

2009

Atlantic Republicanism in Nineteenth-Century Colombia: Spanish America's Challenge to the Contours of Atlantic History

James Sanders
Utah State University

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/history_facpub

 Part of the [History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

"Atlantic Republicanism in Nineteenth-Century Colombia: Spanish America's Challenge to the Contours of Atlantic History." *Journal of World History* 20 (March 2009): 131-150.

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the History at DigitalCommons@USU. It has been accepted for inclusion in History Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@USU. For more information, please contact dylan.burns@usu.edu.





Project
MUSE[®]

Today's Research. Tomorrow's Inspiration.

Atlantic Republicanism in Nineteenth-Century Colombia: Spanish America's Challenge to the Contours of Atlantic History

James E. Sanders

Journal of World History, Volume 20, Number 1, March 2009,
pp. 131-150 (Article)

Published by University of Hawai'i Press
DOI: [10.1353/jwh.0.0034](https://doi.org/10.1353/jwh.0.0034)



For additional information about this article

<http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/jwh/summary/v020/20.1.sanders.html>

Atlantic Republicanism in Nineteenth-Century Colombia: Spanish America's Challenge to the Contours of Atlantic History*

JAMES E. SANDERS
Utah State University

WHY does so much Atlantic history appear to end in 1825? Considering both historical processes and historiography, that date seems to have some obvious advantages, marking the end of the great Age of Revolution with the independence of much of Spanish America. It is also a nice quarter-of-a-century break, better, one supposes, than 1826 when the Spanish garrison holding Callao, Peru finally surrendered. More importantly, choosing 1825 allows Atlantic history to end with a note of triumph, one that can be embraced by historians of all political stripes, be they conservative, liberal, or radical, as almost all claim some aspect of the Age of Revolution as their own. However, does the Age of Revolution accurately mark the end of the political processes of Atlantic history? The recent flourishing of scholarship on Latin American nation and state formation, even if most of it is not

* I would like to thank Ann Farnsworth-Alvear, Aims McGuinness, Michael Ervin, Chris Conte, Jennifer Duncan, the anonymous reader for the *Journal of World History*, and my fellow 2007 LASA panelists who all provided comments on various versions of this paper. I would especially like to thank the archivists and librarians who provided so much help and guidance at the Archivo General de la Nación, the Archivo del Congreso, the Archivo Central del Cauca, the Biblioteca Luis Angel Arango, and the Biblioteca Nacional in Colombia, the Museo Histórico Municipal in Uruguay, and the Library of Congress in the United States. Support for researching and writing this article came from a Utah State University New Faculty Research Grant and the John W. Kluge Center at the Library of Congress.

directly engaged with Atlantic history, strongly suggests that the Age of Revolution's debates over citizenship, sovereignty, and rights continued unabated, even intensified, in the nineteenth century.¹ What would be the ramifications of taking this scholarship seriously for understanding the history of the Atlantic world system? I argue that, at least for Spanish America, the struggles over visions of republicanism and democracy

¹ I hesitate to try to cite all of this literature, as it has grown so vast; a partial listing of key works include Florencia E. Mallon, *Peasant and Nation: The Making of Post-Colonial Mexico and Peru* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniel Nugent, eds., *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1994); Antonio Annino and François-Xavier Guerra, eds., *Inventando la nación: Iberoamérica, siglo XIX* (México, D.F.: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2003); Hilda Sabato, ed., *Ciudadanía política y formación de las naciones: Perspectivas históricas de América Latina* (México, D.F.: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1999); Mark Thurner, *From Two Republics to One Divided: Contradictions of Post-Colonial Nationmaking in Andean Peru* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1997); Peter F. Guardino, *The Time of Liberty: Popular Political Culture in Oaxaca, 1750–1850* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2005); Elías José Palti, *La invención de una legitimidad: Razón y retórica en el pensamiento mexicano del siglo XIX* (México, D.F.: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2005); Sarah C. Chambers, *From Subjects to Citizens: Honor, Gender, and Politics in Arequipa, Peru, 1780–1854* (University Park, Pa.: Penn State University Press, 1999); Ada Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, and Revolution, 1868–1898* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Ulrich Muecke, *Political Culture in Nineteenth-Century Peru: The Rise of the Partido Civil* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2004); Francie R. Chassen-López, *From Liberal to Revolutionary Oaxaca: The View from the South, Mexico, 1867–1911* (University Park, Pa.: Penn State University Press, 2004); Greg Grandin, *The Blood of Guatemala: A History of Race and Nation* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2000); Charles F. Walker, *Smoldering Ashes: Cuzco and the Creation of Republican Peru, 1780–1840* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1999); Marixa Lasso, "Race War and Nation in Caribbean Gran Colombia, Cartagena, 1810–1832," *American Historical Review* 111 (April 2006): 336–361; Jorge Myers, *Orden y virtud: El discurso republicano en el régimen rosista* (Buenos Aires: Universidad Nacional de Quilmes, 1995); Guy P. C. Thomson with David G. LaFrance, *Patriotism, Politics, and Popular Liberalism in Nineteenth-Century Mexico: Juan Francisco Lucas and the Puebla Sierra* (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 1999); James E. Sanders, *Contentious Republicans: Popular Politics, Race, and Class in Nineteenth-Century Colombia* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2004); Brooke Larson, *Trials of Nation Making: Liberalism, Race, and Ethnicity in the Andes, 1810–1910* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Richard A. Warren, *Vagrants and Citizens: Politics and the Masses in Mexico City from Colony to Republic* (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 2001); Jeremy Adelman, *Sovereignty and Revolution in the Iberian Atlantic* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2006); Cecilia Méndez, *The Plebeian Republic: The Huanta Rebellion and the Making of the Peruvian State, 1820–1850* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2005); Peter M. Beattie, *The Tribute of Blood: Army, Honor, Race, and Nation in Brazil, 1864–1945* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2001); Gunnar Mendoza L., Rossana Barragán R., Dora Cajías, and Seemin Qayum, eds., *El siglo XIX: Bolivia y América Latina* (La Paz: Muela del Diablo Editores, 1997); Victor M. Uribe-Uran, ed., *State and Society in Spanish America during the Age of Revolution* (Wilmington, Del.: SR Books, 2001); Ricardo D. Salvatore; *Wandering Paysanos: State Order and Subaltern Experience in Argentina during the Rosas Era* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2003); and Antonio Annino, ed., *Historia de las elecciones en Iberoamérica, siglo XIX: De la formación del espacio político nacional* (Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1995).

