
THE CÁDIZ LIBERAL REVOLUTION
AND SPANISH AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

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Preamble

The new countries that came to define the modern Americas emerged within the “Age of Revolution,” a historical period widely recognized, yet open to diverse periodizations. Many focus on the half century from 1775 to 1825, emphasizing the revolution of the Thirteen Colonies (1776–1783), the French Revolution (1789–1799), the Haitian revolt and independence (1791–1804), and the Spanish American independence movements (1810–1824).¹ Another common vision sees the chronological span of the Age of Revolution as the century that goes from 1750 to 1850.² From a political perspective some historians go as far back as 1688 (to include England’s “Glorious Revolution”); some are more “selective,” like Jacques Solé, who circumscribes this revolutionary era to the period from 1773 to 1804,³ some like David Armitage and Sanjay Subrahmanyam prefer a “global” Age of Revolution from 1760 to 1840,⁴

and, finally, others have no problem extending this age to include the 1848 revolutions.⁵

In this essay, I focus my analysis on the political revolution that took place in the Spanish-speaking world from 1808 to 1824. My main interest is to show the decisive influence that the Cádiz liberal experience had on the Spanish American independence movements. Without understanding this experience it is almost impossible to grasp what went on politically and intellectually in Spanish America during those sixteen years (with variations, of course, depending on the region and the years in which we focus our attention). While the Spanish American independence processes can be considered an integral part of the Atlantic revolutions, their Atlantic character stems mainly from the peninsular political revolution focused on Cádiz. This is not to say that the revolution in the *mundo hispánico* did not share broad political principles, selected ideas, and some debates with the other Atlantic revolutions; in this essay, however, I emphasize the many particular, at times unique, visions, and programs that defined political debates in the *mundo hispánico* between 1808 and 1824. They make it clear that no revolutionary sequence, no “revolutionary wave,” began in Boston, flowed to Paris, crashed in Port-au-Prince, and then flooded Mexico City, Caracas, and Buenos Aires.

The Spanish American independence movements are unintelligible from a political and intellectual perspective without understanding the events and innovations that began in Spain in 1808. After decades of wars and trade conflicts, with France usually as an ally and Britain normally as an enemy, the uprisings in several Spanish cities against Napoleon’s army in the spring of 1808 started the political crisis that turned the *mundo hispánico* upside down. In the following years, peninsular Spaniards and Spanish Americans shaped a new political vision that can be defined, albeit with varying emphases and connotations, as “liberal” and that can be encapsulated, *within the sociohistoric context of the time*, in the term “liberalism.” More precisely, I define it as *liberalismo hispánico*. In the end, the crisis of 1808 led to the loss of all of Spain’s continental territories in the New World; a loss suffered by an empire that had faced political and military decay for more than a century (even as New Spain, Cuba, and the Río de la Plata lived economic revivals); that had become increasingly dependent on France; and that, as the battle of Trafalgar definitively showed in 1805, had lost the military confrontation against England that had characterized European-Atlantic history since at least the War of Austrian Succession (1740–1748). However, no conflict of the eighteenth century was as important as the Seven Years’ War (1756–1763) in showing the Spanish Crown the need

to overhaul its full military, fiscal, and administrative structure in the New World. The British occupation of the strategic port of La Habana in 1762 revealed worrisome vulnerabilities.⁶ Yet Spain's empire carried on. Its demise in America during the first quarter of the nineteenth century was a protracted process, with military and administrative weakness countered by economic resiliency. Social upheavals also marked the second half of the Spanish American eighteenth century, as shown by the Quito insurrection of 1765 and the Túpac Amaru rebellion of 1780 and related risings. Still—and despite the search by so many “nationalist” historians to find precursors everywhere—the conflicts and debates that began in Spain in 1808 and by diverse routes led to Spanish American nations in the 1820s surprised everybody. The wars of independence were completely unexpected (as many of its protagonists recognized).

The political crisis of the mundo hispánico began in 1808 with the Napoleonic invasion and occupation of most of Spain. Two years later, the futures of Spain and Spanish America became inextricably linked to the city of Cádiz. The reasons were mostly military: its geographical location on an isolated peninsula with a very narrow access by land ensured that French armies could not capture Cádiz—while British and Spanish ships could guard and supply it from the sea. Safe from invading forces, Cádiz became the meeting place of the approximately 260 delegates from the Peninsula and overseas (all from Spanish America, but two from the Philippines) who gathered from September 1810 onward in the famous Cortes of Cádiz. From a political perspective, this Parliament radically transformed the Spanish monarchy; first through a series of decrees and then with its culminating work: the Constitution of Cádiz or 1812 Constitution, sanctioned in March of that year.⁷ In January 1814 the Cortes moved from Cádiz to Madrid, only to be dissolved by the recently restored Fernando VII in May of that same year. The dissolution of the Cortes ended the liberal revolution in the Peninsula and returned absolutism to Spain and its empire. It did not end, however, the influence of Cádiz liberalism in the mundo hispánico.

In the first section of this chapter I offer an overview of the Spanish liberal revolution and its main intellectual sources. In the second I consider how the revolution affected the Spanish American emancipation processes—which gradually turned into “independence movements.”⁸ Finally, I explore the recent historiography dealing with the mundo hispánico and the Spanish American independence movements to emphasize that a more profound understanding of Cádiz liberalism and the *revoluciones hispánicas* should lead to a more complex understanding of the “Age of Revolution.”

The Spanish Liberal Revolution

The political and social turmoil that began in Spain in 1808 and soon spread to its Americas began in the face of the invasion of the Iberian Peninsula by Napoleon's army in the fall of 1807. Officially, this was not an "invasion" because the Spanish Crown had signed the Treaty of Fontainebleau in October, permitting French troops to enter Spanish territory on their way to invade Portugal. Soon, however, the supposed transit became an occupation: a tense calm lasted for several months, until the people of Madrid revolted against the French garrison on May 2, 1808. Three weeks later, when the *Gazeta de Madrid* spread the news to several other Spanish cities of the so-called "abdications" of Bayonne, a general insurrection began.⁹ The presence of Napoleon's army in Spanish territory then became a full-fledged occupation. From that moment, the traditional alliance between Spain and France that had persisted during almost all of the eighteenth century, formalized through several Bourbon *pactos de familia*, came to an end. For the next six years the Peninsula was the scene of a war so harrowing that Goya's famous depiction of it (*Los desastres de la guerra*) became an enduring symbol of the senseless and inexhaustible violence of all wars.

The war with France meant that the Spanish army and people had to face the most powerful army of the time. Yet in an unexpected and unique way, the military conflict became a political revolution. During the first two years the revolution was led by a variety of local juntas, later coordinated with much difficulty by a Junta Central that suddenly dissolved in January 1810 in the face of political adversities and defeats against the French army. To that point, the events taking place in the Peninsula did not have a political label. That changed during 1810 when the political group with the upper hand in the Cortes that gathered in Cádiz became known as *liberales*. The extent and depth of the changes that the Cortes designed for Spain and Spanish America are so vast that it is difficult to detail them in a few pages. I will first outline important elements of the political situation in the Peninsula between 1808 and 1814, then proceed to engage the main political tenets of the "first Spanish liberalism," and finally explore key doctrinal and intellectual sources.¹⁰ Together, these three elements should give a clear idea of the revolutionary character of first Spanish liberalism while revealing of some of its tensions and ambiguities.

The liberal revolution of 1808 to 1814 derived some of its main traits from key aspects of Spanish society at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The extraordinary power wielded by the *valido* Manuel Godoy (Carlos IV's first minister for fifteen years) was increasingly resented; in fact, the Spanish Crown's legitimacy and power declined markedly during Godoy's tenure. Legitimacy plummeted for two main reasons. The first one was the Crown's increasing



MAP 2.1. The Cádiz Constitution and Spanish America, ca. 1812–1814

dependence on Napoleon. The second one was the all too public confrontation between Carlos IV, king since 1789, and his eldest son, Fernando. These confrontations led to the abdication by Carlos to his son after the so-called *motín* (riot) of Aranjuez in March 1808 (a rising planned by Fernando's supporters).¹¹ The Spanish monarchy was losing respect and legitimacy at the very moment when the French army was occupying almost all of Spain's peninsular territory.

This uncertain legitimacy opened the way for the *dos años cruciales* (two crucial years), as François-Xavier Guerra called 1808 and 1809. A profound ideological transformation affecting the whole mundo hispánico began in the biennium that preceded the Cortes of Cádiz and the beginning of the Spanish American emancipation processes.¹² Militarily, the years 1808–1810 brought a long list of French victories on Spanish battlefields (notwithstanding the famous Spanish victory at Bailén in July 1808). In the political realm the Junta Central had a difficult time constituting itself as the head of the numerous local juntas while Fernando was a prisoner of Napoleon at Bayonne.¹³

For a long time, Spanish historiography presented these local juntas, that organized the fighting against the French, as “popular,” that is, formed by members of all levels of society, including the least advantaged. It is now clear that the vast majority of them were formed by the notables of each city or town. Still, the crisis of 1808 started as a popular revolt against the French and, in the context of the moment, most juntas could not work without popular support. At the same time, the Spanish war against French occupation made the term “guerrilla” synonymous with armed popular resistance.¹⁴ This pivotal period of Spanish history was therefore shaped in important ways by social movements of popular origin. Such foundations were reflected, explicitly or implicitly, in the ideology the liberals developed from 1808 through 1814; they were a central element of Spanish patriotism during the war—and of an enduring Spanish nationalism.

