco de Saavedra, quoted in Anthony McFarlane, 'The American revolution and the Spanish monarchy', in Simon P. Newman, *Europe's American revolution* (Basingstoke, 2006), pp. 43–4.

[76] McFarlane, 'The American revolution', pp. 44–5; Lynch, 'Origins', pp. 41–3; compare with Kenneth Maxwell's magnificent *Conflicts and conspiracies: Brazil and Portugal, 1750–1808* (London and New York, NY, 2004), which treats roughly the same period in Brazil.

[77] Andrés Muriel, *Gobierno del Señor Rey Don Carlos III, o instrucción reservada para dirección de la Junta de Estado* (Madrid, 1839), pp. 3, 79.

[78] Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo, *Historia de los heterodoxos españoles* (Madrid, 1992), pp. 674, 700; Richard Herr, 'The twentieth-century Spaniard views the Spanish enlightenment', *Hispania*, 45 (1962), p. 184.

[79] Daniel Mornet, *Les origines intellectuelles de la révolution française, 1718–1787* (Paris, 1933).

[80] Michael Sonenscher, 'Enlightenment and revolution', *Journal of Modern History*, 70 (1998), p. 371.

central assumption: enlightenment ideas, derived from France, catalysed Spain's modernization and, subsequently, hastened the end of the old regime. [81]

The fourth traditional, though often neglected, explanation involves the impact of demographic shifts and rising fears of social revolution. The most prominent exponent of this view, George Reid Andrews, contended that 'elite disquiet' mounted when the crown failed to assist them in their 'confrontation with the masses':[82]

> The Crown's promotion of blacks and *mulattos* in the militia (1778), its new slave codes (1784, 1789) and its granting of racial dispensations to nonwhites (1795) all seemed to signal that Spain was willing to neutralize creole power by constructing new alliances with previously excluded groups.[83]

This situation left exit from Spanish rule as the only option to forestall social revolution. White creoles, already alarmed by the growing social mobility of free blacks and *mulattos*, the demographic increase of the *castas*, and the prospect of slave revolts in the wake of the Haitian revolution, 'lost confidence' in the crown and rushed to fill the power vacuum before the forces of social revolution could gather force.[84] As Francisco de Miranda, key visionary and early martyr of independence, observed: 'I confess that as much as I desire the liberty and independence of the New World, I fear anarchy and revolution even more'.[85] In this way, even aspiring creole revolutionaries feared that social upheaval would obviate the political changes which they sought and would produce consequences which they could not predict, let alone control.

III

Recent work has confirmed the immense quality of earlier generations of scholars who studied the dissolution of the Spanish monarchy. Certain assumptions and conclusions, however, have been recast in light of new evidence and shifting perspectives. The first of these revisions concerns the late colonial state. Depictions of the Bourbon state still accentuate its predatory, extractive, and despotic characteristics yet, simultaneously, lethargic, clumsy, ineffective, and anachronistic traits. One consequence of this latter view, however, is the perception that the Spanish transatlantic monarchy slouched on to the nineteenth-century stage in a rather dismal state, unsuited for any thing greater than a minor part in the unfolding

[81] Herr, *The eighteenth-century revolution*; Jean Sarrailh, *La España ilustrada de la segunda mitad del siglo XVIII* (Mexico City, 1957).

[82] George Reid Andrews, 'Spanish American independence: a structural analysis', *Latin American Perspectives*, 12 (1985), pp. 105–32.

[83] George Reid Andrews, *Afro-Latin America, 1800–2000* (New York, NY, and Oxford, 2004), p. 49.

[84] Lynch, 'Origins', pp. 28–30; on the impact of the Haitian Revolution in Spanish America, see chapters by Aline Helg, Matt Childs, and Marixa Lasso, in David Geggus, ed., *The impact of the Haitian revolution in the Atlantic world* (Columbia, SC, 2001); and for the wider impact, Robin Blackburn, 'Haiti, slavery, and the age of democratic revolutions', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 63 (2006), pp. 643–74.

[85] Quoted in Kenneth Maxwell, 'The Atlantic in the eighteenth century: a southern perspective on the need to return to the "big picture"', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th ser. 3 (1993), p. 232.

European geopolitical drama, and on the verge of collapse. Certainly, if the chaos that enveloped Spain after 1808 is emphasized, this perception is justifiable.

Historians now recognize the need to account for the 'durability of archaic structures', a shift that 'requires suppressing postdictive temptations to make empires appear fated to eclipse'.[86] The persistent image of a grasping, failed despotism, for example, does not correspond with recent findings. Instead, this research reports a 'patchwork fiscal reality' and extensive system of intra-imperial transfer of tax receipts, itself subject to alignment with interests of elites, in order to redistribute it to regions that could not or would not raise sufficient revenue. This subsidy defrayed defence costs, which spiked as a result of the new fortifications constructed in the wake of the Seven Years War.[87] Naval reconstruction, too, depended on public–private partnerships: shipbuilding under Charles IV 'systematically relied' on 'private initiative', especially credit extended by colonial as well as peninsular elites.[88] Notwithstanding Madrid's centripetal efforts and matching rhetoric, the late eighteenth-century transoceanic empire, then, resembled those early modern European polities identified and described by John Elliott as 'composite monarchies', founded on a 'mutual compact between the crown and the ruling class of their different provinces –which gave even the most arbitrary and artificial of unions a certain stability and resilience'.[89]

Studies by historians of Spanish American politics and ideas corroborate this finding. With regard to political institutions, the 'putative goal' of centralization in practice gave way to 'substantial flexibility'.[90] Bourbon meddling, it turns out, led to a 'resurgence', not 'inhibition', of elite civic participation. Elites acted to 'benefit from new opportunities or challenge attacks on their local privileges and customs'.[91] Creoles, particularly on the periphery, gained limited access to quasi-governmental, crown-sponsored institutions, such as the *consulado* and the Economic Society.[92] Furthermore, there was a deceleration of the pace of reform, or at least a change of tactics, following the revolt of Britain's thirteen Atlantic

[86] Jeremy Adelman, *Sovereignty and revolution in the Iberian Atlantic* (Princeton, NJ, 2006), p. 7–8.

[87] Regina Grafe and María Alejandra Irigoin, 'The Spanish empire and its legacy: fiscal redistribution and political conflict in colonial and post-colonial Spanish America', *Journal of Global History*, 1 (2006), pp. 241–67 passim; Carlos Marichal and Matilde Souto Mantecón previously estimated that 'remittances sent by the Royal Treasury of New Spain during the eighteenth century to the Caribbean military posts tended to surpass the value of the royal silver transferred annually to the metropolis' in 'Silver and *situados*: New Spain and the financing of the Spanish empire in the Caribbean in the eighteenth century', *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 74 (1994), pp. 588–9.

[88] Ivan Valdez Bubnov, 'Naval power and state modernisation: Spanish shipbuilding in the eighteenth century' (Ph.D diss., Cambridge, 2005), p. 293.

[89] John H. Elliott, 'A Europe of composite monarchies', *Past and Present*, 137 (1992), p. 57.

[90] Jordana Dym and Christophe Belaubre, 'Introduction', in Dym and Belaubre, eds., *Politics, economy, and society in Bourbon Central America, 1759–1821* (Boulder, CO, 2007), p. 8.

[91] Jordana Dym, *From sovereign villages to national states: city, state, and federation in Central America, 1759–1839* (Albuquerque, NM, 2006), p. 35.

[92] Gabriel Paquette, 'State-civil society cooperation and conflict in the Spanish empire: the intellectual and political activities of the ultramarine *consulados* and economic societies, c. 1780–1810', *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 39 (2007), pp. 263–98 passim.

seaboard colonies and, subsequently, after Túpac Amaru and the *Comuneros*.[93] Far from muffled under a repressive Bourbon yoke, civil society and intellectual life, too, flourished.[94] The study of natural history, for example, was nurtured by the crown as a handmaiden to development (*fomento*) and 'improvement'.[95] What mattered to creoles, it is increasingly certain, was 'control over policy-making, not polity-making'.[96]

Coterminous with the revaluation of the Bourbon monarchy is the reassessment of the nature, aims, and scope of the late eighteenth-century conspiracies and rebellions. Historians now conclude that they were neither precursor movements of independence nor movements which reflected the emergence of incipient nationhood.[97] There was 'no swelling national *esprit* waiting to be released from colonial thralldom'.[98] Instead, they 'aimed at perpetuating past practices not at overthrowing them'.[99] They represented 'complex local responses to – and checks on – the peninsular model of nation-building through empire'.[100] Recent research into the Túpac Amaru revolt, for example, suggests overwhelming loyalty of Indian elite which, far from endorsing violent rejection of Spanish authority, preferred to 'negotiate and contest Spanish hegemony through the courts'.[101]

Similarly, elite frustration with certain aspects of the old regime did not translate directly into unrest. With the possible exception of the Río de la Plata, the quest for less regulated trade probably was not a 'dominant factor' in the

[93] On the response in the Iberian Atlantic to the revolt in British North America, see McFarlane, 'The American revolution', pp. 34–41; and Kenneth Maxwell, 'The impact of the American revolution on Spain and Portugal and their empires', in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, eds., *A companion to the American revolution* (Oxford, 2003).