that wracked the region throughout most of the nineteenth century cannot be understood outside of an Atlantic context, nor can the full history of the Atlantic Age of Revolution be complete without taking into account the democratic and republican developments of mid nineteenth-century Spanish America. Ending studies of the Atlantic world in the early nineteenth century has worked to obscure the importance of these later political struggles and their Atlantic character, thereby emphasizing events and processes in the North Atlantic, while ignoring sites of democratic innovation such as Colombia, which, as I will argue below, enjoyed universal adult male suffrage, racially inclusive citizenship, and active subaltern participation in the political system by the 1850s. Likewise, keeping these political struggles in their international context helps to avoid classifying Spanish American republics as fundamentally alien to North American and European politics, instead illuminating the Atlantic nature of the republican political culture of Spanish America until the 1880s—when democratic republicanism declined as the region fully entered into a new neo-colonial global economic and political system.²

Of course, not everyone would choose 1825 and the events of the Age of Revolution as the end of Atlantic history, but the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century does seem to be a popular, although not universal, termination of the Atlantic project. Most studies' periodization follows the establishment and eventual termination of formal colonies, which, given the intricate links between the Atlantic World and colonialism, seems quite logical.³ Yet the nation and state forma-

² For Latin American politics as being fundamentally different from the North Atlantic politics, see Richard M. Morse, *New World Soundings: Culture and Ideology in the Americas* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989); Howard J. Wiarda, ed., *Politics and Social Change in Latin America: Still a Distinct Tradition*, 3rd ed. (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1992).

³ For examples of Atlantic histories ending in the early nineteenth or late eighteenth century, see Bernard Bailyn, *Atlantic History: Concept and Contours* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005); Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000); Peggy Liss, *Atlantic Empires: The Network of Trade and Revolution, 1713–1826* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983); R. R. Palmer, *The Age of the Democratic Revolution: A Political History of Europe and America, 1760–1800*, 2 vols. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1959, 1964); Thomas Benjamin, Timothy Hall, and David Rutherford, eds., *The Atlantic World in the Age of Empire* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2001); Wim Klooster and Alfred Padula, eds., *The Atlantic World: Essays on Slavery, Migration and Imagination* (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2005); Horst Pietschmann, *Atlantic History: History of the Atlantic System, 1580–1830* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2002); John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400–1800*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998);

tion literature cited above and the theoretical work of postcolonial studies should push scholars not to assume that the legacies of colonialism, or, more importantly for this article, the effects of the struggles against colonialism, end with nominal independence. Donna Gabaccia has persuasively argued that those interested in Atlantic history should not be bound by the standard timeline, noting that all kinds of political, economic, intellectual, and cultural factors extend beyond the standard periodization; as this article argues, this periodization is particularly deleterious for understanding Spanish American and Atlantic politics.⁴ Studies of abolition, or the black Atlantic, seems to be the main exception to this trend, and thus 1888 might be the second most popular end point for defining the Atlantic system.⁵ For our purposes, however, and as historians of postemancipation societies have shown, the struggles of the black Atlantic continued much beyond legal abolition in demands for full social, economic, and political citizenship.⁶

Phillip Beidler and Gary Taylor, eds., *Writing Race Across the Atlantic World: Medieval to Modern* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave, 2005); David Armitage, *Greater Britain, 1516–1776: Essays in Atlantic History* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2004); M. J. Seymour, *The Transformation of the North Atlantic World, 1492–1763* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2004); Elizabeth Mancke and Carole Shammas, eds., *The Creation of the British Atlantic World* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005); Juan Javier Pescador, *The New World Inside a Basque Village: The Oiartzun Valley and its Atlantic Emigrants, 1550–1800* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2004); Anthony Pagden, *Spanish Imperialism and the Political Imagination: Studies in European and Spanish-American Social and Political Theory, 1513–1830* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1990); Douglas J. Hamilton, *Scotland, the Caribbean and the Atlantic World, 1750–1820* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005); and Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, *How to Write the History of the New World: Historiographies, Epistemologies, and Identities in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2001).

⁴ Donna Gabaccia, “A Long Atlantic in a Wider World,” *Atlantic Studies: Literary, Cultural and Historical Perspectives* 1 (April 2004): 1–27. Brading’s intellectual history of creole patriotism happily does extend into the nineteenth century, even if he does not think much of the actual, as opposed to intellectual, democratic republics or of subalterns’ role in creating them. D. A. Brading, *The First America: The Spanish Monarchy, Creole Patriots, and the Liberal State 1492–1867* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). Likewise, Dunkerley’s wonderfully idiosyncratic *Americana* is not so much concerned with republicanism, as with Atlantic international connections and mentalities. James Dunkerley, *Americana: The Americas in the World, around 1850* (London: Verso, 2000).