In January 1810, the Junta Central, overwhelmed by military defeats, without economic resources, and facing a campaign of discredit by internal enemies, dissolved itself. In the process, it first made its most important decision: to summon the election of Cortes. The institution was no novelty: Cortes had existed in several Spanish kingdoms since the Middle Ages, gathering representatives of cities and towns to discuss, sanction, or limit royal decisions. But there was novelty in the Cortes that gathered in Cádiz in 1810: the vast majority of the members would be elected by much of the adult male population, something unprecedented in Spain (or in any other part of the world). No less important, the Americas were included in the new representative body (though

the method of electing them was different, to ensure that deputies from the peninsula would hold a strong majority). As mentioned and although numbers vary depending on the date and the issue under discussion, in total around 260 deputies participated in the extraordinary Cortes that opened in Cádiz in September 1810. Of them, about sixty were Spanish Americans—though Spanish America's population was larger than Spain's.¹⁵

The participation of the American representatives in the debates was very important; several topics would not have been discussed at all or would have been debated very differently without the Americans' presence. But they were a minority, and they were defeated at every turn when votes came on the most important economic or political issues (i.e., free trade or political autonomy for their territories). Despite their active participation in several of the most important debates, the *direct* contributions of Spanish American deputies to the 384 articles of the final version of the Cádiz Constitution were limited. We will return to the document later. At this point, it is important to look at Cádiz, the city that became the head and the heart of the Spanish liberal revolution.

As mentioned, Cádiz was the seat of the Spanish government from 1810 to 1814 for purely geo-military reasons. Still, it is important to recognize the exceptionality of the city within Spain. It was a port and by far the most important point of contact of the Peninsula with Spain's Americas. This brought a constant circulation of goods, persons, and ideas from across the world, and the presence of merchants, bankers, intellectuals, and politicians of diverse nationalities. Cádiz was a cosmopolitan city, a place used to "other" ways of thinking, with the vitality of any port where business is vibrant—and in the eyes of many visitors a very beautiful city. Lord Byron, for example, wrote in 1809: "Cadiz, sweet Cadiz!—it is the first spot in the Creation. The beauty of its streets and mansions are only excelled by the loveliness of its inhabitants."¹⁶ Cádiz was not a "traditional" Spanish city. How "untraditional" it was can be inferred by the revolution it hosted and by the reaction of the majority of Spaniards when Fernando VII returned to the Peninsula from his captivity in France and destroyed all that the Cortes had done. In fact, in May 1814 the king issued a decree stating that Spaniards should behave as if the Cortes had never existed.¹⁷ Most Spaniards, exhausted by six years of war and skeptical about the liberals' political innovations, acquiesced in the fall of liberalism (until 1820, when liberals returned to power and the 1812 Constitution was reinstated).

Still, what happened in Cádiz between 1810 and 1814 cannot be explained mainly by the characteristics of the city, unorthodox as it was within the Spain of 1810. What went on in the port has to be explained first by the men who shaped the liberal revolution. They were, by any standard, a small group—in

fact, a very small group of men. Any list can be extended to include dozens of names, but the main protagonists of the Spanish liberal revolution in Cádiz were few: among the *peninsulares*, I would mention Manuel José Quintana, Agustín de Argüelles, José María Queipo de Llano (better known as the count of Toreno), Diego Muñoz Torrero, Álvaro Florez Estrada, and, with hindsight and from a distance (for he left Spain for England in 1810), José María Blanco White. Among the Spanish American representatives with unequivocal liberal perspectives, I would highlight José Mejía Lequerica, José Miguel Ramos Arizpe, José Miguel Guridi, and Joaquín Fernández de Leiva. On this short list, all but Quintana, Flórez Estrada, and Blanco White were deputies in the Cortes. Four were priests (Muñoz Torrero, Blanco White, Ramos Arizpe, and Guridi), five had studied law (Quintana, Flórez Estrada, Argüelles, Mejía Lequerica, and Fernández de Leiva) and one was a noble (Toreno). Such a list, revealing in some respects (for example, the weight of churchmen in the Spanish liberal revolution), is clearly insufficient. It ignores the hundreds of other men who enabled key achievements and spread important ideas. Many deputies contributed proposals, arguments, and votes to shape Cádiz liberalism, although most did so in “selective” ways, depending on the issue under discussion. On questions concerning Spanish America, Peninsulars and Americans were often on different sides.

The men listed above could not have led the Cádiz liberal revolution without the unprecedented situation created by the 1808 crisis. The absence of the king, the occupation of most Spanish territory by the French army, the popular turmoil provoked by the war against Napoleon, the British economic and military support, the *de facto* freedom of the press that existed in the Peninsula since the beginning of the *crisis hispánica*, and last but not least, the widespread discontent with Godoy and the way he handled the monarchy for years, all combined to create an exceptional “breeding ground.” Among these elements, the liberty to publish political texts was paramount: from the spring of 1808 the Spanish press became an open and vibrant political forum.¹⁸

Liberal leaders quickly established a direct link between the war against Napoleon and the political revolution they were trying to forge—*nuestra revolución* (our revolution). A major political crisis, popular participation in uprisings all over the Peninsula, the religious character of the war against the French (considered atheists by many Spaniards), and freedom of the press became an explosive combination. If we add the unlimited devotion of the Spanish people to the absent king Fernando (known as *El Deseado*, “the Desired One”), the concentration in the city of Cádiz of Spaniards looking for a political change, and the fact that for the first time in Spanish history elected Cortes were in perma-

ment session working on a new constitution, we can get an idea of life in “sweet Cadiz” during the liberal revolution.

In any case, while this revolution was the result of the participation of many people, at its core was the small number of deputies identified as liberales. For the first time, the term “liberal” defined a political group. From Cádiz, the term extended to Spanish America, then across Europe and, eventually, to the rest of world.¹⁹

The first Spanish liberalism mixed traditional and revolutionary elements. In new historical circumstances, traditional elements gained strong reformist connotations and led to revolutionary consequences. Karl Marx saw the ambiguous nature of the Cádiz Constitution as a combination of the old and the new in which the latter prevailed. For him, the document was a compromise between the “liberal ideas of the eighteenth century” and “the obscure traditions of theocracy”; the fusion made him wonder how such a radical document came out “of the old monastic and absolutist Spain.”²⁰

The main tenets of the first Spanish liberalism are centered in the following constitutional articles: national sovereignty (art. 3), protection of individual rights (art. 4), purpose of government (“the happiness of the Nation and the well-being of the individuals that compose it,” art. 13), division of powers (arts. 15–17), national representation (art. 27), indirect electoral system in three levels (arts. 34–103), inviolability of individual liberty by the king (art. 172, section 11), fair administration of criminal justice (arts. 286–308), inviolability of each person’s home (art. 306), general taxation (art. 339), national education (arts. 366–370), and, last but not least, freedom of the press (art. 371). Many of these stipulations may not seem new, to the extent they had precedents in the British legislation emanating mainly from the “Glorious Revolution” (1688–1689), the Constitution of the United States (1787), or the French constitutions that came out of the revolution of 1789.

Still, some provisions of the Cádiz Constitution were revolutionary from any perspective: for example, the wide extension of the franchise and the inclusion of the Americas’ indigenous peoples as citizens. Ultimately, the revolutionary character of any constitution comes from the prevailing sociopolitical conditions in which it sees light. The Cádiz Charter came out of a global monarchy (including the Philippines) that had worked for time immemorial under principles of divine right. In that context, the Constitution of 1812 brought a revolutionary rebalancing of the power of God, the rights of the pueblos in Cortes, and a people suddenly in arms against ungodly French usurpers. The core political, social, and cultural values that sustained the Antiguo Régimen in Spain and its empire for centuries were reworked in transforming ways.

Marx's perception of the radicalism of the Cádiz Constitution was right; its novelty built on traditional elements that explain the ideological ambiguity he read in the document. The main argument against the constitution's revolutionary character has focused on article 12, establishing Catholicism as the exclusive religion and forbidding any other. Other articles in the charter point in the same direction: articles 35–58 on the organization of elections at the parish level (thus overseen by local priests) and article 249, maintaining the legal privileges of the clergy. If simple claims of divine right ended with the declaration of national sovereignty the Cortes made on its first day (September 24, 1810), the recognition of God's ultimate power and of Catholic rights held strong.

Many historians have focused on article 12 to question the depth of the first Spanish liberalism. But if Spanish political traditions and new historical circumstances are taken into consideration, this position is untenable. It ignores Spanish history since at least the end of the fifteenth century. Limiting the power of the monarch with a written constitution was a radical turn that did not require a denial of God's rights or the Church's roles. And the Realpolitik of re-creating government in the face of a foreign invasion and broad popular mobilization also inhibited any explicit turn against the Church. As leading liberals like Argüelles and Toreno argued years later to justify their less than radical position regarding the Church, many of the changes pressed by the constitution were going to face adversity within Spanish society (as was the case); a proclamation of religious tolerance would have undermined the whole liberal project.²¹

Still, many decrees issued by the Cortes before the constitution was sanctioned in March 1812 did diminish the power of the Church, seeking to reduce its size and limit its power. The abolition of the Inquisition was a major liberal accomplishment. The six articles of title IX (arts. 366–371) are equally important: education at all levels became the responsibility of the government and a "General Direction of Studies" was created to review and control public education (art. 369). Education came under the oversight of continuing Cortes that will "legislate on everything that has to do with [this] important object" (art. 370). Article 371 also guaranteed freedom of the press, ending Church censorship. It is difficult to exaggerate the importance of these articles in promoting a secularization that can be considered timid only by those blind to the role the Church and the power of Catholicism in Spanish society—historically and still in 1810. Taking education from the Church was an indispensable step toward the kind of society the liberales wanted for Spain and its overseas territories.²² The 1812 Cádiz Constitution maintained Catholicism, but simultaneously ended the exclusive role of the Church in education, the press, and public discourse.