[94] Víctor M. Uribe-Uran, 'The birth of a public sphere in Latin America during the age of revolution', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 42 (2000), pp. 425–57; Daniela Bleichmar, 'Exploration in print: books and botanical travel from Spain to the Americas in the late eighteenth century', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 70 (2007), pp. 129–51; Renán Silva, *Los ilustrados de Nueva Granada, 1760–1808: genealogía de una comunidad de intrepretación* (Medellín, 2002); for a panoramic view with valuable references to recent scholarly literature, see Carlos Martínez Shaw, 'El despotismo ilustrado en España y en las Indias', in Manuel Chust and Víctor Mínguez, eds., *El imperio sublevado: monarquía y naciones en España e Hispanoamérica* (Madrid, 2004).

[95] Paula De Vos, 'Natural history and the pursuit of empire in eighteenth-century Spain', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 40 (2007), pp. 209–39; for the broader context of the interpenetration of science and politics, see Juan Pimentel, *La física de la monarquía: ciencia y política en el pensamiento de Alejandro Malaspina (1754–1810)* (Madrid, 1998); on the discourse of improvement in eighteenth-century Europe, see Richard Drayton, *Nature's government: science, imperial Britain and the 'improvement' of the world* (New Haven, CT, and London, 2000).

[96] Adelman, *Sovereignty and revolution*, p. 124.

[97] Hamnett, 'Process and pattern', p. 287.

[98] Adelman, *Sovereignty and revolution*, p. 347.

[99] See Anthony McFarlane, 'Identity, enlightenment, and political dissent in late colonial Spanish America', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th ser. 8 (1998), p. 322.

[100] Adelman, *Sovereignty and revolution*, p. 53.

[101] David T. Garrett, '"His majesty's most loyal vassals": the Indian nobility and Túpac Amaru', *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 84 (2004), p. 580; the findings of Garrett and McFarlane run counter to Stern's interpretation: 'during the years 1742–1782, the colonial authorities contended with more than local riots and abortive revolutionary conspiracies … they now contended with the more immediate threat or reality of full-scale civil war, war that structured the wider structure of colonial rule and privilege', see Stern, 'Age of Andean insurrection', p. 35.

rejection of Spanish authority.[102] A certain amount of conflict could be contained within older structures: 'acceptable accommodation' and 'orderly readjustment' prevailed.[103] Spanish America thus remained a 'discursive space, densely knit by networks of communication'.[104] When the unified monarchy was pulverized by the cumulative effects of war and revolution, this shared political culture continued to thrive.[105]

Evaluations of the enlightenment in the Spanish Atlantic world have followed the broader European discourse of recent decades, resulting in a revision of the perceived relation between ideological shifts and political turbulence.[106] In Spanish America, there was a 'complex interaction' of two forms of the enlightenment: an absolutist variant that spurred the reformulation of imperial policy and a more liberal manifestation that encouraged experimentation with new types of governmental institutions and norms.[107] The public sphere, it is now recognized, not only incubated dissent, but also bolstered and deepened co-operation between local elites and the crown's agents. As in Europe, it often was not subversive, but instead 'developed within and in support of the established order, not outside and against it',[108] making the 'relationship between the public sphere and the state amicable and mutually supportive'.[109] Because Spanish American societies were 'deeply resistant to change', government became the 'indispensable patron' of creoles who sought progressive reform.[110] Enlightenment precepts, then, 'were

[102] John Fisher, 'Commerce and imperial decline: Spanish trade with Spanish America, 1797–1820', *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 30 (1998), p. 479.

[103] Rodríguez O., *Independence*, p. 35.

[104] François-Xavier Guerra, 'Forms of communication, political spaces, and cultural identities in the creation of Spanish American nations', in Sara Castro-Klarén and John Charles Chasteen, eds., *Beyond imagined communities: reading and writing the nation in nineteenth-century Latin America* (Washington, DC, and Baltimore, MD, 2003), p. 15.

[105] Rodríguez O., 'Emancipation', p. 145.

[106] For a lucid summary and analysis of these pan-European debates, see John Robertson, *The case for the enlightenment: Scotland and Naples, 1680–1760* (Cambridge, 2005), ch. 1; for recent treatments of aspects of the Ibero-Atlantic enlightenment, Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, *How to write the history of the New World: histories, epistemologies and identities in the eighteenth-century Atlantic world* (Stanford, CA, 2001), and 'Eighteenth-century Spanish political economy: epistemology of decline', *Eighteenth-Century Thought*, 1 (2003), pp. 295–314; Eduardo Bello and Antonio Rivera, eds., *La actitud ilustrada* (Valencia, 2002); Chiaramonte, *La Ilustración en el Río de la Plata*; Enrique Fuentes Quintana, ed., *Economía y economistas españoles*, III: *La ilustración* (Barcelona, 2000); see F. Sánchez-Blanco, *La mentalidad ilustrada* (Madrid, 1999); and D. Soto Arango, M. A. Puig-Samper and C. Arboleda, *La ilustración en América colonia: bibliografía crítica* (Madrid, 1995); for recent trends and tendencies in Spanish historiography, see Miguel A. Cabrera, 'Developments in contemporary Spanish historiography: from social history to the new cultural history', *Journal of Modern History*, 77 (2005), pp. 988–1023.

[107] Maxwell, 'Atlantic', p. 213.

[108] T. C. W. Blanning, *Reform and revolution in Mainz, 1743–1803* (Cambridge, 1974), pp. 34–7; see also Kenneth Maxwell, *Pombal: paradox of the enlightenment* (Cambridge, 1995).

[109] T. C. W. Blanning, *The culture of power and the power of culture: old regime Europe, 1660–1789* (Oxford and New York, NY, 2001), p. 13.

[110] Anthony McFarlane, 'Science and sedition in Spanish America: New Granada in the age of revolution, 1776–1810', in Susan Manning and Peter France, eds., *Enlightenment and emancipation* (Bucknell, PA, 2006), pp. 105, 111–12.

neither necessary nor sufficient causes for revolt' for 'new thinking could just as easily be put to use to defend old structures'.[111]

Drawing upon French historiography, particularly the work of Roger Chartier, however, some contemporary scholars suggest that new forms of association, while perhaps maintaining a 'discourse [that] affirmed respect for authority and adherence to traditional values', may have 'prefigured radical sociability'.[112] In this manner, the intellectual culture of the *antiguo régimen* was intrinsically subversive even where its literal content ostensibly reinforced its edifice or at least seemed indifferent to it. Conceiving of the *ilustrados* as a 'cultural group', a recent historian of New Granada traced their coalescence around a shared basis of 'reading, conversation, and scientific activities' which established 'common references' and a shared 'identity', developments which prefigured autonomous status within American elite culture.[113] One of the unintended consequences of this new milieu, with its innovative habits of mind and modes of association, was that it could acquire, when confronted by a crisis, a different political vocabulary and pursue objectives not previously contemplated. In this view, enlightenment represents a steady rejection of the culture of the Baroque and the creation of a new consciousness that laid the edifice of a new public culture. In spite of these valuable insights, however, there is an emerging, persuasive consensus that enlightened ideas neither 'detonated the independence movements'[114] nor 'produced a conception of colonial liberation'.[115]

Historians of this period also have reappraised the applicability of Benedict Anderson's influential work on nationalism. Far from an 'imagined community' existing in an idealized future and involving a sense of sovereignty over a defined territory, those who sought America's independence from Spain wanted to recover a long-lost, pristine past when the government apparatus supposedly functioned properly and in the interest of the community it ruled. In Central America, the revival of municipal government was a 'dynamic and creative adaptation of a proven form of political organization' rather than a 'limping,

[111] Adelman, *Sovereignty and revolution*, p. 146; this view was anticipated, but not developed, by A. P. Whitaker: 'it is a *post hoc* fallacy resulting in the teleological subordination of the enlightenment to the political revolutions in Europe and America and that it produces a narrow, static and misleading picture of that rich and ever changing cultural moment'; see Whitaker, 'Changing and unchanging interpretations of the enlightenment in Spanish America', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 114 (1970), p. 257.

[112] Roger Chartier, *The cultural origins of the French Revolution* (Durham, NC, and London, 1991), p. 16. For example, as Chartier elucidates, the 'new mode of reading', even of texts which were 'in total conformity with religious and political order, developed a critical attitude freed from the ties of dependence that underlay earlier representations', p. 91.

[113] Silva, *Los ilustrados de Nueva Granada, 1760–1800*, pp. 583, 645–6.

[114] Alan Knight, 'Is political culture good to think?', in Nils Jacobsen and Cristóbal Aljovín de Losada, eds., *Political cultures in the Andes, 1750–1950* (Durham, NC, and London, 2005), p. 39.

[115] John Lynch, *Simón Bolívar: a life* (New Haven, CT, and London, 2006), p. 36; for an example of this earlier tendency to accentuate the origins of Bolívar's thought, see J. B. Trend, *Bolívar and the independence of Spanish America* (London, 1946), esp. pp. 141, 208–9.

unthinking extension of a medieval heritage'.[116] Furthermore, Spanish Americans justified self-government using the political languages of 'rationalism, contractualism, and the natural law philosophy of the enlightenment'.[117] The emerging consensus is that 'neither Suárez nor Rousseau' predominated. The distinctiveness of Spanish American political thought lies in its 'pluralism and confusion'.[118] In the *Cortes* of Cádiz, too, appeal was made to tradition and premodern Spanish precedents were exalted.[119] Indeed, the framers of the 1812 Constitution 'convinced themselves that they were honest interpreters of the Spanish tradition, which had been besmirched by the despotism of both the Habsburgs and Bourbons'.[120]

In the same way that old ideas, rooted in Hispanic tradition, were more salient than previously supposed, the press's role, so pivotal to Anderson's theory, has been diminished and exposed as anachronistic. The real 'explosion' of the periodical press everywhere except, perhaps, Mexico, occurred only after 1808.[121] In most of South America, at least, a 'transformation of information networks did not precede revolution'.[122] Anderson also has been criticized on the grounds that his understanding of 'nation' does 'not correspond to historical usage'.[123] It was,

[116] Dym, *From sovereign villages to national states*, p. xxvi.