⁵ Of course, slavery in the Atlantic World did not end in 1888, as it continued in Africa. For 1888 as ending point, see Gabaccia, “A Long Atlantic,” p. 5; Alan L. Karras, “The Atlantic World as a Unit of Study,” in *Atlantic American Societies, from Columbus through Abolition, 1492–1888*, ed. Alan L. Karras and J. R. McNeill (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 7; J. R. McNeill, “The End of the Old Atlantic World: America, Africa, Europe, 1770–1888,” in Karras and McNeill, *Atlantic American Societies*, pp. 245–268.

⁶ George Reid Andrews, *Afro-Latin America, 1800–2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); and Rebecca J. Scott, *Degrees of Freedom: Louisiana and Cuba after Slavery* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 2005).

Equally important, abolition in Spanish America cannot be separated from the democratic republican movements through which emancipation was so often achieved.⁷ Beyond studies of slavery and abolition, however, most Atlantic works do not venture far into the nineteenth century, as is the case with the most important university institution for studying the Atlantic and the two most influential master narratives of Atlantic history.

Harvard University's "International Seminar on the History of the Atlantic World, 1500–1825" lays out the dates precisely and has been one of the most influential shapers of Atlantic history, along with its director, Bernard Bailyn. Bailyn's book *Atlantic History: Concept and Contours*, while charting the course of Atlantic history, also ends in the early nineteenth century, although he curiously never justifies or even explains why he has chosen to do so, other than to cursorily note that the Atlantic system was replaced with a "global world system."⁸ Marcus Rediker and Peter Linebaugh, while positing a very different vision of Atlantic history, also end their *The Many-Headed Hydra* during the Age of Revolution. They offer "the early 1790s" as when the "egalitarian, multiethnic conception of humanity" promoted by working people across the Atlantic was replaced by more particular movements of the "Working Class" and "Black Power," dividing a previously united movement of the commons by race, class, and nationality.⁹ Yet whether one is tracing Bailyn's liberal republican movements or Rediker and Linebaugh's radical struggles for human liberation, the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century cannot serve as the end to either of these stories in Spanish America. Spanish America's liberal republican movements would not triumph until midcentury, well after Bailyn ends his narrative. In addition, these social and political movements triumphed in many places only because of their linkage with radical struggles for human liberation that, unlike in Rediker and Linebaugh's North Atlantic, had not yet divided along racial lines and because a class of industrial workers separate from other subaltern laborers had not yet emerged.¹⁰

⁷ Abolition did not tend to happen "quickly" after the wars of independence in Latin America, as McNeill suggests, but often involved a sustained campaign to claim rights under citizenship. McNeill, "End of the Old Atlantic World," p. 259.

⁸ Bailyn, *Atlantic History*, p. 111.

⁹ Linebaugh and Rediker, *Many-Headed Hydra*, pp. 333–334.

¹⁰ I think Rediker and Linebaugh are essentially correct concerning the North Atlantic; further comparative studies are needed to theorize why the North Atlantic and South Atlantic (or English and Spanish) systems had such variation.

The democratic and republican discourse and practices of politics begun in the Atlantic Age of Revolution would peak in many parts of Spanish America in the 1850s and 1860s. In these years, subaltern political movements forced ruling elites to democratically expand notions of citizenship and rights far beyond that achieved in other areas of the Atlantic World. As we will see in the case of Colombia below, popular liberals allied with elite liberals to open citizenship to all adult males regardless of race, literacy, or property holding, and this new citizen class would radically change the culture of Colombian republican politics, significantly democratizing it. Popular liberals would exploit this democratic republicanism in their quest for human liberation, most successfully concerning the abolition of slavery and less so concerning redefining property to include the “commons.” While many elites reacted in horror at these events, others accepted them as markers of Colombia’s modernity in the Atlantic World and success in securing human freedom, especially compared to the poor record of European societies. However, concerns over order and capitalist development would eventually triumph—if, of course, incompletely—as elites acted to suppress this Atlantic democratic republicanism in the 1880s. Thus while recognizing the danger of historical periodization and the effacement it often does to the reality of historical diversity and agency,¹¹ in this case especially to the story of Cuba whose independence occurred much later, I propose that to understand Spanish American political life that Atlantic history must be extended through most of the nineteenth century. I should also state that while democratic republican movements collapsed in the 1880s, I am not suggesting this decade as a new endpoint of Atlantic historical processes, only that opening up Atlantic history beyond the 1820s is necessary to complete the story of the Age of Revolution while allowing historians to rethink both the role of republicanism in Spanish American history and the role of Spanish America in the world history of democracy and republicanism.

ATLANTIC REPUBLICANISM IN COLOMBIA

Colombia gained its independence with struggles over rights, democracy, and republicanism that nicely fit the model of the Atlantic World’s

¹¹ Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), pp. 19–22.

denouement.¹² As Bailyn notes, however, the region's late joining of the Age of Revolution would end in the "collapse of Latin America's new republics into despotic fiefdoms and anarchic city-states."¹³ Until recently, most scholars of Spanish American history would have agreed with this assessment, considering nineteenth-century republicanism as largely a failure. Subalterns were interested in neither the nation nor democratic republicanism, but were only concerned with the *patria chica* of their immediate surroundings, entering politics only as the clients of powerful patrons. Elites were not divided by different visions of politics, but instead only squabbled over the spoils of the state, despairing of their societies' backwardness.¹⁴ Latin America would eventually reenter a global capitalist system after the chaos of the Wars of Independence, but the political seeds sowed by the Atlantic Age of Revolution had apparently failed to germinate.