A good way to gauge what national sovereignty, political equality, separation of powers, individual rights, elections, and a national system of education meant in peninsular Spain and its territories in America and Asia is the reaction of the Church to the Cádiz Constitution. Clerical opposition could not have been more adamant or more vocal. It is impossible to explain the reception of Fernando VII on his return to Spain in 1814 and the ease with which he reinstated absolutism without the total support of the clerical hierarchy. (The same applies to the army; in fact, in the heat of the moment its support was even more decisive for the return of absolutism.) It should be remembered, however, that several priests played central roles in the Cortes, either designing many liberal measures or supporting them wholeheartedly. Their participation contrasts with the staunch and permanent antiliberal position of the Church hierarchy in every domain of political and social life (an opposition that continued throughout the nineteenth century, and beyond).

The actions of Fernando VII when he returned and reinstated absolutism in 1814 also give a good measure of the radical significance of the Cádiz Constitution. Much has been written about the alliance between “the Throne and the Altar” in eighteenth-century Spain. The alliance was tested by the “regalist” reforms of Carlos III; but after his death in 1788 and then in reaction to the French Revolution, the Spanish Crown and Church grew closer under Carlos IV. If we add the widespread belief among the Spanish people that the French were anti-Catholic and the profound Catholicism of Fernando VII, it is no surprise that the defeat of the French in 1814 brought a renewal of an intimate alliance between king and Church in Spain.

This exploration of the complex relationship among Cádiz liberals, Catholicism, and the Church highlights the role of the 1812 Constitution as revolutionary—within Spanish history and Spanish tradition. Analysts coming from other traditions cannot claim that Cádiz liberalism copied Anglo-American and French precedents—and malign it for not copying their anticlerical examples. In this and many other ways, Hispanic liberalism was uniquely revolutionary.

What were the main intellectual sources of the first Spanish liberalism? The most important are scholasticism, the modern school of Natural Law, Spanish historic nationalism (*nacionalismo histórico*), the Spanish Enlightenment, and finally French constitutional thought (especially the Constitution of 1791).²³ These currents reveal the eclecticism of Spanish liberalism. Let us briefly outline the importance of each.

On scholasticism, during the crisis hispánica of the early nineteenth century it is better to refer to “neoscholasticism.” The main neoscholastic authors “present”

in the Cádiz Cortes were Francisco de Vitoria (1485–1546), Juan de Mariana (1536–1624), and Francisco Suárez (1548–1617), thinkers often identified with the School of Salamanca. As Quentin Skinner has shown, these authors led a revival of Thomism that made very important contributions to the development of modern political thought. They laid the foundations of social contract theory and took the notion of consent to new levels of development.²⁴ However, if Vitoria, Mariana, and Suárez were present in Cádiz, it was not mainly because of the idea of consent, but regarding four related questions that were on the Cortes's agenda due to the French occupation: the ultimate locus of power, the sovereignty of the pueblos (cities, towns, and other communities), the subsequent limits of kingly power, and the consequent right of the pueblos to resist any usurpation of sovereignty. The neoscholastics gave these topics different connotations, but all insisted on the preeminence of the community as the foundation of political legitimacy.²⁵ Their presence in the debates of the Cortes was in a certain way inevitable; Vitoria, Mariana, and Suárez were essential to the curricula of every Spanish and Spanish American university. They were, in other words, part of the “intellectual baggage” of the vast majority of the Cádiz deputies. The sovereignty of the pueblos, derived ultimately from God, was an enduring and very much debated Spanish tradition; it did not have to be imported or copied from anywhere.

The important exponents of modern Natural Law were many; the best-known in Spain during the second half of the eighteenth century were Grotius (1583–1645), Pufendorf (1632–1694), Barbeyrac (1644–1744), and Vattel (1714–1767). The neo-Thomists rigorously maintained the traditional scholastic hierarchy of Eternal, Divine, Natural and human law. For them, Natural Law was a reflection of Eternal Law—an “implant” in men to understand the designs of God.²⁶ This understanding of Natural Law began to change when Grotius saw it as a dictate of reason, of the rational nature of man; for him, the key was not conformity with nature, but conformity with *rational* nature.²⁷

Several proponents of modern Natural Law were introduced into Spanish universities in the 1770s, shaping the visions of many political thinkers as the nineteenth century began. In the Cádiz Cortes, two of the most important theses of what Joaquín Varela Suanzes calls *iusnaturalismo racionalista* came up in several debates, especially regarding the state of nature and the social contract.²⁸ Closely linked to rationalist Natural Law is another important source of the first Spanish liberalism: the constitutional thought contained, implicitly or explicitly, in the works of French thinkers like Montesquieu, Rousseau, and Sieyès. These authors were also present in the Cádiz debates, albeit in varied disguises. In the case of Rousseau, contemporary historiography is cautious

when calibrating his influence on Spanish liberalism. His literary and pedagogic ideas influenced the Spanish Enlightenment, no doubt; but his politics were challenged, and become hard to discuss and assess since the French Revolution and even more after the occupation by Napoleon's army in 1808.

In this regard, the relative openness of the Spanish Crown to the books and ideas coming from its Bourbon ally and neighbor came to a drastic halt in 1789. The count of Floridablanca, one of the most important ministers of the period, closed the border to stop revolutionary material from entering Spain. The closure was not fully effective, but the political reaction of the Spanish government and its increasingly conservative stance toward revolutionary France are evident. Between 1790 and 1792 the most "progressive" members of the Spanish government lost their posts: Cabarrús, Jovellanos, Campomanes, and Aranda. The French Revolution thus fortified the ideology, the interests, and the political position of the Church and of the most conservative sectors of Spanish society.

As Emilio La Parra showed in his biography of Godoy, it is true that on questions of regalism and some economic goals there was no rupture of the Spanish Enlightenment between Carlos III and Carlos IV. However, there is no denying that in other aspects the arrival of Godoy to power in 1790 stultified winds of change that had flourished under Carlos III.²⁹ As Antonio de Maravall and Antonio Elorza showed long ago, some Spanish authors made enlightened and advanced political proposals in the 1780s (León del Arroyal, Manuel de Aguirre, and Valentín de Foronda among them). Still, the limited diffusion of their work and the notion, present in all of them, that the king had to be the center and arbiter of political reforms, make it difficult to see a direct link between the Spanish Enlightenment and the Cádiz Cortes, that were so adamant in limiting the king's power.³⁰ The links between the Spanish Enlightenment, a rationalist movement focused on socioeconomic (i.e., nonpolitical) reform, and the Cádiz political revolution are not as easy to establish as scholars suggested for a long time, and some historians still do. The Enlightenment was primarily a protracted intellectual process focused on administrative and economic reforms that aimed to bolster the monarchy; Cádiz was first and foremost a political revolution that aimed to limit the monarchy, turn it into a constitutional regime, expel the French, and hold the empire together.

A lot of ink has been spilled on the purported influence of the French Constitution of 1791 on the Spanish Charter of 1812. Was the Cádiz text an imitation of the 1791 document? The French text had clear influences on the Cádiz Constitution, but there were also blatant differences regarding certain aspects of government, political values, and ideological visions. Most notably, a deep

Spanish historical perspective—the *historicismo nacionalista* discussed in what follows—justifies the Cádiz text, while a tabula rasa mentality prevails in all the French constitutions drafted in the shadow of the revolution of 1789. The Cádiz Charter permits popular participation in elections and devotes a lot of space to electoral issues, but includes no Declaration of Rights. And as noted, the Cádiz document remained firmly grounded in Spanish Catholicism, much in contrast with the areligious character of French revolutionary texts. Influence, yes; copying, no.

We arrive at arguably the most important doctrinal and ideological source of the first Spanish liberalism: Spanish nationalist historicism or *historicismo nacionalista*. The notion of Spain's "historic constitution" was one of the most debated issues in Cádiz. The concept had been discussed in Spanish intellectual circles since 1780, when Jovellanos presented his discourse of admission to the Royal Academy of History titled *Sobre la necesidad de unir al estudio de nuestra legislación el de nuestra historia* ("On the need to join the study of our legislation to the study of our history").³¹ He argued that the political liberty individuals enjoyed in Spanish medieval kingdoms was lost under the Habsburg dynasty at the beginning of the sixteenth century. The liberty assured until that moment by Cortes that existed in several Spanish kingdoms had kept the power of kings within certain limits. The situation changed with the Hapsburgs—especially the first two, Carlos I and Felipe II. For Jovellanos civil liberty was progressively lost (thus the notion of "liberty recovered," so important for first Spanish liberalism). Therefore, Jovellanos argued that the primary task was to end three hundred years of despotism; his practical recommendations, however, were less critical.³² Without ignoring his historical inaccuracies regarding the real power of the medieval Cortes, Jovellanos's idea of a liberty reclaimed or recovered became, in the hands of the *liberales doceañistas*, one of the most powerful ideological devices at work in Cádiz.

