CAMBRIDGE LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES

The Independence of Spanish America

Jaime E. Rodríguez O.

THE INDEPENDENCE OF SPANISH AMERICA

This book provides a new interpretation of the process of Spanish American independence (1808–1826), one that emphasizes political processes and cultural continuities instead of the break with Spain. It is the first book to examine the representative government and popular elections introduced by the Spanish Constitution of 1812. Rodríguez argues that independence did not constitute an anticolonial movement, as many scholars assert, but rather formed part of the revolution within the Spanish world.

The collapse of the Spanish Monarchy following Napoleon's invasion led to the creation of a parliament, the Cortes, and the Constitution of 1812, which established a representative government for the worldwide Spanish Nation in which all free men, regardless of their race or status, became Spaniards. In America, a struggle over who would govern accompanied the political revolution of the Spanish world.

The Independence of Spanish America is a revised and expanded version of the Spanish-language work *La independencia de la América española* (1996). The English version explains the nature of Hispanic political culture in greater depth than the original Spanish version. It also includes new material, based on additional research in Mexican, Spanish, and Ecuadorian archives, on the popular elections of 1812–1814 and 1820–1822.

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In Memory of
Luis A. Rodríguez S.

Contents

Preface

Although the Spanish language version of this work, *La independencia de la América española,* was written between 1993 and 1995, in one way or another I have been working on the subject for nearly a quarter of a century. My first book, *The Emergence of Spanish America: Vicente Rocafuerte and Spanish Americanism, 1808–1832* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), examined some aspects of the period. Chapter 1, entitled "The Spanish Heritage," considered the Bourbon reforms and the first constitutional period (1810–14), and chapter 2 dealt with "The Spanish Constitution Restored." In that work, I first advanced the notions that a revolution had occurred within the Spanish world and that Spanish American leaders initially "had favored the creation of a constitutional Hispanic commonwealth. But the subsequent failure of the Spanish Cortes (1810–1814 and 1820–1823) forced" them to seek independence.

Since the time of that work, I have become intrigued by the process of nation building. In particular, I was perplexed by the question of why one former colony, the United States, established a stable government and developed economically, whereas the other former colonies, the Spanish American countries, endured political chaos and economic decline during the nineteenth century. I therefore began two separate studies, one of Ecuador – the former Kingdom of Quito – and the other of Mexico – the former Viceroyalty of New Spain – in an effort to understand how those two very different regions made the transition from kingdoms of the Spanish Monarchy to independent nations.

Other concerns, among them a six-year stint as dean of graduate studies and research at the University of California, Irvine, subsequently intervened. In 1986, upon completing my administrative duties, I returned to work on a volume on the First Federal Republic of Mexico. But conversations with colleagues from Mexico, Canada, and the United States convinced me that I, as well as other scholars, lacked a genuine understanding of the causes, the process, and the consequences of the independence movement. I therefore returned to the archives in Mexico, Ecuador, and Spain to reexamine the period. Also, I decided to engage other colleagues concerned with similar or related inquiries. Between 1987 and 1992 I organized a

series of symposia dedicated to various aspects of the question. The first considered *The Independence of Mexico and the Creation of the New Nation* (Los Angeles: UCLA Latin American Center, 1989); the second, *The Revolutionary Process in Mexico* (Los Angeles: UCLA Latin American Center, 1990); the third, *Patterns of Contention in Mexican History* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1992); the fourth, *The Evolution of the Mexican Political System* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1993); and the fifth, *Mexico in the Age of the Democratic Revolutions, 1750–1850* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1994). The symposia raised more questions than they answered, but they proved extremely useful in opening new avenues of inquiry.

As a result of my work on the period, Clara Lida, then editor of the journal *Historia Mexicana,* invited me to contribute a historiographical essay on Spanish American independence for a special issue she was preparing on the occasion of the Quincentenary. In the resulting article, entitled "La independencia de la América española," I surveyed the literature, concluding that independence had not constituted an anticolonial movement but was part of a political revolution in the Spanish world and the dissolution of the Spanish Monarchy. The essay merited the praise of a number of colleagues, among them Manuel Miño Grijalva, who recommended to Alicia Hernández Chávez, president of the Fideicomiso Historia de las Américas, that I be invited to write a volume on the subject. Professor Hernández Chávez kindly agreed and proved to be patient and supportive as I worked on the book. I am most grateful to her for granting permission to publish an English language edition.