A new scholarship emerging in the 1990s challenged these interpretations. As scholars began delving into Spanish American nineteenth-century popular politics, they found the lower classes intensely engaged with the republican politics of the Atlantic Age of Revolution: wrestling with the new concept of the nation, appropriating citizenship to their own ends and reframing liberty, equality, and fraternity.¹⁵ These debates began during and immediately after independence, but often accelerated in the 1850s and 1860s, as reforming liberal parties took power. While most of this work has not been concerned with Atlantic history directly, the new historiography does challenge the standing contours of Atlantic history, since the republican politics that emerged in nineteenth-century Spanish America were a direct consequence of Atlantic processes springing from the Age of Revolution. And Spanish America was the principal site where republicanism developed. Although Spanish America is generally ignored when considering the history of democracy and republicanism, in 1847 there were only two national republics in the Atlantic World outside of Spanish Amer-

¹² See Alfonso Múnera, *El fracaso de la nación: Región, clase y raza en el Caribe colombiano (1717–1810)* (Bogotá: Banco de la República, 1998); Lasso, "Race War and Nation"; and Aline Helg, *Liberty and Equality in Caribbean Colombia, 1770–1835* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

¹³ Bailyn, *Atlantic History*, p. 110.

¹⁴ David Bushnell, *The Making of Modern Colombia: A Nation in Spite of Itself* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 74, 78, 93–100; and Frank Safford, "Social Aspects of Politics in Nineteenth-Century Spanish America: New Granada, 1825–1850," *Journal of Social History* 5 (Spring 1972): 344–370.

¹⁵ See note 1 above.

ica. (Tellingly, in Hobsbawm's world map of republicanism, most of South America is obscured by an inset of Europe, although Switzerland was Europe's sole republic at this time.¹⁶) Therefore, the evolution of democracy and republicanism in Spanish America is an important aspect of Atlantic history that cannot be ignored.

Of course, these republican movements acted nationally and indeed were central to the process of nation formation, so while the internationalism of republican progress was a concern, as we will see below, Atlantic republicanism developed on distinct national stages within Latin America. Republicanism was important in all of Spanish America and even in Brazil, where it served as a vehicle to challenge both the ruling monarchy and slavery, but it seems to have had somewhat less potency and a less popular cast in the Andean highlands.¹⁷ Brooke Larson has argued that liberal republicanism's hostility to indigenous identity and Andean elites' fear of indigenous majorities limited the development and efficacy of republicanism in the new Andean nations. Larson notes, however, that this was not due to lack of interest by the Indians themselves, who in hostile environments still tried to embrace republican political movements, even if panicked elites eventually countered these indigenous efforts with severe repression.¹⁸ While research is ongoing in many areas, it seems Mexico and Colombia adopted republicanism most vociferously, at both the elite and the popular levels.¹⁹

By the 1850s, after liberals took power and opened up the political system, Colombians of all political classes were remaking politics in the Atlantic tradition, debating the meanings of nation, citizenship, liberty, equality, and rights. Benedict Anderson assumes national identity was largely an elite affair in Spanish America, but even if this were the case during independence, it was certainly no longer true by the mid nineteenth century.²⁰ Subalterns embraced the nation as a site of new political identities that might be more powerful than their old positions in society forged under colonialism. For example, the residents of

¹⁶ Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Capital: 1848–1875* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996), p. 312.

¹⁷ João José Reis, *Slave Rebellion in Brazil: The Muslim Uprising of 1835 in Bahia* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993); and Spencer L. Leitman, "The Black Ragamuffins: Racial Hypocrisy in Nineteenth-Century Southern Brazil," *Americas* 33 (January 1977): 504–518.

¹⁸ Larson, *Trials of Nation Making*; see also, Thurner, *From Two Republics to One Divided*; Méndez, *Plebeian Republic*.

¹⁹ Thomson with LaFrance, *Patriotism, Politics, and Popular Liberalism*, p. xiii.

²⁰ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991).

a frontier hamlet, after noting how they and their families had sacrificed to create a new settlement out of a “miserable wilderness” and had even built a church, asserted that before their arrival the land did not give “any benefit to the nation,” but they would “give to the nation the benefit of a civilized and religious village.”²¹ The most important identity within the nation was that of citizenship, claimed by almost all the lower class, be they ex-slaves, Indians, or mestizo peasants. Scholars who practiced Atlantic history before that term came into vogue assumed there was no “national consciousness” in Latin America beyond a small elite and that the poor had no interest in national politics, leaving such history making to the European working class.²² Yet the declaration of Indians from a village in the southwestern Cauca that states, “We are free citizens, like any other civilized Caucano,” reveals the limitations of such assumptions.²³ Ex-slaves declared to the national congress in 1852 that “We enjoy the precious possession of liberty, so long usurped, and with it all the other rights and prerogatives of citizens.”²⁴ Although free on 1 January of that year, most if not all of the petitioners would not have been legal citizens as they would have lacked the necessary property. Yet the vociferousness of subalterns’ claims to citizenship, even when legally excluded, forced Colombian elites desperate for lower-class allies to grant universal adult male citizenship in the 1853 constitution. While legal citizenship and suffrage rights are perhaps not the best measure of political involvement, they do allow easy comparison with other parts of the Atlantic world.²⁵ Instead of seeming backward and an imitator of Europe and the United States, in comparison Colombia was much advanced in extending citizenship beyond the racial and class barriers of the North Atlantic.

Colombia’s subalterns would use their newly claimed citizenship to reimagine the meanings of liberty, equality, fraternity and then employ

²¹ This and all subsequent translations mine. Residents of Cabal Parish [over seventy-five names, majority signed for by others] to Honorable Representatives and Senators of the Congress [national], Cabal, 1 May 1849, Archivo del Congreso (Bogotá) (hereafter AC), 1849, Senado, Leyes Autografas II, p. 175.

²² Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution: 1789–1848* (Cleveland: World Publishing Company, 1962), p. 143, see also p. 121.

²³ Members of the Cabildo Pequeño de Indígenas and Adults of the Village of Sibundoy [over sixty names, majority signed with an X] to Citizen President of the State, Sibundoy, 8 November 1874, Archivo Central del Cauca (Popayán) (hereafter ACC), Archivo Muerto, Paquete 129, Legajo 45, no page number.

²⁴ Residents of San Juan [twenty-four names, all signed with an X] to Citizen Senators and Representatives [national], no place or date on letter [1852], AC, 1852, Senado, Proyectos Negados II, p. 19.

²⁵ Annino, *Historia de las elecciones*; Eduardo Posada-Carbó, ed., *Elections Before Democracy: The History of Elections in Europe and Latin America* (London: Institute of Latin American Studies, 1996).

this new political discourse to challenge existing economic and social relations. Afro-Colombians entered into a long-running alliance with the Liberal Party, fighting as soldiers in civil wars and voting in elections; in return they won citizenship, suffrage rights, the repeal of vagrancy laws, freedom from onerous monopolies on liquor and tobacco production and consumption, a reform of judicial codes including the termination of the death penalty, a return of some common lands, and most importantly the abolition of slavery.²⁶ Indeed it is in slavery's abolition (the one area of Atlantic history that usually does extend further into the nineteenth century) that we see how the red (or radical) and black Atlantics unite into one, for the abolition of slavery in Spanish America occurred as part of an Atlantic movement to secure rights as citizens of a republic, as Reid Andrews has shown.²⁷ While Rediker and Linebaugh see the Haitian Revolution as bifurcating the united movement of working people along racial lines, this is not how that revolution was understood by subalterns in Spanish America.²⁸ Marixa Lasso argues that blacks and mulattos along the Caribbean coast of Colombia understood the Haitian Revolution as a republican struggle for equal rights and the abolition of slavery, not a race war.²⁹ In the process of securing these very real social and economic gains, Afro-Colombians played a part in redefining the most important and powerful tropes of the Atlantic world: democracy, republicanism, liberty, equality, and fraternity. Ex-slaves did not claim "liberty" lightly, investing the word with more than a list of rights guaranteed to white property holders and expanding the concept to include a general freedom from oppression for people of all races and classes. Afro-Colombians also appropriated notions of equality, demanding land for all those who worked it, as toiling for others forced tenants "to be the peons and tributaries of an individual and to cease to be citizens of a free people."³⁰ Colombia's popular liberals thus both acted in an Atlantic tradition, by claiming

²⁶ James E. Sanders, "'Citizens of a Free People': Popular Liberalism and Race in Nineteenth-Century Southwestern Colombia," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 84 (May 2004): 277-313.

²⁷ Andrews, *Afro-Latin America*, pp. 85-115.

²⁸ Linebaugh and Rediker, *Many-Headed Hydra*, pp. 340-341.

²⁹ Marixa Lasso, "Haiti as an Image of Popular Republicanism in Caribbean Colombia: Cartagena Province (1811-1828)," in *The Impact of the Haitian Revolution in the Atlantic World*, ed. David P. Geggus (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2001), pp. 176-190.

³⁰ The Undersigned Members of the Democratic Society of Cali [over 180 names, many with very rough handwriting or signed for by others] to Citizen President of the State, Cali, 1 June 1877, ACC, Archivo Muerto, Paquete 137, Legajo 7, no page number.

a citizenship invested with rights, and remade that tradition, by transforming republicanism into a vehicle capable of promoting visions of social equality that had been defined so differently under the racial and class parameters of Europe and the United States.

Thus Afro-Colombians continued and broadened the work begun by slaves and freedpeople in the French Caribbean during the Atlantic Age of Revolution. As Laurent Dubois argues, “The democratic possibilities imperial powers would claim they were bringing to the colonies had in fact been forged, not within the boundaries of Europe, but through the struggles over rights that spread throughout the Atlantic Empires.”³¹ Yet, these struggles would not end in 1825, but continue, with even more success than during the Age of Revolution, throughout the nineteenth century. This perspective also rescues republicanism and democracy from “Western” history or “Western Civilization” and resituates it in an Atlantic frame—dominated not by Europe or the United States, but by Spanish America and the African diaspora. New research on constitutional and liberal thought in nineteenth-century India may push studies of republicanism and democracy’s development toward a truly global level, forcing a further rethinking of both the “West” and Atlantic history as valid concepts, although as of now studies of these movements suggest they had a less popular cast than those in Latin America.³²

A focus on the evolution of democracy and republicanism in the Atlantic World would also position Latin America as an equally important node in a causal web that connected the Atlantic, instead of its standard relegation to the periphery. Latin America is usually considered important for studies of slavery and economics, but only with its tardy wars for independence does the region matter much politically

³¹ Laurent Dubois, *A Colony of Citizens: Revolution and Slave Emancipation in the French Caribbean, 1787–1804* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), pp. 4–5. See also, Cooper, *Colonialism*, p. 21; Mark Thurner, “After Spanish Rule: Writing Another After,” in *After Spanish Rule: Post-Colonial Predicaments of the Americas*, ed. Mark Thurner and Andrés Guerrero (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2003), p. 30.