[117] José Carlos Chiaramonte, *Nación y estado en IberoAmérica: el lenguaje político en tiempos de las independencias* (Buenos Aires, 2004), p. 164; of course, the prevalence of these influences was recognized long ago, but simply fell out of fashion as attempts were made to integrate Spanish American Independence into a broader, Anglo-American, and French-inspired 'age of revolution'. For earlier contributions, see Manuel Giménez Fernández, *Las doctrinas populistas de la independencia de Hispano-América* (Seville, 1947); Rafael Gómez Hoyos, *La revolución granadina de 1810: ideario de una generación y una época, 1781–1821* (2 vols., Bogotá, 1962); and O. Carlos Stoetzer, *The scholastic roots of the Spanish American revolution* (New York, 1979); on the political thought of the American deputies to the *Cortes* of Cádiz, see Marie Laure Rieu-Millan, *Los diputados americanos en las Cortes de Cádiz: igualdad o independencia* (Madrid, 1990).

[118] José Andrés-Gallego, 'La pluralidad de referencias políticas', in Guerra, ed., *Revoluciones hispánicas*, p. 142.

[119] Joaquín Varela Suances-Carpegna, *La teoria del estado en los origenes del constitucionalismo hispanico* (*Las Cortes de Cádiz*) (Madrid, 1983); for a succinct and revealing analysis of historical constitutionalism in Spain, see Brading, *Origins*, pp. 39–41; for a recent assessment of the intellectual origins of liberalism in the Spanish monarchy, see María Teresa García Godoy, *Las Cortes de Cádiz y América: el primer vocabulario liberal español e mejicano (1810–1814)* (Seville, 1998).

[120] Josep Fontana, *La crisis del antiguo régimen, 1808–1833* (Barcelona, 1979), pp. 16–17; Herr noted that as disenchantment with enlightened despotism grew in 1790s, reformers rediscovered 'that Spain had a constitution and legislative body [i.e. the *Cortes*], that under this body the nation had seen its greatest days, and that the House of Habsburg, to establish despotism, had destroyed the constitution and brought the ruin of Spain', in *Eighteenth-century revolution*, pp. 336–47; Manuel Moreno Alonso remarked that the 1812 Constitution reflected 'traditionalism and a specifically Spanish medievalism', in *La generación española de 1808* (Madrid, 1989), p. 223.

[121] Silva, *Los ilustrados de Nueva Granada, 1760–1808*, p. 339; Guerra, 'Forms of communication, political spaces, and cultural identities', pp. 5–6.

[122] Rebecca Earle, 'The role of print in the Spanish American wars of independence', in Iván Jaksić, ed., *The political power of the word: press and oratory in nineteenth-century Latin America* (London, 2002), p. 28.

[123] Claudio Lomnitz, 'Nationalism as a practical system: Benedict Anderson's theory of nationalism from the vantage point of Spanish America', in Miguel Angel Centeno and Fernando

as Matthew Brown has shown, a 'conceptually broad and necessarily vague construction, into which foreigners and strangers were often welcomed on pragmatic and ideological grounds'.[124] Detailed, archive-driven studies, then, have cast doubt on the prospect of developing a satisfactory overarching theory that connects nascent nationalist identities and the disaggregation of Spain's transoceanic empire.

IV

Reassessments of the Bourbon reforms, national identity formation, and the impact of the enlightenment as preconditions and precipitants of revolt have suggested the limitations of certain aspects of earlier interpretations. But they have not replaced them. Assisted in part by the doubts cast on existing views, however, different perspectives and emphases are emerging. The overarching unity of these views is the rejection of teleological narratives of the liberal nation-state as an intended outcome of political movements in Spanish America, conceived of and striven for, from at least 1808 if not many years before. The multiplicity of mutually exclusive political aspirations, political contingency and fragmentation, and deeper subterranean processes which complicate such linear accounts have prompted historians to shift their gaze toward moments of discontinuity, rupture as well as the durability of institutions that previously were discarded as atavisms of the *antiguo régimen*. This has led to a new emphasis on understudied 'preconditions' and 'precipitants'. It also has endowed the 'trigger' of the 1808 political cataclysm with greater explanatory power than was previously attributed to it.

There are at least four new directions: the long-term, unintended consequences of changes in patterns of oceanic commerce on the relation between colony and metropole; the explanatory significance of political events and decisions in peninsular Spain, including the policies pursued by the liberals of the *Cortes* of Cádiz; the chaotic and incomplete nature of nation-state and identity formation in America, including the role of warfare in this process; and the international dimension's prominence in the process of independence.

Jeremy Adelman has argued persuasively that 1808 thrust into the spotlight a gradual, cumulative change, an ever-widening chasm between Europe and America, that had been stirring since the final decades of the eighteenth century.

López-Alves, eds., *The other mirror: grand theory through the lens of Latin America* (Princeton, NJ, and Oxford, 2001), p. 336; in another book, Centeno disputed whether nationalism existed in the early nineteenth century Latin America: '[there was] a great deal of regionalism, racism, patriotism, but little nationalism'; see his *Blood and debt: war and the nation-state in Latin America* (University Park, PA, 2002), p. 170.

[124] Matthew Brown, 'Not forging nations but foraging for them: uncertain collective identities in Gran Colombia', *Nations and Nationalism*, 12 (2006), p. 236; Nicola Miller has argued that in spite of criticism of Anderson, his idea of the nation as a cultural as opposed to an ideological or bureaucratic construct helped to suggest that 'state-building and nation-creation were related processes, operating in parallel' in 'The historiography of nationalism and national identity in Latin America', *Nations and Nationalism*, 12 (2006), p. 212.

'If the needs of war pushed the imperial parts closer together', he contends, the 'commercial dynamics unleashed by competition and free trade began to pull them apart.'[125] Focusing on the impact of trade reform and merchant capital accumulation, he observed that 'one of [its] unintended consequences' was to '[unblock] the pressure on these emerging networks. So when the European and North Atlantic trading networks got caught up in the maelstrom of revolution and warfare, the South Atlantic was functioning, indeed flourishing on its own.' Pointing to the centrality of the slave trade, conducted directly between the coasts of Africa and South America's Atlantic littoral, in this process, he suggests how it 'evolved outside the orbit of metropolitan interests and controls'. The irony was that 'this was a world made by empire but autonomous from imperial authority'.[126] Reform and burgeoning export-led growth, in this view, neither catalysed resistance and the formation of a separate identity nor produced a yearning for independence. Rather, they accompanied and propelled incremental, subtle, macro-level changes and, in the final analysis, inexorable and *de facto* autonomy for parts of Spanish America well before the spectacular political paroxysm of 1808.

But politics, particularly those of the peninsula, do explain a great deal. The crumpling of the Spanish monarchy, resulting from the double abdications of the Bourbon kings at Bayonne, and Napoleon's installation of his brother on the throne, crowned as José I, always has been deemed crucial. Yet the explanatory priority allotted to this moment was never high until now. 'It was the sudden acephelous condition', it was observed recently, 'that explains the cataclysmic character of the crisis of the Spanish monarchy.'[127] The shock of the abdications, the absence of legitimate authority, and the power vacuum it created rippled westward, crossing the Atlantic, with a tsunami-like effect. The dramatic and traumatic reactions provoked by the absence, not exercise, of authority throughout the constituent kingdoms of the realm now is a crucial locus of research.

Here the Atlantic perspective has proved its particular value by casting light on dynamics that had long been relegated to the historiographical shadows.[128]

[125] Adelman, *Sovereignty and revolution*, p. 54.

[126] Adelman, *Sovereignty and revolution*, pp. 73–7, 83; Adelman's discussion of the increasing autonomy of the South Atlantic's economy, with its links to both slavery and merchant capital, draws on work of, among others, Joseph C. Miller, *Way of death: merchant capitalism and the Angolan slave trade, 1730–1830* (London, 1988), and João Fragoso and Manolo Florentino, *O arcaísmo como projeto: mercado atlântico, sociedade agrária e elite mercantil em uma economia colonial tardia: Rio de Janeiro, c. 1790–1840* (4 edn, Rio de Janeiro, 2001).

[127] François-Xavier Guerra, 'La desintegración de la monarquía hispánica: revolución de independencia', in François-Xavier Guerra, L. Castro Leiva and A. Annino, eds., *De los imperios a las naciones: IberoAmérica* (Zaragoza, 1994), pp. 198–9.

[128] For a flavour of the varieties and distinct approaches to Atlantic History, see J. H. Elliott, *The old world and the new, 1492–1650* (Cambridge, 1970), esp. ch. 4; Maxwell, 'The Atlantic in the eighteenth century'; Bernard Bailyn, 'The idea of Atlantic history', *Itinerario*, 20 (1996), pp. 19–44; and David Armitage, 'Three concepts of Atlantic history', in Armitage and M. J. Braddick, eds., *The British Atlantic world, 1500–1800* (New York, NY, 2002); for recent critique of certain approaches to Atlantic History, see Peter A. Coclanis, '*Drang nach osten*: Bernard Bailyn, the world-island, and the idea of Atlantic history', *Journal of World History*, 13 (2002), pp. 169–82.