This work is a revised and expanded version of the earlier volume. I have corrected errors that unfortunately crept into the Spanish language edition. Since it is my contention that Spanish America was not a colony of Spain but an integral part of the Spanish Monarchy, a heterogeneous confederation, in this edition I have taken the opportunity to eliminate words that might suggest colonial status, such as *colony, colonial, empire,* or *imperial,* that appeared in the first. Instead, I have introduced terms such as *Spanish Monarchy, Crown,* and, after the Monarchy collapsed in 1808, *government in Spain* to refer to the various entities that administered the Spanish Monarchy during the period. As a result of questions from colleagues who kindly read the original manuscript, I have provided additional explanations in several parts of the work, among them the reasons why the rural masses supported the Crown and the changing nature of the autonomous juntas in America. Finally, I have incorporated additional research that I conducted in Spain, Mexico, and Ecuador after the Spanish language edition went to press.

The intellectual debts I have incurred in preparing this book are numerous. First, I should like to acknowledge the influence of *mi maestra,* Nettie Lee Benson. Her pioneering research of Spanish and Mexican politics has illuminated my path. My work also has been influenced by Virginia Guedea's studies reinterpreting Mexican politics during the 1808–21

period. In addition, I am grateful to her for encouragement, support, and advice over the years, as well as for having read the manuscript in both its English and Spanish versions with great care, having saved me from errors, and having suggested improvements. Also, I thank William F. Sater, Kathryn Vincent, Colin M. MacLachlan, Hugh M. Hamill, Jr., Paul Vanderwood, Christon I. Archer, Manuel Chust Calero, John Tutino, Peter Guardino, Mark Burkholder, Rebecca Earle, and Alan Knight, who read various versions of the work and offered valuable suggestions for its improvement. My greatest debt is to Linda Alexander Rodríguez, who has encouraged, supported, and advised me for more than three decades, and who read the present work in all its versions and whose suggestions for improvement helped clarify and enrich my analysis of independence. Of course, these generous academics are not responsible for any errors of fact or interpretation that I might have made.

The present volume is part of my effort to understand the process by which the American kingdoms of the Spanish Monarchy transformed themselves into independent nations. During the years that I have worked on this subject, I have been fortunate in receiving financial aid from the Academic Senate Committee on Research of the University of California, Irvine, the University of California Institute for Mexico and the United States (UC MEXUS), the Fulbright Foundation, and the president of the University of California in the form of a President's Humanities Fellowship. I am also grateful to the Rockefeller Foundation for its invitation to reside for five weeks in its Study and Conference Center in Bellagio, Italy, which afforded me the opportunity to read, think, and discuss my ideas about the process of independence with other colleagues.

I am grateful to Leonor Ortiz Monasterio, director of the Archivo General de la Nación de México from 1983 to 1994, and to her staff for many courtesies during those years. I also express my gratitude to the directors and staffs of the Biblioteca Nacional de México, the Centro de Estudios de Historia de México of the Foundación Cultural de Condumex (Mexico, D. F.), the Archivo del Ayuntamiento de Jalapa, the Archivo Histórico del Banco Central del Ecuador (Quito), the Archivo Municipal de Quito, the Archivo Nacional de Historia (Quito), the Archivo del Congreso de Diputados (Madrid), the Archivo Histórico Nacional (Madrid), the Archivo General de Indias (Seville), the Benson Latin American Collection (Austin), the New York Public Library, the Bancroft Library (Berkeley), the UCLA Research Library, and the UCI Library. Finally, I am grateful to Louise Calabro who navigated this volume through the dangers of the production process with great care and skill.

This work is lovingly dedicated to the memory of my father, a distinguished Ecuadorian nationalist, who would not agree with my interpretation but who, as always, would defend my right to make it.

Jaime E. Rodríguez O.