³² For studies of elite thought, see C. A. Bayly, “Rammohan Roy and the Advent of Constitutional Liberalism in India, 1800–30,” *Modern Intellectual History* 4 (April 2007): 25–41; Amartya Kumar Sen, *The Argumentative Indian: Writings on Indian History, Culture, and Identity* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005). I am not suggesting that the South Asian working classes were not intensely engaged in political thought in the nineteenth century, only that many of their movements were not as invested in republicanism as similar popular movements were in the Atlantic world. See Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983). Of course, by the twentieth century, this would not be the case. Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought in the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986).

for the Atlantic story. Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra's *How to Write the History of the New World* is the exception to this trend. Cañizares-Esguerra positions his "Spanish American baroque" intellectual/political movement as one that challenged the northern European Enlightenment rationality that formed the base of the political narrative of the Atlantic world.³³ However, neither Colombian subalterns nor elites thought of themselves as separate from the democratic republicanism of the enlightened Atlantic, but sought to position themselves as at its center. While Cañizares-Esguerra wishes to place Spanish America apart,³⁴ peasants from a small frontier village in the Colombian Andes claimed their place in Atlantic history, asserting "liberty and independence are found in the cabin of the peasant too."³⁵

While most subalterns (although certainly not all, as we will see below) engaged the Atlantic world through their reformulation and appropriation of concepts of citizenship or liberty and equality, they, not surprisingly, did not make the same direct comparisons, as did many elites, with the rest of the Atlantic world. In nineteenth-century provincial Colombia, most elites assumed they were part of the Atlantic political and cultural tradition. The upper class envisioned their civil wars as no different from those that convulsed Europe and especially understood the United States' fratricidal conflict as mirroring their own 1851 civil war, when conservatives also revolted to preserve slavery.³⁶ (Mexican patriots also compared the U.S. Civil War with their own resistance to the French invasion and Maximillian's monarchy; both societies were engaged in similar struggles of republicans and rights versus aristocrats and slavery.³⁷) Colombians likened the sack of Cali, when popular liberals violently retook the town after a conservative revolt, to "the horrors of the French Revolution" or the Paris Commune.³⁸ When Cali's more popular Democratic Society marched through the streets

³³ Cañizares-Esguerra, *How to Write the History of the New World*, p. 306.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 266–345.

³⁵ The Assembly of Padres de Familia of the Aldea de Chinchiná to Citizen Legislators of the Republic, no place or date on letter but received in Bogotá on 2 February 1856, AC, 1856, Cámara, Solicitudes IV, p. 20.

³⁶ For Europe, see, César Conto to T. C. de Mosquera, Popayán, 2 December 1874, Biblioteca Luis Angel Arango, Bogotá, Sala de Manuscritos, MSS 113, p. 5. For the United States, see José Hilario López, *Mensaje del Poder Ejecutivo a las Cámaras Legislativas* (Bogotá: Imprenta del Neo-Granadino, 1852), p. 1.

³⁷ *La Guerra: Periódico Popular é Independiente* (Morelia), 31 January 1862, 7 February 1852.

³⁸ Anonymous, "Relación de los sucesos de Cali," 30 December 1876, ACC, Fondo Arboleda, Signatura 440, p. 1; see also, *El Ferrocarril* (Cali), 14 February 1878.

to intimidate conservatives, they too “sang their Marseillaise.”³⁹ While Bailyn does note how the “public worlds” of Europe and Latin America were “especially close” at this time, he curiously keeps referring to the “West” in his narrative, although that concept was in little use during the time period, and not really used at all in Latin America.⁴⁰ Of course, the concepts of the “West” has since been used to exclude Latin America as an other of Europe and the United States, but this would have made little sense in midcentury Bogotá or Cali.

Colombians did not see themselves as laggards in the Atlantic World, but felt their new, democratic nations were at the vanguard, compared to Europe’s tired, feudal states. Colombian elites did not just imagine themselves as mere followers of Atlantic political currents, but rather saw themselves as “the vanguard in America” along with other New World republics, including the United States.⁴¹ A Colombian newspaperman exulted, “Europe is the past. America the Future. . . . When we talk of the Old World, we do not speak of you, young Italy! You are the America of Europe.”⁴² Another newspaper referred to Italy as “our sister” who “will be the sentinel for American Rights, stationed at the gates of the European monarchies.”⁴³ The New World, and perhaps young Italy, was the site of progress and the future in the Atlantic world; the Old World, including even prosperous England, was old, tired, decadent, monarchical, beset by violence, and weighed down by the feudal past.⁴⁴ Walter Mignolo positions Latin America as somehow trapped by the Atlantic tradition, arguing that “postindependence nations articulated themselves within the liberal ideology of the modern world system. ‘Decolonization’ as final horizon was still not available in the nineteenth century.”⁴⁵ Yet Colombians did not

³⁹ *El Sentimiento Democrático* (Cali), 10 January 1850.

⁴⁰ Bailyn, *Atlantic History*, p. 109 (quotation), preface, pp. 8, 9, 12, 13, 17, 24, 27, 55, 104, 107.

⁴¹ *La Unión* (Popayán), 23 October 1864; see also, Julián Trujillo, Eliseo Payán, and Manuel del Quijano to Deputies of the Constitutional Convention, Popayán, 15 July 1872, ACC, Archivo Muerto, Paquete 116, Legajo 16, no page number.

⁴² *El Caucaño* (Cali), 3 November 1864.

⁴³ *La Unión* (Popayán), 30 October 1864; see also, *La Unión* (Popayán), 12 March 1864. Yet another paper called Colombia the “American Italy.” *El Cauca: Periódico Literario Dedicado a la Juventud* (Popayán), 9 May 1874.