Though plagued by certain imperfections,[129] this salutary trend serves to reintegrate their histories 'not through cultural diffusion or some systemic logic, but through similar sets of conflicts and parallel responses to globalizing influences'.[130] The unprecedented headless state of the monarchy unleashed myriad divergent, local responses which critically undermined transoceanic connectedness. Historians are increasingly attentive to the ricochet effects of the peninsula's implosion in America as well as the reverberation of American upheaval in Europe.[131] What used to be thought of mainly as a 'trigger' of Spanish American separatism is now considered to be a 'precipitant', of extraordinary magnitude, of the tumultuous processes which culminated in the monarchy's dissolution.

Recent studies conclude that the inaugural moment of nation-state as well as identity formation was the 'unintended and unplanned result of the end of the pact between *pueblos*' which the Spanish monarchy had held together. The existence of well-established administrative and economic spaces, the surfacing of long-subordinate regional and civic identities, compounded by the immensity of physical distance which separated them, proved an 'insuperable obstacle to the construction of such an [American] identity'.[132] The 'simplification' and 'abstraction' of independence as a general, Pan-American phenomenon has been discarded. Instead, the 'confluence of factors and social forces' and the 'simultaneous, locally-generated, uncoordinated movements, with an infinite number of leaders (*cabecillas*)', is the target of research.[133]

The years between 1808 and 1812, then, are decreasingly depicted as an overture to revolution, but rather as a period of extraordinary confusion, notable for the survival and renovative capacity of long-established patterns of politics.[134] In the peninsula, historians have long recognized that the *juntas* that proliferated so

[129] As Cañizares-Esguerra trenchantly observed, Atlantic History's 'trope of discontinuities introduces intolerable distortions when it comes to Latin America … by buying into the narrative of the dawn of the new age, historians of the region find themselves having to grapple with questions of decline and failure', a tendency to 'harp on exploitation and revolution'. See his *Puritan conquistadors*, pp. 231, 233.

[130] Lauren Benton, 'No longer the odd region out: repositioning Latin America in world history', *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 84 (2004), p. 428.

[131] See for example, Jaime E. Rodríguez O., 'Introduction', in Rodríguez O., ed., *Revolución, independencia y las nuevas naciones de América* (Madrid, 2005), p. 15.

[132] François-Xavier Guerra, 'Identidad y soberanía: una relación compleja', in Guerra, ed., *Revoluciones hispánicas*, pp. 231, 236–7.

[133] Francisco Colom González, 'El trono vacío: la imaginación política y la crisis constitucional de la monarquía hispánica', in Francisco Colom González, ed., *Relatos de nación: la construcción de las identidades nacionales en el mundo hispánico* (Madrid and Frankfurt, 2005), p. 39; this view is gaining adherents: in Central America, Dym argues, 'independence was a matter of municipal pronouncement and coordination among extant authorities on a case-by-case basis rather than a concerted decision made in one place by one person or group of persons'. See Dym, *From sovereign villages to national states*, p. 159.

[134] Guerra affirms this conclusion: 'The *pueblos* were the only certain political reality in America … only with their consent could there emerge a political unity of a higher order'; see Guerra, 'La desintegración de la monarquía hispánica', p. 222; also see Dym, *From sovereign villages to national states*, p. xxvi.

rapidly in the summer of 1808 possessed a 'patriotic character', but also represented a 'revolutionary movement' because they assumed 'limitless power to exercise sovereignty'.[135] In America, far from a 'precocious attempt at emancipation', the 'immense loyalty' was expressed through a 'rejection of the invader, unprecedented demonstration of fidelity to the king, an explosion of Spanish patriotism and solidarity with the [pensinular] patriots', articulated through the press, civic processions, and public ceremonies in which participants reaffirmed loyalty to the crown.[136] It was conspicuous for its ardent effort to sustain the transatlantic monarchy or to conceive of it in a manner that did not challenge its basic coherence. This is not, of course, to suggest that Americans were clamouring for the restoration of a rigorous absolutism. Recent scholarship demonstrates a robust demand for autonomy, but not independence.[137] This liminality, which complicates linear narratives of alienation, identity formation, and the embrace of 'enlightened values', is a crucial topic for future research.

As the pivotal, contingent character of the '1808 moment' attracts scholarly adherents, older questions have resurfaced concerning whether liberals, rather than the champions of restoration absolutism, bear some responsibility for exacerbating the crisis. Early nineteenth-century liberals, on the one hand, interpreted the upheaval in America as a rejection of despotism and paraded the prospect of a constitutional monarchy as a panacea to cure the crisis.[138] Absolutists, on the other hand, were convinced that liberals were culpable, a hypothesis Ferdinand VII articulated in a letter to Alexander I of Russia: 'The constitution formed at Cádiz, and the revolution made in Spain, were the work of the machinations of those who desired to separate the Americas from the metropolis.'[139]

Recent scholars have latched on to this reactionary critique of Cádiz liberalism. The previous generation of historians recognized the *Cortes*'s 'failure to reach consensus', the absence of a 'universal policy for America, logically conceived and consistently applied', and the 'systemic dysfunction' of 'governmental, policy-making, information-transmitting, and consensus-generating mechanisms' throughout the 1808–26 period.[140] Had the various governments after 1810 been

[135] Miguel Artola, *Antiguo régimen y revolución liberal* (Barcelona, 1978), p. 161.

[136] Guerra, 'Lógicas', pp. 22, 16–19; on image of Ferdinand VII and its multiple uses, see Victor Mínguez, 'Fernando VII: un rey imaginado para una nación inventada', in Rodríguez O., ed., *Revolución*; for a book that argues that the name of the king was invoked only to 'mask' the genuine pursuit of independence, see Marco Antonio Landavazo, *La máscara de Fernando VII: discurso e imaginario monarquicos en una época de crisis: nueva España, 1808–1822* (Mexico City, 2001); for an excellent study of the political culture of Peru in the period following 1808, see Víctor Peralta Ruiz, *En defensa de la autoridad: política y cultura bajo el gobierno de virrey Abascal. Perú, 1806–1816* (Madrid, 2002).

[137] Portillo, *Crisis atlántica*, pp. 65–8.

[138] Michael P. Costeloe, *Response to revolution: imperial Spain and the Spanish American revolutions, 1810–1840* (Cambridge, 1986), p. 7.

[139] Quoted in Rebecca Earle, *Spain and the independence of Colombia, 1810–1825* (Exeter, 2000), p. 154.

[140] Anna, *Spain and the loss of America*, p. xv; this view has been adopted by more recent scholars, including Earle, who argues that 'Spain never developed a coherent strategy for responding to its

more dexterous, had they assuaged American aspirations for autonomy, events might have taken a different course. Instead, they shunned compromise and conciliation. The intransigence was epitomized by the 41,000 troops sent to reconquer America between 1814 and 1826.[141] But obstinacy, in most traditional accounts, was of tertiary importance behind incompetence and vacillation, not to mention explanations that privilege the agency of American actors and factors.

In the most recent scholarship, the ideological contradictions, not simply administrative deficiencies, of the Cádiz liberals – particularly their attempt to reconfigure the empire from a composite of multiple societies into a single political community while denying Americans equal political rights[142] – is acknowledged as alienating Americans from Spain when separation was merely one of a number of possible paths. One historian provocatively argues that Americans neither were 'admitted to the Spanish nation in the first place' nor 'offered an acceptable and stable pact to integrate them into the new *patria española*'. Instead, 'inequality and the rejection of autonomy' was offered and this paltry package 'generated a great many of diverse responses'.[143]

The *Cortes* debates concerning America thus assume greater prominence in the scholarly literature. Two disputes stand out: first, the right of Americans to form their own *juntas*; second, equality of representation in the monarchy's legislative bodies, initially in the *Junta Central* and, subsequently, in the *Cortes*.[144] In the *Junta*, in spite of the superior population of America, there were 9 Americans as opposed to 26 peninsular Spaniards. In the *Cortes*, there were 30 deputies for America against 250 for the peninsula. Particularly controversial, as well as pivotal to the justification of this disparity, was the distinction made between Spaniards and citizens, the latter possessing political rights, including the right to vote in national and municipal elections and hold public office. A contentious, closely related issue was the 'problem of descent', concerning the extent of the political inclusion of American non-whites, particularly the right to be

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revolted colonies, and attempted to pursue simultaneously a collection of often contradictory policies'. She concludes that 'Spain lost the war of independence as surely as Spain won it'. See Earle, *Spain*, pp. 4, 6.

[141] For an excellent account of tactics of the Spanish Army in this period, see Earle, *Spain*, pp. 30–103 passim. Though 41,000 is not an inconsiderable figure, recall that 35,000 Spaniards died in the single battle of Ocaña (1809).

[142] See Dym, *From sovereign villages to national states*, pp. 110–26; this new view was anticipated by Brian Hamnett who convincingly showed that the Cádiz 'liberals inherited many of the policies of enlightened absolutism … they sought to strengthen the Bourbon unitary state both in the peninsula and the Indies'. See Hamnett, 'Constitutional theory and political reality: liberalism, traditionalism, and the Spanish *Cortes*, 1810–1814', *Journal of Modern History*, 49 On Demand Supplement (1977), p. D1110.