The same can be said of the vision of Spain's history presented by the second most important author of "historical nationalism": Francisco Martínez Marina. He wrote *Teoría de las Cortes*, the most complete text of this current of thought; this book was a historical interpretation and an ideological construct that became a political device.³³ Martínez Marina's life and work reflected the ambiguities and inconsistencies of the first Spanish liberalism—to such an extent that it is difficult to locate him in the ideological spectrum of the age. He first collaborated with the Napoleonic government of José I, but his *afrancesado* past did not prevent his ideas from being read and discussed widely, nor block his election as a deputy in the revived Cortes of 1820.³⁴ Martínez Marina began to develop Jovellanos's ideas in his *Ensayo histórico-crítico sobre la legis-*

lación y principales cuerpos legales de los reinos de León y Castilla (1808), but it was his later *Teoría de las Cortes* (1813) that gave him notoriety. He extended Jovellanos's thesis insisting on the despotism of the Habsburg and Bourbon dynasties. In the aftermath of the 1808 crisis, Martínez Marina's argument was recovered, modified, and developed by Cádiz liberals who found in it Spanish precedents for popular sovereignty, the rejection of absolutism, and the recovery of individual and municipal liberties.³⁵

The third key text of Spanish historic nationalism, following Jovellanos and Martínez Marina, is the "Preliminary Discourse" that prefaced the Cádiz Constitution. Its authorship is traditionally attributed to Argüelles, the deputy considered by friends and foes alike as the leader of the liberal group at the Cádiz Cortes. Although he was responsible for most of its content, other members of the constitutional commission contributed to the "Discourse." This text became the most important synthesis of the doctrine and program of early Spanish liberalism. Its opening words have been cited repeatedly. I present them here again because they show the level of complexity and tension of the relationship that Spanish liberals established with their past:

The Commission does not propose anything that cannot be found in authentic and solemn form in the various legislative bodies of Spain, but rather the novelty lies in the way in which the duties of government have been distributed. Said duties have been ordered and classified such that they might form a system of foundational and constitutional law that was in accordance with the fundamental laws of Aragon, Navarre, and Castile with regard to national liberty and independence, to the privileges and obligations of citizens, to the dignity and authority of the King and the judicial system, to the establishment and use of the armed forces, and to the economic and administrative methods to be employed in the provinces.³⁶

In these lines, the revival of Spanish monarchical traditions could not be stated more clearly. Yet as María Luisa Sánchez-Mejía emphasizes, the constitution also contained articles that were pure "revolutionary liberalism": sovereignty of the nation, a one chamber parliament, individual liberties, clear limits to the king's power, division of powers, and the responsibility of ministers to the Parliament.³⁷ The insistence of key liberals on the traditional character of their enterprise may thus seem odd. However, with the Spanish people immersed in a brutal war against Napoleon, this insistence gains intelligibility as another example of their political ability. Let us read some lines from the end of the "Discourse":

The Constitution will never be in greater danger than from the moment it is announced until, following the proposal that the Constitution will put into place [that it cannot be modified in eight years, article 375], the document begins to more firmly establish itself and thereby reduce the aversion and repugnance that work against it. Feelings of resentment, revenge, worries, diverse interests, and even habit and tradition, will conspire against the Constitution.³⁸

Regarding those authors who still question the liberal character of the Constitution and the Spanish revolution of 1808–1814, it should be mentioned that there is no one model or archetype of liberalism. Instead, diverse historical liberalisms have existed in the Western world during the last two hundred years. It is useful to cite more of the “Discourse” to show to what extent the Cádiz enterprise belongs among them:

The Government must ensure that our laws are upheld. This must be its primary concern; but in order to preserve the peace and tranquility of the people, the government does not need to determine the interests of private citizens by means of court rulings and political decisions. *The harmful insistence on controlling all areas of civilian life by means of the regulations and mandates of political authorities have brought about similar and even greater ills than those that were supposed to be prevented by such control.*

A few lines ahead:

True progress means protecting liberty in each individual’s exercise of his physical and moral authority according to his needs and preferences. There is nothing more appropriate for the achievement of this objective than the entities that established under the proposed system. This system rests on two principles: to preserve the role of government so that it might be able to perform all its obligations and *to grant freedom to the nation’s private citizens so that personal interest might be, in the case of each and every individual, the agent that drives their efforts toward well-being and advancement.*³⁹

These liberal elements in the “Discourse” were partially grounded in some of the central tenets of historic nationalism: the adherence to the historic legislation of Spain, the utmost admiration for the Spanish medieval Cortes, the decadence of Spain attributed to kingly despotism, and the progressive loss of the limiting power that the Cortes supposedly wielded. The mixture was un-

stable, due to the prescriptive role given to history by *nacionalismo histórico*. Still, in the political situation created by the crisis of 1808, this historical, ideological, and political “cocktail” proved to be very effective. In the final analysis, historic nationalism was the most original element of the first Spanish liberalism—a history and a nationalism that could not be imported, yet could be exported and adapted to Spanish America.

Cádiz Liberalism and Spanish America

In the “Preliminary Discourse” of the Cádiz Constitution there is only one mention of the wars that by March 1812, when the charter was sanctioned, had been going on for more than a year and a half in several parts of Spanish America. The reference points to the liberal decrees that the Cortes adopted on the administration of justice, which the “Discourse” stated “will obviously begin to heal the wounds that the rejection of the motherland’s revolution, together with the disorder and arbitrariness of the previous Government, have opened unfortunately in some of Spain’s overseas provinces.”⁴⁰ These words evince an idea cherished by peninsular liberals: that the text, almost by itself, would pacify the American insurrections. Regarding the “disorder and arbitrariness of the previous Government,” the drafters of the “Discourse” surely referred to the Junta Central. The reference reveals a lack of self-criticism. The Junta Central had disappeared in January 1810, and the Cortes that gathered in Cádiz in September of that year not only failed to offer any proposal to pacify the Americas; on the contrary, it sent more soldiers to fight American “rebels.”⁴¹

If one goal of the Cádiz project was to hold Spain’s Americas in the empire and in the fight against Napoleon, it succeeded despite insurgencies in New Spain and resistance in Caracas and Buenos Aires during its first years of implementation. Yet the 1812 Constitution contributed to transatlantic political debates that led most of the Americas to break away—during the charter’s second implementation (with a new anticlerical edge), after 1820. Cádiz liberalism alone could not hold Spain’s domains together, nor did it alone create Spanish American republics. But it did create liberties that helped keep the empire together in the face of insurgencies to 1814—and fueled divisions that contributed to its fall after 1820.

It should not be forgotten that reactions in Spanish America to Napoleon’s 1808 invasion of the Peninsula unanimously supported the motherland (*madre patria*), and specifically Fernando VII. During 1809 there were confrontations in Chuquisaca, La Paz, and Quito between Americans and the peninsular authorities regarding the way the king’s sovereignty was to be kept while he was

a prisoner in France. Overt conflict between the metropolis and its colonies in America began in April 1810, when the Junta of Caracas decided not to recognize the legitimacy of the Regency that had succeeded the Junta Central in January of that year as the highest entity representing the deposed king. This conflict turned into an open war for separation in July 1811, when a Caracas junta declared Venezuela independent.⁴² Separation had become an option.

At Cádiz, the empire was reconceived as a constitutional monarchy that would guide the destiny of a transatlantic Spanish nation united under shared liberal principles and institutions. While many in the Americas saw gain, they also saw the limits of Cádiz when dealing with some of their most cherished goals: commercial freedom and local self-rule. Paradoxically, the Cádiz liberalism designed to forge transatlantic unity increasingly became a language and a tool that fostered divisiveness between *españoles peninsulares* and *españoles americanos*.

Beginning in the summer of 1808 new political ideas coming from the Peninsula were discussed and debated with growing intensity across Spanish America. Newspapers, pamphlets, and leaflets published in Madrid, Seville, and Cádiz arrived in the American ports and reached all the important cities. Inevitably, there was a lapse of months between events in the Peninsula and the time they were known in America. More important, the news of several months often arrived at once in American ports (creating uncertainty, limiting understanding of peninsular events, and inhibiting possibilities of reacting effectively). Finally, the enormous distances and the time ships took to make the journey (especially to distant ports in South America) often made measures taken by the Junta Central, the Regency, or the Cortes obsolete on arrival. Such delays can be more or less harmless in “normal” times, but more than once they proved to be crucial as the mundo hispánico lived critical months.

By the time the Cortes gathered on September 24, 1810, Juntas of Caracas, Buenos Aires, and Bogotá had decided not to recognize the executive power claimed by the Regency. And although the new Cortes could not know it, a few days earlier a popular rebellion against Spanish authorities had begun in New Spain, the richest and most populated territory of the Spanish America. The rising, headed by the priest Miguel Hidalgo, was crushed after only four months; still, it shook established powers, devastated the silver economy (so important to the fight against Napoleon), and set off continuing conflicts—political and popular—that would change the face of the viceroyalty permanently. Less violent movements that would nonetheless also end up in independence several years after, also started in September 1810 in two South American cities, Santiago and Quito.

Meanwhile, the Spanish American deputies at Cádiz faced possibilities and limits.⁴³ As noted, the American minority was always defeated when their most important political and economic demands came to a vote. This was perhaps inevitable: peninsular liberals never recognized the distinctive nature of the American territories and the different needs of its inhabitants. This “centralizing” perspective prevailed in the Cádiz Cortes from the very beginning (the same can be said of the Madrid Cortes during the Trienio Liberal of 1820–1823). However, it is important to put this issue in historical perspective. During the eighteenth century, the Spanish American territories had been treated increasingly as colonies, though Spanish legal tradition considered them kingdoms. Between 1810 and 1814 the American territories did obtain many things from the Cortes: among them, the end of tributes paid by indigenous and mixed peoples, limited representative institutions, freedom of cultivation, some commercial openings, new rights to justice and education, and legislation that softened social hierarchies. In contrast with the numerous constitutional documents drafted in Spanish America during these years, the goal of the Cádiz Constitution was to keep the transatlantic Spanish nation together. Article 18 granted full citizenship to indigenous Americans—a radical inclusionary step taken by Spanish liberals, far beyond anything contemplated by the men who turned thirteen colonies into the United States thirty years earlier.⁴⁴

The 1812 Constitution aimed to keep the transatlantic nation together through “unitary” rule. It centralized political power in the hands of new *jefes políticos* or *jefes superiores* appointed by the king in each Spanish American jurisdiction. The political chiefs would rule over two local entities created by the constitution—the *diputaciones provinciales* (Provincial Deputations) and *ayuntamientos* (city and town councils) that were given only administrative prerogatives. However, once in place the ayuntamientos progressively acquired capacities that were both administrative and political. In this, some of the most prescient peninsular liberals were proven right in their fears that due to the enormous distance from the center of political power, any political autonomy allowed to Spanish Americans would lead sooner than later to federalism and, in the long run, to the dissolution of the monarchy. In this and other ways, rights given by a charter seeking to forge unity worked to facilitate autonomy—and, in time, division.