⁴⁴ T. C. de Mosquera, “Mensaje del Gobernador de Estado a la Lejislatura de 1859,” Popayán, 11 August 1859, ACC, Archivo Muerto, Paquete 74, Legajo 48, no page number; *La Unión* (Popayán), 18 October 1863 and 31 January 1864; Jaime Jaramillo Uribe, *El pensamiento colombiano en el siglo XIX* (Bogotá: Editorial Temis, 1964), pp. 3–74.

⁴⁵ Walter D. Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), p. 133.

“articulate” themselves within a system, but saw themselves as leading the way to the creation of a new democratic republicanism, at least before the 1870s. Also, decolonization was a concern of Colombian intellectuals, although lingering colonial effects were considered no worse than monarchy and feudalism in the imperial center. One writer evoked the Americas versus Europe thus: “The situation of America is dire; the fight is between the colonial system and the modern liberal spirit, between the paganism of the Roman priests and the evangelical Christian idea, between those that dream of re-establishing slavery, privilege, monarchy, theocracy and those that believe that all of those abominations should remain in Europe.”⁴⁶

The idea that the rights of man would find their most complete expression in Spanish America, as opposed to Europe, was not limited to Colombia. During the French intervention in Mexico (1862–1867), one newspaper declared the invasion’s replacement of Mexico’s republic with a monarchy was designed to ensure “that the struggles in the New World for liberty to conquer the sacred rights of humanity become sterile in their results, because thrones shudder when democracy rapidly moves to achieve the destiny of the people: universal fraternity.”⁴⁷ This writer not only positions Spanish America as part of a universal fraternity of peoples, but places Mexico at the forefront of a struggle for rights in the Atlantic World.

During the international and civil war of Uruguay (1836–1852), in which Giuseppe Garibaldi fought for the republican government in Montevideo, a newspaper chastised the French, seen as abandoning the city to the forces of the Argentine caudillo Juan Manuel de Rosas: “. . . neither the French nor other foreigners are the ones that have given us liberty or institutions. Thanks to our own efforts, we enjoy both more and better than the French, who are more slaves of Luis Felipe . . .”⁴⁸ Garibaldi united in one man the international republican

⁴⁶ *El Caucaño* (Cali), 21 January 1864. The writer referred specifically to the U.S. Civil War and the French intervention in Mexico, as well as Colombia’s own resurgent Conservative Party. See also, *El Ciudadano* (Popayán), 17 June 1848.

Colombian politicians discursively supported Cuban patriots in their struggle against Spain and Mexican republicans against their imposed monarchy. Jorge Isaacs, Secretary of the Cámara de Representantes to Secretary of the Interior and Foreign Relations, Bogotá, 15 June 1870, Archivo General de la Nación (Bogotá) (hereafter AGN), Sección República, Fondo Congreso, Legajo 5, p. 553; *Gaceta Oficial del Cauca* (Popayán), 23 July 1867; *Gaceta Oficial* (Popayán), 31 July 1869.

⁴⁷ *La Guerra: Periódico Popular é Independiente* (Morelia), 27 December 1861.

⁴⁸ *El Compás* (Montevideo), 5 December 1840.

struggle, as he fought against monarchies and dictatorships in Brazil and Uruguay before returning to Italy: “the hero of both Worlds.”⁴⁹ The subaltern Italian Garibaldinos fighting in Uruguay’s civil war who remained in their Spanish American home wanted to send their battle flags to Genoa to serve as examples (to Europeans) that “free men and true republicans” could triumph in Europe as they had in the New World, showing even poor soldiers shared an Atlantic imagination.⁵⁰ Garibaldi, who would become a potent symbol of liberal republicanism throughout Spanish America, and his subaltern followers operated in an Atlantic that assumed a historical political unity. There was not the assumption that he, as a European, or Europe had a monopoly on political progress; on the contrary, Europe lagged the rest of the Atlantic World in securing democratic republicanism. As Colombian (New Granadan) president Manuel Mallarino asserted, “The Granadan people, if not as prosperous and powerful as others whose existence measures centuries, is without a doubt as free as any in the New or Old Worlds.”⁵¹

So why by the 1880s in most parts of Spanish America was democratic republicanism waning and intellectuals looking to Europe or the United States as the founts of modernity? The debilitation of the democratic republican project seemed to solidify in most of Spanish America in the 1880s, while recognizing that local contingencies, especially Cuba, which was still a colony in the 1880s, resist defining historical epochs. Beginning in the 1870s and accelerating thereafter, the most vibrant republican political cultures in Spanish America would lose their discursive power and their subaltern adherents would lose many of their rights in the evolving nation-states, such as under Mexico’s Porfiriato.⁵² A Spaniard writing in Mexico applauded Porfirio Díaz’s efforts, noting that a “healthy dictatorship” was preferential to rowdy republics: “Political science knows nothing more lamentable than those

⁴⁹ *La Nación* (Montevideo), 4 June 1882.

⁵⁰ Draft of letter from Italian Legion to Uruguayan National Government, Museo Histórico Municipal, Archivo y Biblioteca Pablo Blanco Acevedo (Montevideo), Colección Museo Histórico Nacional, Tomo 1283, no page number.

⁵¹ M. M. Mallarino, “Mensaje del Poder Ejecutivo al Congreso de la Nueva Granada en sus sesiones ordinarias de 1857,” Bogotá, 1 February 1857, AC, 1857, Cámara, Mensajes y Correspondencia IV, p. 30.

⁵² Mallon notes how “in many Latin American countries, suffrage was more limited in the late nineteenth century than at the beginning.” Florencia E. Mallon, “Subalterns and the Nation,” *Disposition* 25, no. 52 (2005): 162. See also Hilda Sabato, *The Many and the Few: Political Participation in Republican Buenos Aires* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2001), pp. 180–181.