Our kings, far from having considered establishing in our Americas the modern system of colonies of other nations, not only made our [kingdoms] the equals of Spain but also granted us the best [institutions] she possessed. . . . It is evident that under the constitution granted by the kings of Spain to the Americas, these lands are kingdoms independent of her [Spain] without any other link but the king. . . . When I refer to the social pact of the Americans, I do not refer to Rousseau's implicit pact. Rather, it consists of a pact between the Kingdom of New Spain and the sovereign of Castilla. The rupture or suspension of that pact . . . results, as an inevitable consequence, in the reassumption of sovereignty by the Nation. . . . When that occurs, sovereignty reverts to its original owner.

Sevando Teresa de Mier
Madrid, ca. 1800

How different are the Spaniards and the French . . . ! How false, how perfidious, how arrogant, how cruel, how devilish the latter! . . . In contrast, the Spaniards how sincere, how loyal, how human, how kind, how religious, and how brave! I speak principally of the lower and middle classes for among the higher classes there are many who are selfish, ignorant, haughty, and bad citizens.

José Mexía Llequerica
Madrid, May 1808

We are among the first to sacrifice our meager personal and common belongings, our repose and tranquillity, our children and our families . . . in order not to submit to [Napoleon] who only merits the just anger of our Nation. . . . And . . . we are determined to shed the last drop of our blood rather than abandon the defense of God's law and our Catholic monarch [Fernando VII] (May God protect him).

Declaration of Indian Officials
Mexico City, July 1808

Since the French nation has subjugated through conquest nearly all Spain, since José Bonaparte has crowned himself king in Madrid, and, therefore, since the Junta Central, which represented our legitimate sovereign, has been extinguished, the people of this capital – faithful to God, the *patria,* and the

king – have created another [junta] equally supreme and interim . . . until H. M. recovers the Peninsula or comes to America to govern.

Marqués de Selva Alegre
Quito, August 1809

Equality! The sacred right of equality. Justice is founded upon that principle and upon granting every one that which is his. . . . The true fraternal union between European Spaniards and Americans . . . can never exist except upon the bases of justice and equality. America and Spain are two integral and constituent parts of the Spanish Monarchy. . . . Anyone who believes otherwise, does not love his *patria.*

Camilo Torres
Santa Fé de Bogotá
November 1809

Q. What is the Spanish Nation?
A. The union of all Spaniards of both hemispheres.
Q. Who are Spaniards?
A. According to the Constitution [of 1812], Spaniards are: (1) all free men born and residing in the Spanish dominions and their children; (2) foreigners who have obtained naturalization papers from the Cortes; (3) those, who without them, legally reside ten years in any town of the Monarchy; and (4) freedmen who acquire their freedom in the Spains.
Q. What is a constitution?
A. An organized collection of fundamental or political laws of a nation.
Q. Do we possess a constitution?
A. We have such an excellent one that it will make us happy if we observe it and contribute to its observance.
Q. Is the Constitution a novelty recently introduced among us?
A. No. Its principal rules had been in use earlier; but since they neither constituted a single body of law nor was their application guaranteed, those interested in violating the Constitution had caused it to fall into disuse. The Cortes have made the Constitution live again.
Q. What are the Cortes?
A. The gathering of all the deputies who represent the Nation, freely elected by the citizens to make the laws.
Q. What is a king?
A. The person in whose name everything is carried out in a monarchical government.

Q. From whom does he receive his authority?
A. From the very Nation he governs.
Q. Is the king not sovereign?
A. The king is a citizen, just like everyone else, who obtains his authority from the Nation.
Q. What are the rights [of Spaniards]?
A. Life, security, property, and equality.
Q. Could these rights be abused or abrogated?
A. Spaniards regained their rights after despotism had usurped them. The heroic efforts they made and are making to maintain their independence are convincing proof that they will not permit anyone to despoil them of their liberty, which is assured by the exact observance of the wise Constitution they have sworn [to uphold].
Q. What are the individual obligations of Spaniards?
A. Every Spaniard must love his *patria,* be just and kind, obey the Constitution, obey the laws, respect the established authorities, contribute, without any distinction, in proportion to his wealth, to the expenses of the state, and defend the *patria* with arms when called upon by the law. That is, there can be no privilege whatsoever with regards either to taxation or to military service.