[143] Portillo, *Crisis atlántica*, pp. 103, 158; this tendency to question Spanish liberalism goes against the scholarly grain: as Isabel Burdiel noted 'there has been a profound revision of the "myth of failure" as a leitmotiv of Spanish history and historiography. Historians now seriously question the image of social, economic and political stagnation associated with nineteenth-century Spain': Burdiel, 'Myths of failure, myths of success: new perspectives on nineteenth-century Spanish liberalism', *Journal of Modern History*, 70 (1998), p. 894.

[144] Guerra 'Lógicas', p. 25.

represented while not enjoying other rights associated with citizenship, a dispute that became 'indistinguishable from the problem of American equal rights'.[145]

Some scholars offer a more sympathetic explanation for the attitudes of the Cádiz liberals, stressing the limitations of a 'strictly juridical analysis of [the 1812 Constitution]' and the 'priority' that they granted to a collective concept of the nation resulted from the exigencies of war and the situation engendered by abdication.[146] Furthermore, its shortcomings must be contextualized: 'the constitution surpassed all existing representative governments, such as those of Great Britain, the United States and France, in providing political rights to the vast majority of the male population'.[147] Another nuanced variation on this apology suggests that peninsular liberalism evolved in response to political movements in America, particularly the American deputies' efforts to 'transform [municipalities] into authentic vehicles for the pursuit of American autonomy'.[148] Spanish liberals veered toward monarchical form of government, it is argued, in reaction to America's autonomist aspirations.[149] The Cádiz liberals were not 'innately' centralist, but rather antagonistic to all forms of particularism. They associated federalism, even in a liberal form, with the decentralized rule of the municipalities of the seigneurial regime, and regarded it as a retrograde step.[150]

These disputes between the peninsula and America, it should be noted, were as discursive as they were substantive. Both Americans and peninsular deputies 'employed the concept of "nation" in mystifying ways, endowing it with different significances, sometimes calling it the state, sometimes only using it in a cultural sense'.[151] There existed two related, but not identical, notions: first, the idea of a nation of individuals who form a citizenry; second, a 'conjunction of corporate entities, *pueblos*, provinces'.[152] *Patria*, too, is now considered to be a 'political identity' fraught with 'multiple ambiguities'.[153]

This confusion suggests that national identity was forged during the independence struggle itself. It was not pre-existing, waiting for a propitious opportunity

[145] Christine Duffy, 'The American delegates at the *Cortes* de Cádiz: citizenship, sovereignty, nationhood' (M.Phil diss., Cambridge, 1995), pp. 11–12, 30; on these debates see Manuel Chust, 'El rey para el pueblo, la constitución para la nación', in Chust and Mínguez, eds., *El imperio sublevado*; for a brilliant overview of notions of citizenship in the Spanish Atlantic world, see Tamar Herzog, *Defining nations: immigrants and citizens in early modern Spain and Spanish America* (New Haven, CT, and London, 2003).

[146] Lluís Roura, 'Guerra y ocupación francesa: ¿Freno o estímulo a la revolución española?', in Manuel Chust and Ivana Frasquet, eds., *La transcendencia del liberalismo doceañista en España y en América* (Valencia, 2004), p. 28.

[147] Rodríguez, 'Emancipation', p. 145.

[148] Manuel Chust, 'América y el problema federal en las Cortes de Cádiz', in Manuel Chust and José A. Piqueras, eds., *Republicanos y repúblicas en España* (Madrid, 1996), p. 56.

[149] Manuel Chust, 'Rey, soberanía y nación: las Cortes doceañistas hispanas, 1810–1814', in Chust and Frasquet, eds., *Transcendencia del liberalismo doceañista*, p. 59.

[150] Chust, 'América y el problema federal', pp. 57, 60.

[151] Chust, 'Rey, soberanía y nación', p. 55; on the different uses of '*nación*', see Varela Suances-Carpegna, *La teoria del estado*, p. 430.

[152] Chiaramonte, *Nación y estado*, pp. 37–8.

[153] Guerra, 'Forms of communication, political spaces, and cultural identities', p. 32.

to reveal itself.[154] The nation was the result, not the cause, of the independence movements.[155] Spanish American 'elites dedicated themselves to creating that discursive infrastructure of nationhood only after independence was won'.[156] Unstable state and federal governments and acute conflict, not undisputed, legitimate translocal polities, were the norm. 'Participatory and republican processes', including popular elections of officials, galvanized the protracted initial phase of nation-building.[157] So did war. The role of the army and the function of war has assumed greater significance in recent historiography as a 'creator of identities', for it was the army that could create a stable and unified base for central authority. It assumed the 'place of king in the symbolic economy of the new state, a counterweight to the disaggregative tendencies which existed'.[158]

The recognition of the multiplicity of possible polities and the contested nature of sovereignty has prompted enhanced interest in the alternative trajectories besides those which, in the very long run, resulted in the unitary nation-state. The competing models of political organization were more than 'necessary and rather unsatisfactory way-stations on the road that led to unitary statehood'.[159] Just as early modern Europe was 'one of the composite states, coexisting with a myriad of smaller territorial and jurisdictional units jealously guarding their independent status',[160] historians now perceive that the Spanish transatlantic monarchy operated along similar lines well into the nineteenth century. The problem, it is suggested, was not to 'give state form to a supposedly pre-existing nation', but rather the 'very organization of the sovereign states' coming into existence.[161] Each part of the monarchy 'conceived of the crisis as its own' because each considered itself, following abdication, the 'depository of sovereignty'. This conviction provoked simultaneous, unconnected debates across the empire, resulting in myriad irreconcilable conclusions.[162] The dichotomy of independent nation-state/colony, it is argued, obscured the variety of 'sovereignties', alternative forms of political organization, and entangled sub-national identities which flourished before the triumph of the unitary nation-state.[163] The effort to

[154] José Carlos Chiaramonte, 'El mito de los orígenes en la historiografía latinoamericana', *Cuadernos del Instituto Ravignani* [Buenos Aires], 2 (1991), p. 20.

[155] José Carlos Chiaramonte and Nora Souto, 'De la ciudad a la nación: las vicisitudes de la organización política argentina y los fundamentos de la conciencia nacional', in Colom González, ed., *Relatos de nación*, p. 312.

[156] Guerra, 'Forms of communication, political spaces, and cultural identities', p. 32.

[157] Dym, *From sovereign villages to national states*, p. xxv.

[158] Clèment Thibaud, *Repúblicas en armas: los ejércitos bolivarianos en la guerra de independencia en Colombia y Venezuela* (Bogotá, 2003), pp. 12–13, 519.

[159] Elliott, 'A Europe of composite monarchies', p. 51.

[160] Ibid., p. 51; C. A. Bayly suggests that the 'jumble of rights, privileges, [and] local autonomies' may be observed on a global scale in this same period. See Bayly, *The birth of the modern world, 1780–1914* (Oxford, 2004), p. 33.

[161] José Carlos Chiaramonte, 'Modificaciones del pacto imperial', in Guerra, Castro Leiva, and Annino, eds., *De los imperios a las naciones*, p. 108.

[162] Portillo, *Crisis atlántica*, pp. 56–7.

[163] Chiaramonte, *Nación y estado*, pp. 20–1; Chiaramonte and Souto, 'De la ciudad a la nación', p. 317.

replace empire with 'something else gave rise to the simultaneous advent of patriotic localisms and centralisms … no stable or hegemonic model took root'.[164]

While the nation-state should not be reified or perceived as the final stage of a historical teleology, one major caveat must be borne in mind: the large nation-state with a strong central government was conceived by certain revolutionary leaders, notably Bolívar, as an antidote to both the instability wrought by experiments with federalism and the decentralized, highly personalized power wielded by the *caudillos* who resisted the institutionalization of authority. As early as 1813, for example, Gran Colombia, encompassing several colonial political jurisdictions, was presented explicitly as an 'alternative to the anarchy of *caudillo* rule'.[165] It was this feared prospect that was realized as post-independence Spanish America degenerated into a 'disastrous combination of local autocracy with little central domination; a continent of repressive islands with weak central domination'.[166]

This insight notwithstanding, these localisms are the subject of intense scholarly interest, in part because they facilitate the study of previously neglected historical actors. While scholarship on Spanish American independence has been criticized for its emphasis on 'macro, structural and elite-centered interpretations',[167] there is now a growing consensus that it involved a broad cross-section of society in political debate and these previously neglected groups are now considered to have formed an unheralded and integral part of the story. Creole patriots were complemented, in Mexico, by village revolts, guided by millenarian ideologies, that were extremely radical at their base and only occasionally linked to elite movements.[168] In New Granada, debates about political representation, sovereignty, and citizenship flourished and a 'patriotic rhetoric incorporated racial conflicts within a larger republican discourse that sharply distinguished between an archaic, despotic and oppressive Spanish past and a new republican future of freedom, equality and justice'.[169]

[164] Adelman, *Sovereignty and revolution*, p. 391. Adelman rightly notes that 'what was so labyrinthine [about the independence period] was the quest to create new foundations for social life while old rules and norms decomposed', p. 2.

[165] Lynch, *Simón Bolívar*, pp. 99, 76; on phenomenon of the *caudillo*, see Lynch, *Caudillos in Spanish America, 1800–1850* (Oxford, 1992).

[166] Centeno, *Blood and debt*, pp. 156–7.

[167] Uribe-Uran, 'The enigma of Latin American independence', p. 255.

[168] Eric Van Young, *The other rebellion: popular violence, ideology and the Mexican struggle for independence, 1810–1821* (Stanford, CA, 2001).