The Cádiz Constitution did not operate in the whole of Spanish America during its first period of application (1812 to 1814); it ruled less widely when it was reinstalled during the Trienio. During its first phase, it was implemented in the Viceroyalty of New Spain (except in the Bajío and other regions mired in insurgency), the Captaincy of Guatemala, the Viceroyalty of Peru, and some

cities in the Captaincy of Venezuela and the Viceroyalty of New Granada, as well as the city of Montevideo. Provincial deputations appeared in regional capitals, leading cities elected constitutional councils, old indigenous republics experimented with liberal municipalities—via parish elections that included all Hispanic and indigenous men, and excluded those of African ancestry, until selections moved up to electors who ensured that only the notables gained office.

The influence of first Spanish liberalism was direct in some cases, important in many others, but always debated, due to the conflictive circumstances.

Liberalismo hispánico also exerted influence in discussions and debates in territories where the constitution was not implemented.⁴⁵ Recent studies show that the Cádiz Constitution and the first Spanish liberalism had considerable influence even in the Río de la Plata region. While pursuing local autonomies, leaders kept informed of constitutional debates and constitutional offerings, responding in their own way to peninsular liberalism and at the same time promoting independence from the metropolis.⁴⁶ A leading Argentine scholar of the political history of the Río de la Plata in the independence period, Marcela Ternavasio, concluded that the Cádiz experience “had a strong presence in the *rioplatense* revolutionary process.”⁴⁷

The first Spanish liberalism came to an abrupt end in the Peninsula, and formally in the Americas, with the return of Fernando VII in 1814. Six years later liberals returned to power in Spain and forced the Cádiz Constitution on Fernando. In the interim, movements toward independence had advanced in South America. In Peru loyalty still held, thanks to the political and military abilities of Viceroy José Fernando de Abascal and a creole elite who feared any experiment with popular sovereignty as the memories of the devastating risings of the 1780s held strong. In New Spain, political insurgency had declined since 1815, yet was never vanquished—and the popular insurgency that had devastated the Bajío was just ending in 1820.

Yet, while much had changed in the Americas since 1814, the Trienio Liberal (1820–1823) did not alter the attitudes and actions of the peninsular deputies in dealing with America. They remained committed to the limited representation and central control that had prevailed in the Cortes of Cádiz. A new approach to the *problema americano* might have been politically wise, as several territories, notably Buenos Aires and Caracas, were far along the road to independence, and many elsewhere were actively debating its benefits. Yet Spanish liberals still refused significant concessions to Americans regarding political autonomy and commercial openings. When peninsular deputies began to attend to American requests, it was too late. In September 1821 Mexico declared independence and New Spain’s deputies, the largest American delegation at the

Madrid Cortes, returned to their homeland. Three years later, in December 1824, the battle of Ayacucho meant that the whole of continental America was irretrievably lost to Spanish rule.

The triumph of the Spanish American emancipation movements after 1820 should not obscure the importance of the Trienio Liberal for Spanish history and Spanish American independence. It was the first time that liberalism was implemented in all of peninsular Spain. More important, this time the liberales came to power by themselves, not in response to invasion and occupation—but by a rising of military forces about to be sent to fight for the monarchy in South America. During the Trienio liberalism was not a cloistered anomaly in a city under siege. Operating across Spain, in 1820 liberals known as *exaltados* began to press radical antiaristocratic and anticlerical measures. Most of the revolutionaries remaining from the 1812 experience, the *doceañistas*, became *liberales moderados*—rivals of the *exaltados*. The second coming of Spanish liberalism was laden with contradictions; among them, military leaders forced a constitution grounded in popular sovereignty on a reluctant monarch in 1820 and new anticlerical and antiaristocratic energies turned powerful defenders of Spanish rule in New Spain to lead a monarchical Mexican independence in 1821. In the metropolis, the rise of radical anticlericalism, divisions and conflicts among liberals, and the hard political and ideological turn toward absolutism across Europe after Napoleon's defeat contributed to the short life of the second Spanish liberal experience: in 1823 an army of the Holy Alliance reinstalled Fernando VII as an absolutist king.

From a chronological perspective, the foundational Spanish liberalism of 1810–1814 and 1820–1823 appears as a brief experiment that failed. However, its values, visions, and goals would remain part of a polarized Spanish polity throughout the nineteenth century as its radicalism progressively softened.⁴⁸ The implementation of the constitution on American soil was always selective: elections and freedom of the press were allowed as those in power thought warranted. In New Spain, the war and insurgency of 1810 to 1815 limited its application. In Guatemala, tendencies to localism were strong and economic conditions too adverse to enable full implementation. In Peru, Abascal modified or varied the enforcement of the constitution, yet it was applied in several aspects.⁴⁹ Still, even with its limits and variations, the implementation of the Cádiz Constitution meant that for the first time millions of Americans experienced individual rights, elections, freedom of the press, and the social dynamism they entailed.

The Cádiz Constitution was in force in almost all of the Spanish American territories considered in this book, among them the core regions of the silver

economies and those with the strongest, most enduring bases in indigenous republics—which Cádiz would replace with constitutional municipalities. As Erick Langer’s chapter will show, debates over preferences for indigenous republics and liberal municipalities and the potential gains and losses for native peoples would mark the nineteenth century in Mexico and Guatemala, Peru and Bolivia, and to a lesser degree elsewhere.

The Viceroyalties of New Granada and Río de la Plata, as well as the Captaincy General of Venezuela and the “Kingdom” of Chile, although much less populated than the territories where the constitution was in force, were roughly equivalent in size to the territories considered in this book. Those four administrative entities were less central to the silver economies, less grounded in indigenous majorities, less organized in indigenous republics. But their commercial importance had risen in the late eighteenth century; they felt increasingly constrained by imperial trade restrictions. These long peripheral territories also received, read, and discussed the hundreds of publications that arrived from the Peninsula from 1808 onward. While Cádiz liberals, like their monarchical predecessors, focused on holding the rich silver economies in the empire and favoring Cuban sugar growers with restrictions on Afro-Americans’ citizenship, they did not open trade possibilities for commodity exporters in Caracas and Buenos Aires. These territories did not send delegates to Cádiz and rejected the constitution. They formed their own juntas and pursued autonomous routes. Cádiz liberalism clearly led to diverse responses: while the capitals of the Captaincy General of Venezuela and the Viceroyalties of New Granada and Río de la Plata ignored Cádiz, some cities within these entities stayed loyal to Fernando VII and accepted the constitution.⁵⁰

The intellectual, ideological, and political transformations that took place in the mundo hispánico between 1808 and 1824 were complex and laden with ambiguities and contradictions. That almost three hundred years of Spanish rule was often not perceived as domination by many *españoles americanos* help explain why so many years, so many qualms, so many hesitations, and so many battles had to take place before several territories broke from the metropolis. In general, loyalty did not shift from Spain to the new patria in a direct and unequivocal manner. On the key viceroyalties of New Spain and Peru, Brian Hamnett, a leading analyst of the period, suggests that the erosion of the “middle position” allowing autonomy within the monarchy was “the main characteristic of the period 1808–1821.”⁵¹

Amid the complex imperial and local conflicts that marked Spanish America after 1808, the Cádiz revolution was never determining in a simple way. It was influential in political ideas, political debates, and constitutional proposals,

but it was always limited by peninsular and regional economic interests, and by international wars, local events, internal insurgencies, and military leaders. While Cádiz and its constitution shaped liberal political visions in the whole mundo hispánico, powerful men on horseback at the head of diverse armies were equally important—and often pivotal in determining political outcomes between 1810 and 1830. Bolívar, San Martín, and Iturbide may be the first to come to mind, but many others played pivotal political and/or military roles in Spanish America at key moments during those two decades: among them, Moreno, Morelos, Rodríguez de Francia, Artigas, Santander, Sucre, Belgrano, O’Higgins, and Monteagudo; in Spain, Rafael del Riego forced liberalism onto King Fernando in 1820.

The Cádiz revolution was a hope, a promise, and a possibility for many Spaniards and Spanish Americans. However, the vast distances and geo-economic differences between the *madre patria* and its American territories, the political divergences that began with the French invasion of the Peninsula, the opposition of *americanos* who did not want to continue under Spanish rule, the war against the Spanish American territories (which the Cortes never really dealt with politically), and the refusal of peninsular deputies in Cádiz and Madrid to attend to the diverse needs of these territories made that possibility vanish.⁵² Still, in one way or another Cádiz marked everything in the vast Hispanic world for a pivotal decade and, in certain respects, long after.