Catecismo político
[Primary school text]
Cádiz, 1813

In 1810 we did what we had to. We only aspired to remain free of foreign domination and not to follow Spain's misfortune if she were lost. . . . No one knew what would be the result of Spain's struggle for her liberty, or if King Fernando would return or not to the throne of Spain. At that time we still looked to that king with expectation and hoped that some day he would end our ills. . . . But suddenly these expectations were destroyed. In Spain, [upon his return in 1814, the king] punished those who had obeyed the Cortes, and he waged a bloody war against the natives of America who, not recognizing [those Cortes] as legitimate, just as that king did, had disobeyed them. Thus, . . . we began to detest so unjust a king who without a hearing sought to destroy men, more faithful than many of those who surround him [at court].

El Censor
Buenos Aires 1816

It was for their king and lord that they were going to die, and not as rebels nor for the *patria;* they did not know what this *patria* was, nor who it was, nor what form the *patria* had; no one knew if the *patria* was a man or a woman; as for the king, he was well known, his government well established, his laws respected and faithfully observed.

Declaration of royalist Indians in Upper Peru
prior to execution by pro-independence forces
December 31, 1816

[Men of goodwill should be] seeking the happy pacification of America. Animated by the spirit of the great Spanish family and electrified by the effects of the Sacred Constitution, we will form institutions which have as their foundation the understanding of our reciprocal interests, fortified by the powerful ties of a common tongue and a common religion.

Vicente Rocafuerte
Havana, 1820

Madrid and the entire Peninsula constitute a glorious spectacle. It is an entirely free theater where the most important questions of practical politics relative to the future of Spain's America are treated.

José Miguel Ramos
Arizpe
Madrid, 1821

I love the Spanish nation like my grandmother and America like my mother. I weep to see these beloved persons destroyed.

Manuel Lorenzo de
Vidaurre
Philadelphia, 1823

Introduction

The independence of Spanish America can best be understood as part of the larger process of change that occurred in the Atlantic world in the second half of the eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries. This period has been called the *Age of Democratic Revolutions* because during that time some monarchical societies were transformed into democratic ones. That is, subjects of monarchies became citizens of nation-states. Although scholars have studied that process for the United States and France, the Spanish world has not been examined from that perspective. Most historians end the period of democratic revolutions in 1799, when Napoleon Bonaparte seized control of France.[1] The political revolutions of the Spanish world, or *Spanish Monarchy,* as it was called, however, occurred after 1808. Moreover, the independence of Spanish America did not constitute an anticolonial movement, as many assert, but formed part of both the *revolution* within the Spanish world and the *dissolution* of the Spanish Monarchy. Indeed, Spain was one of the new nations that emerged from the breakup of that world-wide polity.

The American continent underwent significant transformations in the wake of the Seven Years' War (1756–1763) when both the Spanish and British crowns reordered their possessions in America, a process known in the Spanish world as the *Bourbon reforms.* Although both Spanish and Anglo Americans objected to many of these changes, the Spanish kingdoms in the New World did not imitate their northern brethren in rebelling against the Crown. On the contrary, the Spanish Monarchy was sufficiently certain of its American subjects that it fought Great Britain during the Anglo American struggle and signed the Treaty of Paris of 1783, which granted independence to the United States. Although the Spanish Americans opposed certain aspects of the Bourbon reforms, sometimes violently, they did not

1 See, for example, the classic works of Jacques Godechot, *La Grande Nation: L'expansion révolutionnaire de la France dans le monde de 1789 à 1799,* 2 vols. (Paris: Aubier, 1956); and Robert R. Palmer, *The Age of Democratic Revolutions: Political History of Europe and America, 1760–1800,* 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959–1964).

seek separation from the Spanish Crown. Only when the Spanish Monarchy collapsed in 1808, as a result of the French invasion of the Iberian Peninsula – thirty-two years after the Anglo Americans rebelled – did the Spanish Americans insist upon home rule.

The disintegration of the Spanish Monarchy in 1808 triggered a series of events that culminated in the establishment of representative government in the Spanish world. The initial step in that process was the formation in Spain and America of local governing *juntas* (committees) that invoked the *Hispanic* legal principle that in the absence of the king, sovereignty reverted to the people. Ultimately, this process resulted in the creation of a parliament, the Cortes, and the Constitution of 1812, which established a representative government for a worldwide *Spanish Nation* in which all free men, regardless of their race or status, became Spaniards.