[169] Marixa Lasso, 'Revisiting independence day: Afro-Colombian politics and creole patriot narratives, Cartagena, 1809–1815', in Mark Thurner and Andrés Guerrero, eds., *After Spanish rule: post-colonial predicaments of the Americas* (Durham, NC, and London, 2003), pp. 229–39; nevertheless, as Florencia Mallon observes, 'nowhere in the region has a new and inclusive national project emerged'. See Mallon, 'Decoding the parchments of the nation-state in Latin America: Peru, Mexico and Chile', in James Dunkerley, ed., *Studies in the formation of the nation-state in Latin America* (London, 2002), p. 19.

If the formation of the nation-state and national identity remain mired in controversy, other new directions are less contentious. Perhaps the most innovative of these new scholarly approaches to the end of the Spanish empire privileges the international and transnational dimensions of the dissolution and recomposition of the Spanish Atlantic world. This new approach takes two, normally related forms: the first situates Spanish America in comparative perspective, examining it alongside other independence movements, particularly those of Brazil and the United States;[170] the second re-assesses international involvement in, and attitudes toward, Spanish America in this period. It examines Spanish American independence's reverberation in European intellectual debates, geopolitical calculations and stock exchanges, viewing it as an episode of 'interconnected or "entangled" history' of multiple colliding, concentric, or sometimes intertwined Atlantic worlds.[171]

These studies, then, breathe new life into an already robust corpus of work treating nascent Latin America's relations with the wider world. The main themes include: foreign enlistment, diplomatic recognition, 'informal' empire, economic dependence and underdevelopment, and recurrent debt crises.[172] But this scholarship poses new questions, applies new methods, and challenges long-held assumptions. One remarkable monograph, for example, contends that

[170] Key examples include Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic world*; Adelman, *Sovereignty and revolution*; and Hamnett, 'Process and pattern'.

[171] On the concept of 'entangled histories', its historiographical pedigree, and its relation to comparative and transnational history, see Eliga H. Gould, 'Entangled histories, entangled worlds: the English-speaking Atlantic as a Spanish periphery', *American Historical Review*, 112 (2007), p. 766.

[172] Among the works which examine these themes, see J. Fred Rippy, *Rivalry of the United States and Great Britain over Latin America (1808–1830)* (Baltimore, MD, 1929); William Spence Robertson, *France and Latin American independence* (Baltimore, MD, 1939); William W. Kaufmann, *British policy and the independence of Latin America, 1804–1828* (New Haven, CT, 1951); John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson, 'The imperialism of free trade' [1953], in John Gallagher, *The decline, revival and fall of the British empire: the Ford lectures and other essays*, ed. Anil Seal (Cambridge, 1982); H. S. Ferns, *Britain and Argentina in the nineteenth century* (Oxford, 1960); Harold Temperley, *The foreign policy of Canning, 1822–1827: England, the Neo-Holy alliance and the New World* (London, 1966); John Lynch, 'British policy and Spanish America, 1783–1808', *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 1 (1969), pp. 1–30; Stein and Stein, *The colonial heritage of Latin America*; D. C. M. Platt, *Latin America and British trade, 1806–1914* (London, 1972); Peter Winn, 'British informal empire in Uruguay in the nineteenth century', *Past and Present*, 73 (1976), pp. 100–26; Ron Seckinger, *The Brazilian monarchy and the South American republics, 1822–1831* (Baton Rouge, LA, 1984); D. A. G. Waddell, 'British neutrality and Spanish American independence: the problem of foreign enlistment', *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 19 (1987), pp. 1–19; Nicole Bousquet, 'The decolonization of Spanish America in the early nineteenth century: a world systems approach', *Review* [Binghamton], 11 (1988), pp. 497–531; Frank Griffith Dawson, *The first Latin American debt crisis: the city of London and the 1822–25 loan bubble* (New Haven, CT, and London, 1990), Rory Miller, *Britain and Latin America in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries* (London, 1993); A. G. Hopkins, 'Informal empire in Argentina: an alternative view', *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 26 (1994), pp. 469–84; James E. Lewis, *The American union and the problem of neighborhood: the United States and the collapse of the Spanish empire, 1783–1829* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1998); Alan Knight, 'Britain and Latin America', in Andrew Porter, ed., *The Oxford history of the British empire*, III: *The nineteenth century* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 122–45; and Gabriel Paquette, 'The intellectual context of British diplomatic recognition of the South American republics, c. 1800–1830', *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, 2 (2004), pp. 75–95.

'collective identity formation in Latin America took place against an ever-present background of transnational movements, migrations, and networks' and that the involvement of foreigners in nascent polities was 'as often based upon adventure, culture and kinship as [it was] upon commerce or threats of military force'.[173] Even the role of foreign commercial and military factors, though, has been reconsidered in innovative and suggestive ways.[174] While more research must be pursued, the four new directions surveyed here suggest that the study of Latin American independence is enjoying a renaissance.

V

There remains a lively debate concerning whether Spanish American independence really represented a break from the colonial past and constituted a 'revolution' in the strict sense.[175] Octavio Paz observed that liberal and democratic ideologies served merely to 'adorn the vestiges of the colonial system' with ornaments of 'modernity' without producing significant socio-economic change.[176] For the vast majority of the population, independence offered only the illusion of change.

Many of the nascent republics 'dragged the detritus of colonial attitudes, habits and institutions' into the post-Independence era.[177] Separation from Spain did not automatically lead to the dismantlement of colonial-era restrictions, including those that stifled international commerce. In Peru, from 1820 until 1850, for instance, 'free traders were few, far between, foreign, feeble and factionalised'.[178] Other institutions and attitudes persisted or were resurrected soon after their initial demise. Indian tribute, for example, whose abolition was declared in the Cádiz constitution of 1812, was reimposed in Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia during the 1820s.[179] In Nicaragua, Indian control over land was eliminated by the late 1850s and half of the land was sold at public auction in the following decade,

[173] Matthew Brown, *Adventuring through Spanish colonies: Simón Bolívar, foreign mercenaries, and the birth of new nations* (Liverpool, 2006), pp. 4, 216; on the impact of British books and the book trade on the formation of new identities, see Eugenia Roldán Vera, *The British book trade and Spanish American independence: education and knowledge transmission in transcontinental perspective* (Aldershot, 2003), esp. chs. 2, 5, and 6.

[174] As Rafe Blaufarb suggests, 'the activities of foreign revolutionaries, mercenaries, spies and freebooters who lurked in the back alleys of Latin American Independence furnish material for a transnational diplomatic history "from below" in which states figure as just one among several types of actor'; see Blaufarb, 'The western question: the geopolitics of Latin American independence', *American Historical Review*, 112 (2007), p. 743.

[175] For a glimpse into this debate, see German Carrera Damas's essay '¿Independencia fue una revolución?', in his *Cuestiones de historiografía venezolana* (Caracas, 1964), particularly pp. 123–4.

[176] Octavio Paz, *El laberinto de la soledad* (Mexico City, 2002), p. 131.

[177] Brooke Larson, *Trials of nation making: liberalism, race and ethnicity in the Andes, 1810–1910* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 34.

[178] Paul Gootenberg, *Between silver and guano: commercial policy and the state in postindependence Peru* (Princeton, NJ, 1989), p. 33.

[179] Larson, *Trials of nation making*, p. 34; even features of colonial legislation were maintained, including the *patronato* power over ecclesiastical appointments. With reference to Colombia, see Jaime

paving the way for the giant coffee *fincas* of the late nineteenth century.[180] Furthermore, the partition and redistribution of manorial estates, feudal-like servitude, and land redistribution only came in the mid-twentieth century. For much of the nineteenth century, in many places, the 'hierarchical, discontinuous, internal boundaries of ethnic caste, colour, class, gender, and corporation' persisted.[181] For example, African slavery endured and *castas* faced legal and social restrictions in education, government participation, and taxation well into the nineteenth century.[182] But not only caste, but class and urban–rural disparities were also dramatic. In late nineteenth-century Uruguay, to take but one of many cases, a mere 5 per cent of the population was able to cast ballots and, in the countryside, a paltry 1 per cent enjoyed citizenship rights.[183] The grandiose promises of independence were only imperfectly realized.

What happened to the peninsula after the dissolution of the transatlantic monarchy? It formerly was accepted that nineteenth-century Spain was economically backward and that this plight was attributable chiefly to the forfeiture of its captive American markets, easy access to precious metals, and sole control over valuable export commodities. This problem was compounded by its abrupt entry into a European economy in which it proved uncompetitive.[184] This view was attacked in the 1980s and 1990s. Critics contended that the loss of Spanish America produced only a modest negative impact on the Spanish economy between 1820 and 1914. Furthermore, imperial contraction was, in the long run, salubrious for it compelled Spain's adaptation to new, competitive circumstances and, ultimately, increased overall production and productivity, albeit at a slower rate than the rest of Western Europe.[185]

Jaramillo Uribe, *El pensamiento colombiano en el siglo XIX* (rev. edn, Bogotá, 1996), esp. part 1, 'La evaluación de la herencia española y el problema de la orientación espiritual de la nación'.

[180] Elizabeth Dore, *Myths of modernity: peonage and patriarchy in Nicaragua* (Durham, NC, and London, 2006), pp. 70–1.

[181] Mark Thurner, *From two republics into one divided: contradictions of postcolonial nationmaking in Andean Peru* (Durham, NC, and London, 1997), p. 3.