Liberalism and the Mundo Hispánico in the Age of Revolution

The ambitious project that peninsular liberals tried to put in place between 1810 and 1814 failed; it did not result in an enduring constitutional regime limiting monarchical rule; the political and social forces opposed to liberalism proved to be stronger. The king led the opposition, but support for the monarch in the top echelons of the army and the Church was decisive. Important opposition also came from conservative deputies who showed political muscle in the elections for the ordinary Cortes that opened in October 1813. Less than a month before the return of the king, these deputies drafted a document, known as the Manifiesto de los Persas, condemning the preceding extraordinary Cortes that had written the constitution. If we add a peasantry that saw little change emerging from liberal proclamations (inevitable, as the constitution could not be implemented in most of Spain before it was abrogated in 1814) and a society exhausted by six years of war, the delirious welcome that Spanish towns and cities gave Fernando VII on his way to Madrid in the spring of 1814 come as no surprise.⁵³

In the end, a coalition of conservative forces and interests defeated Spain's liberals. Many of them suffered the king's repression; some died because of it, but some were able to participate in the comeback of liberalism in 1820 and, with it, the reinstatement of the Cádiz Constitution. This time, however, Spanish liberals had to share power with a "constitutional" monarch who was not captive in another country, but very much present and had been working with international allies to bring down the liberal government and the Cádiz Constitution since the beginning of its reinstatement. Thus the revival of liberalism in Spain was short-lived.⁵⁴ Absolutism returned in 1823 without the liberals being able to put up a real fight. The king would stay in power another decade, until his death in 1833.

The reactions and responses to peninsular liberalism in Spanish America were varied, complex, ambiguous, and thus much more difficult to follow, among other reasons because there was no "liberal" political group identified as such. The size and greater social diversity of Spain's American domains also help to explain this complexity. In any case, the core principles of liberalism—national sovereignty, political equality, individual liberties, division of powers, representative government—were pursued almost everywhere. The challenge is to distinguish between liberal principles and complex and often-contested sociopolitical practices.

From 1811 onward a constitutional "explosion" took place in Spanish America. Between that year and 1816 more than thirty constitutional documents were drafted in the region (especially in New Granada). However, given the state of war that prevailed in many regions, liberalism proved to have limited social reach during the independence period in Spanish America. Constitutions and formal political structures did not lead societies to adopt liberal values, attitudes, and behaviors. Very slowly and not without countermarches, this adoption would take place during the nineteenth century. In that long process, different segments of Spanish American societies would adapt and use liberalism for differing purposes. Facing that diversity, scholars have used the term "popular liberalism" to label many of the varied instances when rural communities mobilized liberal rhetoric to demand rights from the powerful. Whether those communities had become committed to central tenets of liberalism such as individual rights and electoral rule, or primarily pursued local political advantage, is much debated.

The search for popular liberalism in large part emerged as part of the search for subaltern contributions, participations "from below" in the political development of independence movements and also of republicanism in some Spanish American countries (during the independence period and beyond). In some

cases, these contributions have opened new and more complex understandings of early national conflicts and political challenges.⁵⁵ In others, we remain far from an integrated and convincing understanding of the diverse interactions among liberalism, republicanism, and popular participation in the complex processes of nation making in nineteenth-century Spanish America.⁵⁶

The relationship between liberalism and republicanism during the era of Spanish American independence also remain subject to debate. The institutional and constitutional coincidences between the two ideologies far outweigh, in my view, the contrasts in the political language that some historians have privileged. Some of liberalism's deepest goals—popular sovereignty, electoral rule, freedom of the press—remained honored goals in most Spanish American republics throughout the nineteenth century. Though too often abrogated, they were proclaimed constantly and practiced more often than sometimes recognized. Parliamentary practice and liberal principles, some of them rooted in Cádiz, played roles that were far more than perfunctory. Political and intellectual history should recognize these facts and pursue studies aiming to understand the enduring limits to the realization of liberal goals in the history of Spanish America.

After more than 150 years of ignoring and sometimes denigrating the political history of the region during the first half of the nineteenth century, Western historiography recently began to recuperate topics such as elections, citizenship, sociabilities, the press, and public opinion. The change, provoked a quarter of a century ago by François-Xavier Guerra, is most welcome. Scholars began to see that not everything was chaos and caudillos in the origin and formation of Spanish American nations. Too often, however, historiographic reactions become overreactions. Studying aspects of the political and social life of the new nations that were neglected or ignored is positive; suggesting that life in the emerging nations was infused with liberalism, republicanism, and citizenship is another matter.⁵⁷ One aim of the chapters that follow is to explore the interplay of the economic transformations analyzed by Tutino in chapter 1, with the political and ideological innovations engaged here, and with the hard domains where power faced participation of different kinds in diverse American societies.

In the wake of Guerra's oeuvre, the Hispanic world of the first quarter of the nineteenth century has become a vibrant field of inquiry for political and intellectual history.⁵⁸ New circumstances and new analyses have contributed to a renewed interest in the "Age of Revolution."⁵⁹ I conclude by considering critically some of the ways Atlantic history has viewed the *revoluciones hispánicas* within the Age of Revolution.

The Atlantic approach has become the dominant prism through which the anglophone academy views and studies the independence movements of Latin America. Too often, proponents of that approach assume that commonalities and sequences prevailed over the complex specifics of the several revolutionary processes that shaped this pivotal age.⁶⁰ Lurking behind this assumption is another one: that the first Atlantic revolutions (the independence of the thirteen colonies and the French Revolution) became “models” followed in Spanish America from 1808 onward.

The Atlantic perspective on Spanish American independence is an enormous step forward vis-à-vis the nationalistic approaches that prevailed for too long. Such approaches were parochial and limited. Put simply: it is impossible to understand Spanish American independence from a political and intellectual perspective by studying separate national processes. The Spanish American nations came out of a single empire. In the last twenty-five years, nationalist histories of Spanish American independence have given way to broader perspectives. They recognize the influence of general political principles and constitutional architectures in part originating in the North American and French revolutions (with important British antecedents). But studies of Hispanic American independence have forged a new prism that is mainly Hispanic—or, better, Hispanic Atlantic. Rather than presume an inevitable sequence of innovation that began in the United States and France, the Hispanic-Atlantic perspective emphasizes that Spain and Spanish America began, negotiated, and ended their revolutionary processes in deeply Hispanic ways.

Atlantic history has proven its fertility in topics like migration, commercial exchanges, and slavery—notably when it focuses within the British empire. Too often, however, the innovations of Atlantic history have not extended to questioning much older presumptions of Anglo-American primacy in the making of the modern world. The enduring tendency to expect that Anglo-American innovations, mediated by French revolutionary aspirations, shaped independence movement in the mundo hispánico leads, in my view, to fundamental misunderstandings of the Age of Revolution.⁶¹

Global and Atlantic processes, economic, political, and ideological, affected the independence of Spanish America, no doubt—but local historical circumstances, an ideological arsenal of great complexity, and a series of regional conflicts inextricably linked to Hispanic politics led to the new countries that emerged in Spanish America between 1810 and 1830. There is a clear link between the French Revolution and the events that shook Saint Domingue between 1791 and 1804, but it was a link of reverberations that led to oppositions, as Carolyn Fick shows in chapter 4. There were also conflictive reverberations

of the French Revolution, through Napoleon, on the 1808 invasion of Spain, on Cádiz liberalism, and on the Spanish American conflicts that led to independence, but none of them were imitations.⁶² The presumptive assertion of imitative Atlantic revolutions diminishes the complexity of the Age of Revolutions—and the creativity of Hispanic revolutionaries, intellectuals, and state makers.⁶³

The causal chain often suggested by Atlantic historians mainly refers to *ideas* or constitutional principles (in their most general expression). Such links are often found by intellectual historians who exalt ideas and tend to downplay political and social conflicts and practices.⁶⁴ The *revoluciones hispánicas* did not begin in the light of historical or political “forces” emanating from the United States or revolutionary France (and the Hispanic American elites who started these revolutions and declared the independence of new countries saw nothing positive in Haiti). The revolutionary movements in Spanish America began as a reaction against Napoleon’s invasion and occupation of the Iberian Peninsula. French revolutionary ideology was rejected outright for a very simple reason: the invading army came from the land of Rousseau, Marat, and Robespierre.⁶⁵

In Spanish America, at the beginning of the crisis *hispánica* public declarations were not *against* the king, but *for* the king—and most Spanish Americans, including indigenous peoples, remained devoted to the king throughout. The oft-repeated claim that an accumulation of hatred among Spanish American *criollos* against peninsular Spaniards was one of the main causes of the independence movements is clearly wanting as an explanation of events after 1810. Why did such “disaffected” elites in New Spain and Peru remain loyal to the Spanish Crown for more than a decade after 1810?

Spanish America included a diversity of racial and social groups with no parallel in British North America, making the challenges of independence and nation making radically different. Careful analysis of Spanish America between 1808 and 1824 cannot suggest, much less conclude, that its independence processes were last “episodes” of a single Atlantic Revolution—as chapters 7 to 10 of this volume will show.

At the same time, however, no historical process is absolutely original. The *revoluciones hispánicas* developed within the broad economic and imperial, political, and intellectual events that shaped the second half of the eighteenth century. There is no reason to deny the resonance of important aspects of North American and French political thought and constitutional thinking. Still, Cádiz liberalism and the *revoluciones hispánicas* emerged as independent creations, that must be taken seriously to understand the Age of Revolution. Understandings emphasizing transatlantic interactions must remain; presumptions of Anglo-American primacy and Hispanic imitation must end.

The Hispanic revolutions must not be presumed isolated or self-generating. They engaged and revised many of the broad political principles that played decisive roles in the birth of the United States and in revolutionary France. The chronological precedence and geographical proximity of these conflicts made these influences inevitable. The general political principles that were the basis of the Spanish American revolutions—national sovereignty, political equality, individual liberties, division of powers, representative systems—were also paramount in the American and French Revolutions, *but with different connotations and emphases in each case*. Since the Middle Ages, the Spanish world was part of a European debate on monarchical power and popular participation. A unique Hispanic emphasis on the rights of the pueblos enabled Spanish monarchs to allow local republics for indigenous peoples across its American domains since the sixteenth century and helps explain why the Cádiz Constitution recognized these same peoples as part of the citizenry.