In America, a struggle over who should govern accompanied the political revolution of the Spanish world. The first phase of that conflict pitted European Spaniards, formerly a privileged group, against the American Spaniards (*criollos*), the New World bourgeoisie. There were divisions within as well as between these groups: Some European Spaniards supported the new order, whereas many criollos favored the old regime. The upper- and middle-class struggle for power provided an opportunity for politically discontented popular rural and urban groups to press their demands. Regional strife further complicated the political conflict within the American kingdoms. These tensions precipitated violence, civil war, and terror, offering military leaders opportunities for power, wealth, and status. Despite the significant participation of the rural and urban masses in the conflict, the American struggle for independence was fundamentally a political process that resulted in the triumph of the criollos, the New World bourgeoisie.

American efforts to obtain home rule within the Spanish Monarchy form a critical aspect of the process of independence. The New World discourse was based on the belief that the American realms were not colonies but equal and integral parts of the Spanish Crown. Law, theory, and practice all confirmed the Americans' belief that their kingdoms were coequal with the Iberian Peninsula. It was a principle the leaders of the New World insisted upon during the period following the 1808 crisis of the Spanish Monarchy. Indeed, the majority of these leaders demanded *equality* rather than *independence:* They sought *home rule,* not *separation* from the Spanish Crown. This distinction is crucial because when the documents of the epoch use the word *independence,* they generally mean *autonomy.* Only when the government in Spain refused to grant their demand for *autonomy* did most Americans opt for *emancipation.*

Perhaps the biggest obstacle to understanding the process of independence is the belief in its inevitability. The assumption that what occurred

had to happen permeates virtually every work on independence. Yet, at the time, many prominent American political leaders frequently discussed the possibility of establishing a system of federated monarchies along the lines of the early British commonwealth. Royal officials began to discuss proposals for some form of New World autonomy in 1781, and American deputies to the Spanish Cortes proposed it as a solution to the conflict as late as 1821.

The political process that resulted in Spanish American independence, part of the larger political revolution in the Spanish world, began in the latter part of the eighteenth century when the urban upper and middle classes of Spain and America sought to form a modern polity. Although the political transformation of the worldwide Spanish Monarchy also constituted part of the larger process of political change in the Atlantic world, the Hispanic movement was unique in its scope. The development of modern political thought in the Spanish world occurred throughout the vast Monarchy.

The generation of Spaniards and Americans who directed the political revolution after 1808 had been educated in the reformed institutions of the Spanish Monarchy. Although influenced by the new ideas of the Enlightenment, their views were grounded on Hispanic thought, which included the important concepts of popular sovereignty and representative government. Spain and Spanish America, a major segment of Occidental civilization, drew upon a shared Western European culture that originated in the ancient classical world. The independence of the United States and the French Revolution provided exciting examples of political change, but they did not present models radically different from those already common within Hispanic culture. The political revolution in the Spanish world, therefore, evolved within the boundaries of an idealized political legitimacy and developed a unique political culture and institutions that derived not from alien models but from the traditions and the experience of the Spanish world itself.

This work concentrates on politics and political processes. It seeks to understand Spanish American independence within the context of the broader political revolution for representative government within the Spanish world. Although it focuses on what is called *high politics,* it does not assume that *low politics* did not exist. The urban and rural lower classes possessed their own interests and concerns. Some of these, primarily those of the rural groups, have been studied. But scholars generally assume that the *campesinos* (peasants), as well as the urban poor, either did not know, understand, or care about the pressing political issues of the day. That is incorrect. Urban and rural popular groups not only knew and understood the advantages and disadvantages of what has been called the *social compact* of the Monarchy but were also keenly aware of the political revolution carried

out by the Spanish Cortes. The evidence indicates that poor people, whether urban or rural, were not only affected by high politics but also understood their interests and took action to defend them; that is, they engaged in politics.[2]

Some participated in autonomist and insurgent movements. Others took advantage of the upheavals to pursue their own concerns. Many others joined members of the urban upper and middle classes who remained loyal to the Crown. Indian communities from the highlands of southern Peru and Upper Peru, the region that experienced the great Túpac Amaru Revolt in 1780, for example, remained the Monarchy's most devoted adherents.[3] Their staunch defense of the Spanish Crown continued until