[182] Larson, *Trials of nation making*, pp. 41–5; of course, scholars must avoid the 'teleological traps', 'essentialist formulations', and implication of 'transhistorical immutabilities' when they analyse the legacies of colonialism in the national period. For an excellent discussion, see Jeremy Adelman, 'Preface' and 'Introduction: The problem of persistence in Latin American history', in Adelman, ed., *Colonial legacies: the problem of persistence in Latin American history* (New York, NY, and London, 1999), pp. x–xi, 12–13.

[183] Fernando López-Alves, *State formation and democracy in Latin America, 1810–1900* (Durham, NC, and London, 2000), p. 80.

[184] Fontana, *La crisis del antiguo régimen*, p. 29; Costeloe, *Response to revolution*, p. 150; Juan Sempere y Guarinos captured the prevailing pessimistic mood which pervaded subsequent historiography: 'the emancipation of Spain's colonies … would be a most ruinous blow to the metropolis not only for the loss of silver from its inexhaustible mines, but rather because of the loss of markets for peninsular products and manufactures, which will lose out to foreign competitors, particularly England'. See *Consideraciones sobre las causas de la grandeza y la decadencia de la monarquía española* [1826] (Alicante, 1998), p. 235.

[185] Leandro Prados de la Escosura, *De imperio a nación: crecimiento y atraso económico en España (1780–1930)* (Madrid, 1988), pp. 30–1, 93, 243; this view has been challenged by Jordi Malaquer de

This revision was challenged, in turn, as historians recognized the cultural, political, and economic utility of colonies in nineteenth-century Spain. Capitulation at Ayacucho did not vanquish the long-indulged imperial imagination, though diplomatic recognition was bestowed grudgingly following Isabel II's accession in 1834.[186] While Spain might sporadically intervene militarily in post-independent American affairs,[187] its chief response to defeat was the consolidation, reorganization, and reconcentration of its commercial, agricultural, and military interests in the remaining overseas dominions, *España Ultramarina*. Composed of Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines and, after 1865, Santo Domingo, each was considered an integral part of the Spanish state and nation.

Far from a 'feeble relic of its former greatness', recent work has shed light on the vigorous renewal of the colonial project in the 1830s and has suggested the resilience of the peninsula's bonds with *España Ultramarina*. Though Spain began its liberal age shorn of most of its colonies and deprived of exclusive access to the precious metals of Peru, Mexico, and New Granada, it preserved its monopoly in Cuba and Puerto Rico as a reserve for its less competitive exports. It also reaped the economic benefits of colonial commodities whose harvest required the superabundance of forced labour. By 1870, for example, the 370,000 slaves of Cuba harvested 40 per cent of the world's sugarcane. Cuba remained the peninsula's third largest export market, behind Britain and France, throughout the nineteenth century.[188] So important was Cuba to Spain's economy and to its sense of national prestige that Prime Minister Antonio Cánovas, in 1897, just months before his assassination, would assert that it was 'Spain's Alsace-Lorraine'.[189]

Motes, who argued that it was only after relinquishing its last colonies in 1898 that Spain's economic modernization began in earnest, emerging from defeat at the hands of the United States with little foreign debt and a devalued *peseta*, both of which created conditions for increased investment in the peninsular economy. See his *España en la crisis de 1898: de la gran depresión a la modernización económica del siglo XX* (Barcelona, 1999). For a review of the most recent literature on this topic, see Christopher Schmidt-Nowara, 'Silver, slaves, and sugar: the persistence of Spanish colonialism from absolutism to liberalism', *Latin American Research Review*, 39 (2004), pp. 196–210.

[186] Technically, final military defeat occurred with the surrender of the fortress of Callao, Peru, on 23 Jan. 1826. Negotiations to recognize the independence of new American states were opened in 1835 with those nations which chose to apply: Mexico (1836), Ecuador (1840), Chile (1844), Venezuela (1845), Bolivia (1847), and so on. Honduras was the last (1895). See Anna, *Spain and the loss of America*, p. 294; and M. A. Burkholder and L. Johnson, *Colonial Latin America* (6 edn, Oxford and New York, NY, 2006), p. 377

[187] Most notably its spectacular, failed invasion of Mexico in 1829, successful reincorporation of Santo Domingo (1861–5), 1864 seizure of Peru's guano-producing Chincha islands, and 1866 bombardment of Valparaiso, Chile; on the latter two episodes, see the well-researched but somewhat outdated book by William Columbus Davis, *The last* conquistadores*: the Spanish intervention in Peru and Chile, 1863–1866* (Athens, GA, 1950).

[188] Christopher Schmidt-Nowara, *Empire and antislavery: Spain, Cuba, and Puerto Rico, 1833–1874* (Pittsburgh, PA, 1999), pp. 2–5; slave figure is from 1862. The 1870s figure is difficult to ascertain due to the advent of the Ten Years War (1868–78). See Laird Bergad, Fe Iglesias García and María del Carmen Barcia, *The Cuban slave market, 1790–1880* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 32.

[189] Quoted in Sebastian Balfour, *The end of the Spanish empire, 1898–1923* (Oxford, 1997), p. 7.

Accompanying the reliance on the Cuban economy, however, was the flagrant exclusion of colonials from representative government, a subordinate status symbolized by the expulsion of Cuban, Puerto Rican, and Filipino deputies from the *Cortes* in 1837 and the creation, enshrined in the constitutions of 1837 and 1845, of 'exceptional rule' in the colonies until 'special laws' could be drafted. [190] Though Spain would forfeit its Caribbean possessions and the Philippines to the voracious United States at the end of the century, its imperial ambitions were not yet extinguished. It would cling to Spanish Guinea (now Equatorial Guinea) until 1968 and remain ensconced in parts of Morocco, including Western Sahara, until 1973. Even today, Spain's retention of Ceuta and Melilla draws protests from the governments of North African countries.

Another emerging field of enquiry concerns how the transition from the transatlantic Spanish monarchy was remembered, represented, and moulded into a 'useable' past in the nineteenth century in both Spain and in Latin America. Recent research suggests that the indigenous, pre-Conquest past, ubiquitous as a symbol of freedom, heroism, liberty, and the illegitimacy of Spanish rule during the revolutionary period,[191] lost its lustre and political utility in independence's aftermath. As the new political regimes consolidated control and became entrenched, the creole patriot's temptation to regard himself as a 'son of Montezuma' or 'avenger of Atahualpa' diminished whereas figures and imagery drawn from the late colonial and revolutionary epochs were recollected and belatedly endowed with heroic status as part of the elite's exaltation of a *patria criolla*.[192] In Argentina, for example, San Martín has figured in 44 per cent of all stamps depicting political figures.[193]

But whereas the 'precursors' were deified, historians in the early nationalist period recognized that the colonial experience was 'precisely what republics had to transcend'. Colonialism remained 'something against which a new order had to be built'.[194] Similarly, little nostalgia was expressed for the municipality, the

[190] Schmidt-Nowara, *Empire and antislavery*, pp. 15, 54–7, 70.

[191] Earle, 'Creole patriotism', pp. 125–45 passim. Of course, as Anthony Pagden points out, there were dissident voices: Bolívar, notably, found anathema what he considered an irrationalism patriotism based on an illusory and savage past, fuelled by a radical, fanatical Catholicism. See Pagden, 'The end of empire: Simón Bolívar and the liberal republic', in Pagden, *Spanish imperialism and the political imagination*, p. 138.

[192] Rebecca Earle, '*Sobre héroes y tumbas*: national symbols in nineteenth-century Spanish America', *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 85 (2005), pp. 375–416; As Earle elucidates, 'within decades of independence, some politicians had begun to use the purported apathy of the populace, supposedly demonstrated during the war, to justify restrictions to political power'. See Earle, 'Creole patriotism', p. 144.

[193] Centeno, *Blood and debt*, p. 207.

[194] Jeremy Adelman, 'Colonialism and national histories: José Manuel Restrepo and Bartolomé Mitre', in Christopher Schmidt-Nowara and J. M. Nieto-Phillips, eds., *Interpreting Spanish colonialism: empires, nations and legends* (Albuquerque, NM, 2005), pp. 183–4; for an analytical survey of Argentine efforts to understand colonial legacies in the national period, see Tulio Halperín-Donghi, 'Argentines ponder the burden of the past', in Adelman, ed., *Colonial legacies*; for Chile, see James Wood, 'The French and Chilean revolutions in the imagination of Francisco Bilbao, 1842–1851', *Atlantic Studies*, 3 (2006), pp. 7–23.

mitochondria of local identity production, whose institutional shell had sheltered the incipient independence movements. In the nineteenth century, liberal regimes suppressed elected local governments in favour of appointed governors and mayors. Elected local government would not reappear, in many cases, until the final decade of the twentieth century.[195]

If in Latin America, the Spanish legacy was deemed an obstacle to overcome, in peninsular Spain the now-diminished empire became a much venerated achievement. A normally fractious political and intellectual life achieved rare unanimity when the imperial past was invoked.[196] Generally, it was held that inclusiveness and assimilation were unique features of Spanish colonialism and that, whether through miscegenation or diffusion of 'civilization', conquered peoples had been incorporated into the Spanish nation: 'apparent conflicts created through war, slavery, despotic rule and racial heterogeneity were harmonized into a coherent whole by language, religion, laws and racial mixture'.[197] This view persisted into the early twentieth century. Ortega y Gasset, to cite but one cultural luminary, would describe colonialism, with the notable exception of the duplicity and carnage that marred the initial conquest, as 'the only true, substantial, great [historical] deed that Spain [had] achieved'.[198] Imperial narratives never were 'simply an academic matter', but rather constituted a 'central chapter in the process of constructing Spanish nationalism'.[199] It is the 'imperial ideal's continuing validity' after the loss of most of America, not its waning appeal, that attracts the gaze of contemporary historians.[200]

VI

In spite of two centuries of analysis and fierce debate, at least six aspects of the dissolution of the Spanish monarchy have not been explored fully by historians.