When the mundo hispánico was turned upside down by Napoleon's occupation of the Iberian Peninsula in 1808, Spanish and Spanish Americans became active and innovative participants in political, intellectual, social, and economic debates and conflicts. The revoluciones hispánicas inscribed themselves within the Age of Revolution in ways far more creative than too many histories allow. To fully understand Atlantic processes in the formation of the modern world, we must recognize the creative complexity and the ambiguous originality of the Hispanic revolutions—the political and social movements that culminated the Age of Revolution.⁶⁶

Notes

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- 1 These are the four "classic" *Atlantic Revolutions*, therefore in this case we could talk of certain identification between the *Age of Revolution* and the *Atlantic Revolutions*.
- 2 Some options to study the *mundo hispánico* with this chronology are Kenneth J. Andrien and Lyman Johnson, eds., *The Political Economy of Spanish America in the Age of Revolution, 1750–1850* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994), and Victor M. Uribe-Uran, ed., *State and Society in Spanish America during the Age of Revolution* (Wilmington, DE: SR Books, 2001). On the whole continent, see Lester D. Langley, *The Americas in the Age of Revolution, 1750–1850* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996).

- 3 *Les révolutions de la fin du XVIII^e siècle aux Amériques et en Europe, 1773–1804* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2005). Solé's final chapter on Latin America uses very limited sources.
- 4 David Armitage and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, eds., *The Age of Revolutions in Global Context, c. 1760–1840* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).
- 5 Following a classic written more than fifty years ago: Eric Hobsbawm's *The Age of Revolution: Europe 1789–1848* (London: Abacus, 1962).
- 6 As I will suggest, the reforms of Charles III's reign (1759–1788) influenced Cádiz's liberalism in a limited way.
- 7 The promulgation of the 1812 Constitution is why the Spanish liberals of this period are also known as *doceañistas*, and *doceañismo* is sometimes used to label their ideological, political, and social project—a project that, it may be added, resonated not only in Spanish America, but also in Portugal, Italy, Norway, and even Russia. On the three first cases, see Ignacio Fernández Sarasola, “La proyección europea e iberoamericana de la Constitución de 1812,” in *La Constitución de Cádiz (Origen, contenido y proyección internacional)* (Madrid: CEPCC, 2011), 292–308. On the Russian case, see Richard Stites, “Decembrists with a Spanish Accent,” *Kritika* 12:1 (winter 2011).
- 8 Some ideas in the first section of this essay appeared in my book *El primer liberalismo español y los procesos de emancipación de América (Una revisión historiográfica del liberalismo hispánico)* (Mexico: El Colegio de México, 2006). Some arguments presented in the second and third sections appeared in *El imperio de las circunstancias (Las independencias hispanoamericanas y la revolución liberal española)* (Madrid: Marcial Pons/El Colegio de México, 2012).
- 9 See Emilio La Parra, ed., *La guerra de Napoleón en España* (Alicante: Universidad de Alicante/Casa de Velázquez, 2010). The contributions by Fraser, Hocquetel, and Álvarez Junco in this volume show the decisive role played by the diffusion of the Bayonne abdications and not the uprisings in Madrid in igniting the general insurrection of 1808. In strict legal terms, the only “abdication” was the one in which Carlos IV ceded the crown to his son Fernando in March 1808. Two months later, Fernando VII returned the crown back to his father, who gave it to Napoleon the day after. A month later, he awarded the crown to his brother Joseph, who became José I “rey de España e Indias.”
- 10 I use the term “first Spanish liberalism” to refer to the political revolution in the Peninsula between 1808 and 1814. However, the expression can also include the Trienio Liberal (1820–1823), and some authors extend it to the end of the 1830s.
- 11 It is impossible to deal here with Godoy and his power from 1792 to 1808. See Emilio La Parra, *Manuel Godoy (La aventura del poder)* (Barcelona: Tusquets, 2002).
- 12 See Guerra's article “Dos años cruciales (1808–1809),” in *Modernidad e independencias (Ensayos sobre las revoluciones hispánicas)* (Madrid: Mapfre, 1992), 115–148. The use of the word *hispánicas* in the subtitle reflects that for Guerra the first quarter of the nineteenth century had to be understood from a *Hispanic* perspective (including Spain and Spanish America). For him, the two years were “crucial” mainly

- because peninsular newspapers and other publications spread the ideas, principles, and values of the political revolution taking place in the Peninsula to Spanish America.
- 13 It was also in this city that in June 1808 Napoleon gathered a series of Spanish and Spanish American notables to discuss and approve a constitutional document that his advisors had drafted. This Constitution or Statute of Bayonne was never applied in Spanish America (in the Peninsula its application was minimal). Its influence on the Cádiz Constitution is hard to determine, but it is clear that the concessions offered by the Statute to the Spanish Americans in political and commercial terms could not be ignored by the deputies who gathered in Cádiz more than two years later.
 - 14 The role of the guerrillas has been exaggerated in Spanish historiography; a tendency that diminishes the importance of the British army and the Duke of Wellington, the commander of allied British, Spanish, and Portuguese troops. A balanced view suggests that guerrillas were very important in harassing the French army day in and day out throughout the war, but did not determine the military outcome.
 - 15 Almost thirty of them were substitute deputies chosen in Cádiz among the American residents. This limited the legitimacy of the Spanish American delegates; more so in the regions that never sent proprietary deputies. This was the case across South America, except for the Viceroyalty of Peru and the cities of Maracaibo and Montevideo.
 - 16 Thomas Moore, *Letters and Journals of Lord Byron with Notices of His Life* (London: John Murray, 1830), 195.
 - 17 This is exactly what the king established in the decree that he issued on his return to Spain. The document is dated May 4, but became known only days later to avoid reactions against it: <http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/obra/real-decreto-de-fernando-vii-derogando-la-constitucion-valencia-4-mayo-1814/>, Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes (www.cervantesvirtual.com), accessed 13 April 2015.
 - 18 Up to that time, most output of Spanish presses had been religious. On freedom of the press, see Isabel Larriba and Fernando Durán, eds., *El nacimiento de la libertad de imprenta* (Madrid: Sílex Ediciones, 2012). The Cortes first sanctioned this freedom in December 1810, then confirmed it in article 371 of the constitution.
 - 19 Of course, the word existed for centuries in Spanish, English, French, and Italian, meaning “generous”; I refer here to its use as an adjective labeling a political group with a shared ideology.
 - 20 Marx expressed these ideas in a series of articles in the *New York Daily Tribune* in 1854. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Escritos sobre España*, ed. Pedro Ribas (Valadolid: Editorial Trotta, 1998), 131, 139; my translation.
 - 21 The intensity of the opposition to the liberales and the measures they proposed can be surmised by some paragraphs of the “Preliminary Discourse” of the constitution, discussed at the end of this section.
 - 22 The articles on education in the Cádiz Constitution have not received the attention they deserve, even by historians inclined to underline the liberal character of the document.
 - 23 With a couple of minor changes, this is the classification given by Joaquín Varela Suanzes, in his article “La Constitución de Cádiz y el liberalismo español del siglo

- XIX,” in *Política y Constitución en España (1808–1978)* (1987; reprint, Madrid: CEPC, 2007).
- 24 Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, vol. 2: *The Age of Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 159, 163. On page 174, Skinner underlines the influence of the Spanish neo-Thomists on John Locke and his *Two Treatises on Government*.
 - 25 For Mariana political power rested essentially and permanently with the community, making the right of resistance a permanent option (a position Vitoria and Suárez rejected).
 - 26 See Skinner, *The Foundations*, 148, and Howard P. Kainz, *Natural Law (An Introduction and Re-examination)* (Chicago: Open Court, 2004), 31.
 - 27 “The idea that natural law might be valid and binding even if God did not exist was suggested before Grotius by Robert Bellarmine and other scholastics. But Grotius made this point more explicitly and forcibly, and is credited with the groundbreaking attempt to disengage natural law from the existence of a Divine Legislator.” Kainz, *Natural Law*, 33.
 - 28 *La teoría del Estado en las Cortes de Cádiz* (Madrid: CEPC, 2011), 42.
 - 29 See La Parra, *Manuel Godoy*, chaps. 4 and 5.
 - 30 Antonio de Maravall, “Las tendencias de reforma política en el siglo XVIII español,” in *Estudios de historia del pensamiento español s. XVIII* (1967; reprint, Madrid: Mondadori, 1991); Antonio Elorza, *La ideología liberal en la ilustración española* (Madrid: Tecnos, 1970).
 - 31 The discourse can be found in Jovellanos, *Obras en prosa*, ed. José Miguel Caso González (Madrid: Castalia, 1988), 71–102. On the political thought of Jovellanos, the most important thinker of the Spanish Enlightenment, see *Obras completas*, vol. 9: *Escritos políticos*, ed. Ignacio Fernández Sarasola (Oviedo: Ayuntamiento de Gijón/Instituto Feijoo de Estudios del Siglo XVIII, 2006).
 - 32 Some Spanish American intellectuals and politicians favoring independence adopted the notion, making despots of all the Spanish authorities in America.
 - 33 *Teoría de las Cortes* (Bilbao: Gestingraf, n.d.); this book, in three volumes, is number 9 of the collection “Clásicos Asturianos del Pensamiento Político,” edited by the Junta General del Principado de Asturias. On Martínez Marina’s political thought, see Joaquín Varela Suanzes, *Tradición y liberalismo en Martínez Marina* (Oviedo: Caja Rural Provincial de Asturias, 1983).
 - 34 I have not paid any attention to the Spaniards that supported José I: the *afrancesados*. Long condemned as traitors, their historiographical rehabilitation started with *Los afrancesados* by Miguel Artola, published in 1953. By now it is clear that the motives of those who supported José were complex and that many of them were ideologically very close to the liberales, their sworn enemies.
 - 35 Martínez Marina’s main political and historical ideas can be found in a brief discourse on the Cortes he first published by itself, but then used to introduce *Teoría de las Cortes* in 1813. It has been read through this lens since then (see *Teoría de las Cortes*, 5–49).