2 On the nature of mass political participation in Mexico, see Virginia Guedea, "El pueblo de México y la política capitalina, 1808 y 1812," *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos* [hereafter cited as *MS/EM*], 10:1 (Winter 1994), 27–61; my "The Constitution of 1824 and the Formation of the Mexican State" in *The Evolution of the Mexican Political System,* ed. Jaime E. Rodríguez O. (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1993), 79–82; Peter Guardino, *Peasants, Politics, and the Formation of Mexico's National State: Guerrero, 1800–1857* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996); Richard A. Warren, "Vagrants and Citizens: Politics and the Poor in Mexico City, 1808–1836" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1994). As Terry Rugeley notes: "peasant communities were receiving regular news regarding the decisions of the Cortes." *Yucatán's Maya Peasantry & the Origins of the Caste War* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996), 39.

3 José Santos Vargas, a commander of one of the pro-independence groups in Upper Peru, described an encounter with pro-royalist Indians is his diary as follows: "[Our men] surprised the royalist Indians about 2 or 3 in the morning . . .; they tied up the 11, that was all there was, none escaped; they took them to the bluff of Calayasa where they were all killed with cudgels, stones, and lances. Some, with great heroism, declared that their death mattered little. Others said that it was for their king and lord that they were going to die, and not as rebels nor for the *patria;* they did not know what this *patria* was, nor who it was, nor what form the *patria* had; no one knew if the *patria* was a man or a woman; as for the king, he was well known, his government well established, his laws respected and faithfully observed. That is how the 11 died." *Diario de un comandante de la independencia americana, 1814–1825,* ed. Gunnar Mendoza I. (Mexico: Siglo XXI, 1982), 118.

For some scholars, such a quote confirms their belief that the Indians, or the *campesinos,* did not understand the political, economic, or social implications of the struggle for independence. Jean Piel, for example, has argued that "At Junín and Ayacucho, the Peruvian soldiers on the two sides, that of the Crown and that of Independence, killed each other without a thought. To the majority the idea of an independent Peru meant nothing." Jean Piel, "The Place of the Peasantry in the National Life of Peru in the Nineteenth Century," *Past and Present,* 46 (February 1970), 116. Although Piel argues that the independence leaders did not offer the Indians socioeconomic reasons to support them to explain why the *campesinos* would "kill each other without a thought," he nonetheless considers the natives merely "cannon fodder." Such views, however, demonstrate only the lack of understanding expressed by their authors. They appear unable to ask the question of why anyone, however untutored, would be willing to die for no reason.

In discussing why some *campesinos* in Peru rebelled in the name of King Fernando VII in 1825–1828, *after* royalist forces had been defeated, Cecilia Méndez offers another, more realistic explanation: "If the Indians of Iquicha rose against Bolívar's republic, it was not because they had been 'deceived' nor because they wished to perpetuate . . . the colonial system. On the contrary. They rebelled to defend the rights and *status* which, *as Indians,* they had received from the colonial system and which the Creole republic threatened to eliminate" [emphasis in the original]. Cecilia

independence finally was achieved in 1826, eighteen years after the crisis unleashed by the collapse of the Monarchy in 1808.

This book consists of two parts. The first examines the interplay of relations between Spain and America. Chapter 1 focuses on the late-eighteenth-century cultural, institutional, and political transformations that set the stage for revolutionary changes after 1808. Chapter 2 considers the impact of the new intellectual and cultural attitudes of the eighteenth century, as well as the political crisis caused by the French invasion of the Peninsula and the destruction of the Spanish Monarchy. It also analyzes the similar responses of Spain and America to the crisis and the search for an alternative regime. Chapter 3 concentrates on the formation of a representative government, the Cortes, and its profound impact upon the Spanish world.

The second half of the book emphasizes primarily the American response to the collapse of the Spanish Crown. Chapter 4 examines the disparate reactions of those regions of the New World that did not accept the parliamentary solution to the crisis of the Monarchy. Geographic, economic, and social differences affected those responses. The chapter also demonstrates that the experiences of the American autonomist regions, although different from those of Spain and large sectors of the New World, were nevertheless influenced by the Hispanic experiment in representative government. Chapter 5 considers the failure of both Fernando VII, after his return in 1814, and the reestablished Cortes, after 1820, to restore unity in the Spanish world, as well as the vastly different experiences of *América Septentrional* (North America) and *América Meridional* (South America) in the final process of emancipation.