[195] Coatsworth, 'Economic and institutional trajectories', p. 41.

[196] On historiographical disputes in nineteenth-century Spain, see José Álvarez Junco, *Mater dolorosa: la idea de España en el siglo XIX* (Madrid, 2001).

[197] Christopher Schmidt-Nowara, *The conquest of history: Spanish colonialism and national histories in the nineteenth century* (Pittsburgh, PA, 2006), pp. 40–1; this tendency, of course, was a revival of eighteenth-century Spanish attempts to counter the 'black legend' concerning Spain's rapacious conduct in the conquest and colonization of the New World. See María Teresa Nava Rodríguez, 'Robertson, Juan Bautista Muñoz y la academia de la historia', *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia*, 187 (1990), pp. 435–56; Ricardo García Cárcel, *La leyenda negra: historia y opinión* (Madrid, 1992); Cañizares-Esguerra, *How to write the history of the New World*; and Javier Yagüe Bosch, 'Defensa de España y conquista de América en el siglo XVIII: Cadalso y Forner', *Dieciocho*, 28 (2005), pp. 121–40.

[198] José Ortega y Gasset, *España invertebrada: bosquejo de algunos pensamientos históricos* (Madrid, 1922), pp. 163–5. He lamented, however, that it was accomplished without 'conscious aim' or 'deliberate tactics' and failed to endow the *pueblos* it 'engendered' with 'superior discipline, *cultura vivaz* or progressive civilization'.

[199] Antonio Feros, '"Spain and America: all is one": historiography of the conquest and colonization of the Americas and national mythology in Spain, c. 1892–1992', in Schmidt-Nowara and Nieto-Phillips, eds., *Interpreting Spanish colonialism*, pp. 112, 127.

[200] Christopher Schmidt-Nowara and Josep M. Fradera, 'After "Spain": a dialogue with Josep M. Fradera on Spanish colonial historiography', in Antoinette Burton, ed., *After the imperial turn: thinking with and through the nation* (Durham, NC, and London, 2003), p. 166.

The first understudied area concerns the complexity of the late colonial state: how can historians integrate meliorist reformers who urged imperial federation, crown-led efforts to coax colonial elites into public–private partnerships, and the surprising redistributive role of Spain's fiscal apparatus into the dominant historical narratives which stress metropolitan dereliction, recalcitrance, exploitation, and impending crisis?[201] Will this revisionist understanding of the late colonial state vanquish a neo-'black legend' which attributes obstacles to capitalist development and liberal constitutionalism to Latin America's Iberian institutional heritage?[202]

The second neglected topic is the impact of, and the reaction to, the Bonapartist state's attempted reforms. How were its strenuous efforts to abolish, for example, the vestiges of feudalism, the Inquisition, the Council of Castile, and internal customs barriers perceived and analysed in America, particularly by those creoles previously complicit with the enlightened reform of the last Bourbons? Did the new states adapt 'reform from above' as a model for their new purportedly liberal polities?[203] Notwithstanding the existence of several major studies concerning the peninsula, a re-examination of Don José I's impact in America is sorely needed.[204]

The third major subject about which strikingly little is known concerns the early, 'failed' constitutional experiments, such as those of Chile (1810) and Cundinamarca (1811), ultimately abandoned or thwarted during the tumult of the revolutionary era. In differing ways, these constitutions proposed greater autonomy and extensive self-government within the context of a federal, limited monarchy composed of republican states.[205] Further research into such 'paths not

[201] For examples of these new directions, see Grafe and Irigoin, 'The Spanish empire and its legacy'; and Gabriel Paquette, *Enlightenment, governance, and reform in Spain and its empire, 1759–1808* (Basingstoke, 2008), esp. chs. 1, 2, and 4 passim.

[202] On this neo-'black legend' and institutional development, see Jeremy Adelman, 'Institutions, property, and economic development in Latin America', in Centeno and López-Alves, eds., *The other mirror*, pp. 28–9.

[203] Provocative suggestion made in McFarlane, 'Identity, enlightenment, and political dissent', p. 334; nevertheless, Alan Knight's observation should be borne in mind: *caudillos* 'remained republicans, continued to claim popular legitimacy, and never established enduring dynasties'; see Knight, 'Democratic and revolutionary traditions in Latin America', *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, 20 (2001), p. 160.

[204] While there are major works in this area, including Miguel Artola, *Los afrancesados* (Madrid, 1953); Juan Mercader Riba, *José Bonaparte, rey de España (1808–1813): estructura del estado español bonapartista* (Madrid, 1983); Juan López Tabar, *Los famosos traidores: los afrancesados durante la crisis del antiguo régimen (1808–1833)* (Madrid, 2001), no published account examines the transatlantic dimensions of Don José's reign or fully elucidates the links between the Bonapartist reform programme and the early liberal state in the peninsula. As Alejandro Nieto García tantalizingly notes, 'the administrative system of the regency of María Cristina clearly reflects the ideological inheritance of Josephism'. See Nieto García, *Los primeros pasos del estado constitucional. Historia administrativa de la regencia de María Cristina de Borbón* (Barcelona, 1996), pp. 20–1.

[205] For a stimulating essay on this subject, see José M. Portillo, 'La federación imposible: los territorios europeos y americanos ante la crisis de la monarquía hispana' in Rodríguez O., ed., *Revolución*; for an attempt to categorize the constitutions of the early national period, see Roberto

taken' may yield new insights into early nineteenth-century political culture which will serve to vanquish old teleologies which continue to plague nationalist historiography.

While recent research has elucidated the role of municipalities, the fourth underexplored topic is the role of regionalism in formation of the nation-state. In particular, one 'crucial and unfinished task' concerns how regions jostled for pre-eminence in matters of economy, politics, culture, and identity.[206] The way in which regional dynamics both propelled and stunted the formation of national states deserves further research.

The fifth significant gap in the historiography relates to the *cabecillas* (rebel band leaders) and their followers who served in the *gavillas* (gangs) that infested much of the Spanish American countryside during wars of independence. Whereas Spanish guerrillas of the peninsular war have received major re-examination,[207] insurgent royal chiefs, let alone minor figures, remain under-researched. The study of these ubiquitous groups, whose impact on the wars of independence and the post-independence political alignments was crucial, is in its infancy.[208]

The sixth lacuna concerns the pervasiveness and importance of catechisms, sermons, and ceremonies as 'essential vehicles for the construction and diffusion of values and identities' during the independence period, devices that were 'employed by both royalists and insurgents'. Some outstanding pioneering work has been completed, but further detailed studies are needed.[209] In addition to these specific scholarly concerns, broader challenges remain. Among these are the tasks of adapting and improving generalizations about colonialism, the 'age of revolution', and post-independence Latin America using new, nuanced understandings bestowed by focused case studies.

A survey of recent research indicates that, like the bonds tying together the far-flung parts of the Atlantic monarchy in the late eighteenth century, older interpretations have proven their durability, elastic enough to absorb new insights and accommodate unfamiliar evidence. Like the eighteenth-century empire, however, there are cracks in the edifice. The new interpretations discussed here strongly suggest that an exciting transformation is underway, even if its final form is not yet discernible. The scores of colloquia, conferences, and workshops planned to

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Gargarella, 'Towards a typology of Latin American constitutionalism, 1810–1860', *Latin American Research Review*, 39 (2004), pp. 141–53.

[206] Mallon, 'Decoding the parchments of the nation-state'.

[207] In a significant revisionist study, Charles Esdaile argues cogently that at the 'roots of *la guerrilla popular* lay not heroism but hunger, not daring but despair', their ranks composed of men who were 'refugees from military service, poverty, noose or prison camp, mercenary hirelings, or unwilling conscripts'; see Esdaile, *Fighting Napoleon*, pp. 120, 129; and Esdaile, ed., *Popular resistance in the French wars: patriots, partisans, and land pirates* (Basingstoke, 2005); see also John L. Tone, *The fatal knot: the guerrilla war in Navarre and the defeat of Napoleon in Spain* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1994).

[208] For more on this gap in the literature and suggestions to remedy it, see Christon I. Archer, ed., *The wars of independence in Spanish America* (Wilmington, DE, 2000).

[209] Guerra, 'Forms of communication, political spaces, and cultural identities', pp. 8–9.

coincide with the bicentenary of independence could expedite the historiographical revolution.

The lamentation, however, of one of the pioneers of the study of Spanish American independence should be recalled as future research proceeds: 'we still await the synoptic view, a general synthesis which shall be full and adequate. Perhaps the time is not yet ripe. But may we not hope for an interim report?'[210] The fragmented state of the field may preclude the ultimate synthesis. Indeed, the potential dangers of synecdoche, of overarching conclusions drawn from the experience of one or several of the fragments of the Spanish Atlantic monarchy, is real and present. But the 'interim reports', if the magisterial books surveyed in this article may be described with such understatement, are now available and they have enriched scholarly understanding immeasurably. The prospect of a grand synthesis, which would integrate the complex processes from Patagonia to California into a single, seamless narrative, has never appeared more plausible.

[210] Humphreys, 'The historiography of the Spanish American revolutions', p. 105.