- 36 There are many printed versions of the “Discourse”; an option is the one that accompanies *La Constitución de Cádiz (1812)* by Antonio Fernández García (Madrid: Editorial Castalia, 2002), 195–270. The English translation I use here is by Liberty Fund. Conference “Liberals and Liberty in 1812; Spain and Beyond,” Eduardo Nolla, organizer, Santiago de Compostela, Spain, January–February 2013, 2.
- 37 “Tradición histórica e innovación política en el primer liberalismo español,” *Revista de Estudios Políticos*, no. 97 (July–September 1997), 281.
- 38 Liberty Fund translation, 44.
- 39 Liberty Fund translation, 37, 38 (my emphasis in both cases).
- 40 Liberty Fund translation, 29.
- 41 Due to the war with Napoleon, its number was limited, but that is secondary to the point I make here.
- 42 The Spanish American wars of independence were civil wars, rarely setting *peninsulares* against *americanos*. The royalist armies were filled by Americans who for diverse motives did not seek separation from Spain—as the histories in this book show.
- 43 Marie Laure Rieu-Millan, *Los diputados americanos en las Cortes de Cádiz: Igualdad o independencia* (Madrid: CSIC, 1990).
- 44 On slavery, only two of the new countries on Spanish America abolished it quickly (Chile and Mexico); most maintained it until the middle of the nineteenth century.
- 45 On the two “variants” of the *liberalismo hispánico* (peninsular liberalism and Spanish American liberalism), they were so intermingled in the first quarter of the nineteenth century that one must be careful with the division. Once Spanish American countries achieved independence (often long after they *declared* it), we cannot refer any longer to *liberalismo hispánico* but to Spanish, Mexican, Chilean, Argentine, (etc.) liberalisms.
- 46 Venezuela declared independence in 1811, Paraguay in 1813, the Provincias Unidas del Río de la Plata (Argentina) in 1816, Chile in 1818, Peru in 1821 (and again in 1824), New Spain (Mexico), and the Capitanía General de Guatemala in 1821.
- 47 Marcela Ternavasio, *Gobernar la revolución (Poderes en disputa en el Río de la Plata, 1810–1816)* (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2007), 261. Ternavasio refers to Spanish American territories that for geographical and military reasons were never threatened by the Spanish Crown during the whole independence period.
- 48 See Varela Suanzes, “La Constitución de Cádiz y el liberalismo español del siglo XIX.”
- 49 On New Spain, see Roberto Breña, “The Emancipation Process in New Spain and the Cádiz Constitution (New Historiographical Paths regarding the Revoluciones Hispánicas),” in *The Rise of Constitutional Government in the Iberian Atlantic World (The Impact of the Cádiz Constitution of 1812)*, ed. Scott Eastman and Natalia Sobrevilla Perea (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2015). For Guatemala, Mario Rodríguez, *The Cadiz Experiment in Central America, 1808–1826* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), and Jordana Dym, “Central America and Cadiz: A Complex Relationship,” in *The Rise of Constitutional Government in the Iberian Atlantic World*. On the Peruvian case, see Víctor Peralta, *En defensa de la autoridad:*

- Política y cultura bajo el gobierno del virrey Abascal, 1806–1816* (Madrid: CSIC/ Instituto de Historia, 2002), and Natalia Sobrevilla Perea, “Loyalism and Liberalism in Peru,” in *The Rise of Constitutional Government in the Iberian Atlantic World*.
- 50 At different times and facing different war situations, this was the case in cities like Coro, Maracaibo, and Valencia in Venezuela; Popayán, Santa Marta, and Cartagena in New Granada; and Montevideo in Río de la Plata.
- 51 Brian Hamnett, *Revolución y contrarrevolución en México y el Perú (Liberalismo, realista y separatismo, 1800–1824)* (Mexico: FCE, 1978), 17. There is a new and updated version: *Liberales, realistas y separatistas, 1800–1824* (Mexico: FCE, 2011).
- 52 The return of Fernando VII in 1814 and of absolutism in 1823 sealed the fate of the first Spanish liberalism and the destiny of what he considered to be his *possessions* in America. He died in 1833, without ever recognizing them as independent countries.
- 53 To get an idea of this reception, see last pages of what still is the most complete and best-written history of this period of Spanish history: the count of Toreno’s *Historia del levantamiento, guerra y revolución de España* (Pamplona: Ugoiti Editores, 2008), specifically, 1179 and 1182. This edition has an excellent introduction by the late French historian Richard Hocquellet. I survey the book and make a critique of Toreno’s ideas on Spanish America in a long review I wrote for *Historia Constitucional*, no. 13 (2012): “La *Historia* de Toreno y la historia para Toreno: el pueblo, España y el sueño de un liberal”: <http://www.historiaconstitucional.com/index.php/historiaconstitucional/article/view/350>.
- 54 On the end of the Trienio, see Emilio La Parra, *Los cien mil hijos de San Luis: El ocaso del primer impulso liberal en España* (Madrid: Editorial Síntesis, 2007), and Emmanuel Larroche, *L’expédition d’Espagne, 1823: De la guerre selon la Charte* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2013).
- 55 See Marixa Lasso, *Myths of Harmony: Race and Republicanism during the Age of Revolution, Colombia, 1795–1831* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2007), and Véronique Hébrard and Geneviève Verdo, eds., *Las independencias hispano-americanas: Un objeto de historia* (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2013).
- 56 See, for example, James Sanders, “Revolution and the Creation of an Atlantic Counter-Modernity: Popular and Elite Contestations of Republicanism and Progress in Mid-Nineteenth Century Latin America,” in *L’Atlantique révolutionnaire: Une perspective ibéro-américaine*, ed. Clément Thibaud, Gabriel Entin, Alejandro Gómez, and Federica Morelli (Bécherel: Éditions Les Perséides, 2013), 233–257.
- 57 I do not see Mexico City and Lima as rich in civic culture and democratic practices as Carlos Forment does in his book *Democracy in Latin America, 1760–1900*, vol. 1: *Civic Selfhood and Public Life in Mexico and Peru* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).
- 58 Besides Guerra, Jaime Rodríguez, Antonio Annino, and Brian Hamnett have played very important roles in these fields. To engage the politics and intellectual life of the *mundo hispánico* in the first quarter of the nineteenth century requires reading in Spanish, in order to keep up with some of the best historians working nowadays on the period, among them José María Portillo, Elías Palti, Javier Fernández Sebastián, Marta Lorente, José Antonio Aguilar Rivera, Marcela Ternavasio,

- Ignacio Fernández Sarasola, Víctor Peralta Ruiz, Carlos Garriga, Rafael Rojas, and Noemí Goldman.
- 59 For contemporary political reasons that Cádiz has received so much attention in recent years, see Gabriel Paquette, “Cádiz y las fábulas de la historiografía occidental,” in *Cádiz a debate (Actualidad, contexto y legado)*, ed. Roberto Breña (Mexico: El Colegio de México, 2014), 49–61.
- 60 However, as I will suggest and as the present book gives ample proof, in several aspects the Atlantic approach enriches our understanding of the Spanish American independence movements. Two very good examples are Jeremy Adelman’s *Sovereignty and Revolution in the Iberian Atlantic* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006) and J. H. Elliott’s *Empires of the Atlantic World (Britain and Spain in America, 1492–1830)* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006). I dealt briefly with the Atlantic approach in “Liberalism in the Spanish American World, 1808–1825,” in *State and Nation Making in Latin America and Spain*, ed. Miguel A. Centeno and Agustín Ferraro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 271–281.
- 61 In the words of Atlantic historian Wim Klooster: “Seismic waves travelled through the Atlantic world in the half century after 1775, linking uprisings on either side of the Atlantic.” *Revolutions in the Atlantic World: A Comparative Perspective* (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 158.
- 62 In “Was There an Age of Revolution in Spanish America?” Eric Van Young shows why Latin American historians should be cautious with the assumptions that lie behind the expression “Age of Revolution.” This essay is the conclusion of the book *State and Society in Spanish America during the Age of Revolution*, 219–246.
- 63 There is a recent trend to establish close connections between the Haitian Revolution and Spanish American independence movements. If among the Atlantic revolutions only Haiti achieved a radical social transformation, this in fact limited its influence on the revoluciones hispánicas, which were eminently *political* processes. In *Myths of Harmony*, 33, Marixa Lasso states that while Haiti entered the local popular imaginary, it is difficult to assess the influence of the Haitian Revolution in Cartagena, a Caribbean city with a large slave population.
- 64 I dealt with this topic in “Las conmemoraciones de los bicentenarios y el liberalismo hispánico: ¿Historia intelectual o historia intelectualizada?” *Revista Ayer*, no. 69 (2008), 189–219.
- 65 Napoleon in many ways inherited the spirit of 1789, while at the same time, in several ways he was the denial of that same spirit. In any case, from 1789 to 1814 revolutionary France was a political countermodel in the mundo hispánico.
- 66 The regionally focused chapters that follow seek an understanding not only of the Spanish American independence movements, but of how diverse regions of the Americas negotiate their way through the Age of Revolution in very different ways.