Although America ultimately severed its ties with the Spanish Monarchy, the leaders of the new countries remained ambivalent about their recently achieved freedom. Independence produced new and difficult challenges. The once powerful worldwide Spanish Monarchy shattered into many weak nations; the war against the French in the Peninsula and the wars of independence in America destroyed local economies and divided society. The reconsolidation of the state and the restructuring of the economy would constitute long and difficult processes both in America and in Spain.

Méndez, "Los campesinos, la independencia y la iniciación de la República. El caso de los iquichanos realistas: Ayacucho 1825–1828," in, *Poder y violencia en los Andes*, ed. Henrique Urbano (Cusco: Centro de Estudios Regionales Andinos Bartolomé de Las Casas, 1991), 184. See also her "Rebellion without Resistance: Huanta's Monarchist Peasants in the Making of the Peruvian State, Ayacucho 1825–1850" (Ph.D. diss., State University of New York at Stony Brook, 1996).

The available evidence indicates that the urban and rural masses did not serve merely as cannon fodder for their elite leaders. Clearly, they acted for their own very good reasons, some of which happened to coincide with those of the elites.

Two opposing political traditions emerged between 1808 and 1826 during the struggle for independence. One, forged in the crucible of war, emphasized executive power, and the other, based on civilian parliamentary experience, insisted upon legislative dominance. Proponents of the two traditions struggled to control the new American nations. Although military strongmen – *caudillos,* not a modern institutional military – frequently came to dominate their countries, they could not eliminate the liberal tradition of constitutional, representative government that had emerged in the Cortes of Cádiz. That tradition, together with the achievement of nationhood, remains the most significant heritage of Spanish American independence.

1

Spanish America

At the end of the eighteenth century, the Spanish Monarchy's possessions in America constituted one of the world's most imposing political structures. Its territory, which included most of the Western Hemisphere, stretched along the entire Pacific coast from Cape Horn in the south to Alaska in the north. On the east coast, it shared South America with Brazil and the Guianas, Central America with British Honduras, and North America with the United States and Canada, both of which were limited to strips of land along the Atlantic. In the Caribbean, the Spanish Crown possessed the principal islands. The Spanish Indies – generally called *America* in the eighteenth century – also included the Philippines and other islands in the Pacific.

Spanish America originally consisted of two viceroyalties, New Spain and Peru; the Crown further subdivided South America when it established the viceroyalties of New Granada and the Río de la Plata in 1739 and 1776. But the most enduring territorial units were those areas administered by the *audiencias* (high courts), often referred to as *reinos* (kingdoms). With the exception of the *audiencias* of New Spain, these were the areas that became the new nations of Spanish America. New Spain possessed two *audiencias,* Mexico and Guadalajara. The Philippines, a dependency of New Spain, enjoyed its own *audiencia,* Manila. The other *audiencias* of Spanish America consisted of Guatemala (Central America), Santa Fé de Bogotá (New Granada), Caracas (Venezuela), Quito, Charcas (Alto Peru), Lima (Peru), Santiago (Chile), Buenos Aires (Río de la Plata), and Santo Domingo (the Caribbean). Although Cuzco obtained an *audiencia* in 1787, that high court had not existed long enough when independence was achieved to consolidate the region's separate identity. The area subsequently formed part of the Republic of Peru.

In 1800 Spanish America had a population of approximately 13.6 million people, nearly half of them residing in New Spain. Although the population of Spanish America was multiracial, class rather than ethnicity became important in the most developed areas toward the end of the eighteenth century.

Population of Spanish America ca. 1800

New Spain	5,900,000
Philippines	1,000,000
Guatemala (Central America)	1,100,000
Caribbean islands	550,000
New Granada	1,000,000
Venezuela	500,000
Quito	700,000
Charcas	650,000
Peru	1,200,000
Chile	500,000
Río de la Plata	500,000
Total	13,600,000

Spanish America was a diverse and complex region. Not only were some areas, like the Viceroyalty of New Spain, more populated, developed, and prosperous than other realms, but even within kingdoms, some regions were more advanced than others.

The Spanish Crown's possessions in America may be divided for purposes of analysis into four general areas. First were the core areas of central New Spain, Guatemala, New Granada, Quito, Peru, and Upper Peru, which possessed complex economies, including commercial agriculture, manufacturing [i.e., textile *obrajes* (workshops) and other artisanal production], and some important mining regions. Second were the mainly agricultural and pastoral areas that supplied the more developed core regions, including portions of New Galicia and some parts of Central America, Chile, and the Río de la Plata. Third were the tropical areas, primarily Cuba, Puerto Rico, Venezuela, parts of coastal New Granada, Guayaquil, and some coastal regions of Peru, which were characterized by plantation agriculture, generally oriented to an export market either in Europe or in Spanish America. (Guayaquil and Venezuela, for example, found their principal market for cacao in New Spain.) New Spain also possessed important tropical regions, Veracruz and the *tierra caliente* (hot lands) on the Pacific. But these locations were integrated into the larger economy of the viceroyalty. The Philippines, although also a tropical region dependent upon New Spain, possessed a special place in that kingdom's economy because it served as an entrepôt of trade with Asia. Finally, there were the frontier regions, the Provincias Internas (interior provinces) of northern New Spain, the southern portions of Chile and the Río de la Plata, the Banda Oriental (eastern bank of the Uruguay River), and Paraguay, which served as buffers

Map 1. Spanish America, c. 1800. (From *Cambridge History of Latin America,* Vol. III, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, p. 6. Reprinted with permission.)

between the settled areas and nomadic Indians as well as other European empires.

Regional economic variations in Spanish America fostered social diversity. The core areas included significant urban groups – a varied elite of government officials, clergy, professionals, merchants, landowners, miners, and other entrepreneurs – as well as diverse artisanal and working sectors. Those regions also possessed a complex *campesinado* (peasantry) – predominantly Indian but also composed of mestizos (a mixture of Europeans and Indians), criollos, blacks, and *castas* (people of color) – which included small landowners, renters, resident workers, day laborers, and corporate villagers. Although Indians constituted the majority of the population in core areas, many were not *juridical* Indians, the members of the *repúblicas de indios* who lived in corporate villages subject to tribute. In the urban centers, the population was increasingly defined along class rather than racial lines.

Although generally similar to the core regions, the agricultural areas possessed a simpler social structure, the result of a less complex economy and a smaller population. The tropical regions, although dominated by the plantation labor force, which included large groups of blacks and *castas,* as well as smaller contingents of Indians, mestizos, and criollos, contained a comparable but smaller urban component. In many respects, tropical rural society was less differentiated than its counterpart in the core areas. The peripheral, or frontier, regions were characterized by a sharp distinction between settled groups, mostly mestizo, and the generally nomadic "barbarous Indians." They also contained a much smaller population and less social differentiation than the tropical areas.

New World society may be best understood if we analyze its structure from a socioeconomic rather than a caste perspective. The traditional static view of American society as one of estates and races, a hierarchy in descending order of European Spaniards (*peninsulares,* also known as *gachupines* in North America and *chapetones* in South America), American Spaniards, mestizos, *mulatos,* blacks, and Indians, or some variation thereof, fails to account for the dramatic social changes resulting from economic development. Rather than the *feudal* and *premodern* hierarchical structure espoused by some scholars, the late eighteenth century was, as Felipe Castro Gutiérrez has noted, an epoch of "transition from the older society ordered by socioracial estates to a new society of classes, where ethnic origin would be of little importance."[1] Thus, a modern socioeconomic structure, similar to that of Western Europe, was emerging.

1 Felipe Castro Gutiérrez, "Orígenes sociales de la rebelión de San Luis Potosí, 1767," in *Patterns of Contention in Mexican History,* ed. Jaime E. Rodríguez O. (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1992), 47. Others who advance similar views include José Luis Mirafuentes Galván, "Identidad india, legitimidad y emancipación política en el noroeste de México (Copala, 1771)," and Virginia Guedea, "De la fidelidad a la infidencia: Los gobernadores de la parcialidad de San Juan," in *Patterns of Con-*