Republics where everyone rules and no one obeys. . . .”⁵³ Similarly, in Colombia, under the elite project for expanded state power called the Regeneration, subalterns lost the right to organize in political clubs and full citizenship in 1886, which had legally marked their inclusion in the republican nation.⁵⁴ When Colombia’s elites had needed subaltern allies earlier in the century, they had tolerated the lower class’s appropriation of republicanism and democracy; however, the rising potency of the state in the 1880s created a new calculus of political power.

During and after the 1880s, elites and state bureaucrats were finally able to tame and control the power of nation, citizenship, and republicanism by bringing to bear new discursive powers of scientific racism, renewed imperialism (the colonization of Africa and Asia in the late nineteenth century also provided a language and strategy to control Spanish American democracy and republicanism), and the “logic” of capitalist development to limit and box in subalterns’ appropriation of the nation and republicanism. While scientific racism helped promote a xenophobic nationalism in Europe after the 1880s,⁵⁵ it worked in Spanish America to weaken republican nationalism by justifying elites’ efforts to exclude racially inferior subalterns from the political sphere.⁵⁶ The reflowering of imperialism in Africa and Asia helped give great prestige to scientific racism and forced Spanish American elites to reevaluate their claims to modernity. The discourse and practices of late nineteenth-century colonialism developed by the British and French for Africa and Asia could also be used by Latin American elites to master their internal colonies of subalterns. Mark Thurner notes that by the 1890s, Peruvians accepted French imperialist justifications for colonialism as a “scientific discourse” (and indeed used them for internal colonial projects in the Amazon), while earlier in the century they had rejected such notions.⁵⁷ The acceptance of such ideas meant that by the 1880s, Latin American elites had abandoned the idea of being the vanguard of modernity in the Atlantic world, instead embracing an aristocratic *hispanismo* that closely resembled

⁵³ *El Siglo Diez y Nueve* (Mexico City), 15 September 1884.

⁵⁴ Sanders, *Contentious Republicans*, pp. 153–198.

⁵⁵ Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 91, 107–109.

⁵⁶ Andrews, *Afro-Latin America*, pp. 117–151; Richard Graham, ed., *The Idea of Race in Latin America, 1870–1940* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990); and Nancy P. Appelbaum, Anne S. Macpherson, and Karin Alejandra Roseblatt, eds., *Race and Nation in Modern Latin America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

⁵⁷ Thurner, “After Spanish Rule,” pp. 44–45.

the discourse Cañizares-Esguerra championed from the colonial era.⁵⁸ Conservative elites hoped to regenerate the nation-state by celebrating elite Spanish culture, thereby ostracizing Amerindians, Afro-Latin Americans, and Atlantic republican political discourses and values.⁵⁹ By the late nineteenth century, modernity would only come from the outside,⁶⁰ via ideas (scientific racism), institutions (increased state power), people (European migrants), or capital (foreign investment).

If elites had to restrict democracy to obtain this modernity, they would not hesitate to do so. In Mexico, the governor of Oaxaca warned his state that people must abandon “once and for all sterile political questions” and dedicate themselves only to labor.⁶¹ Eliseo Payán, one of the leaders of Colombia’s Regeneration, argued that disorder had reached such extremes and economic prostration had sunk to such depths “that the path of the dictator is considered justifiable as the way to obtain order and peace.”⁶² Colombia’s subalterns had shown themselves eager and able to seize the democratic and republican traditions of the Atlantic Age of Revolution. Throughout the midcentury, they successfully claimed these ideas for their own and used them to promote their own ends. However, by the 1870s and 1880s, elites and the state sought to regain control over the meanings and power of democracy and republicanism. The Colombian politician Juan Ulloa exhorted that to achieve these changes “there is much work to be done in order to make the masses understand what real and true liberty and democracy are.”⁶³

Perhaps most important, the revival of capitalism in Spanish America, based on the export of primary products and neocolonial investment and policies by the United States and Europe, gave elites and the state the resources to abandon their bargaining with subalterns.⁶⁴

⁵⁸ Cañizares-Esguerra, *How to Write the History of the New World*, pp. 267, 348.

⁵⁹ Isidro Sepúlveda Muñoz, *Comunidad cultural e hispano-americanismo, 1885–1936* (Madrid: Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia, 1994); Frederick B. Pike, “Making the Hispanic World Safe from Democracy: Spanish Liberals and *Hispanismo*,” *The Review of Politics* 33 (July 1971): 307–322.

⁶⁰ Thurner, “After Spanish Rule,” p. 29.

⁶¹ *La Libertad* (Mexico City), 8 November 1884.

⁶² *Registro Oficial (Organo de Gobierno del Estado)* (Popayán), 1 May 1880.

⁶³ Juan E. Ulloa to Salvador Camacho Roldán, Palmira, 19 June 1879, AGN, Sección Academia Colombiana de Historia, Fondo Salvador Camacho Roldán, caja 13, carpeta 166, p. 6.

⁶⁴ For economic history, see Tulio Halperín Donghi, *The Contemporary History of Latin America* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1993), pp. 158–207. McNeill notes how the railroad turned trade inward away from the Atlantic by the 1880s, thus ending the

Supporters of Díaz in Mexico argued for an activist state that would not act as a “servant of the nation” but that would exercise its “right” to legislate, judge, and “punish.”⁶⁵ States could now afford to raise professional armies; build prisons; use bureaucracies to map, observe, count, quantify and qualify populations; and exploit railroads and telegraphs to deploy states forces. This had been predicted decades earlier by Francisco Bilbao, a great promoter of Atlantic republicanism in the nineteenth century, who had urged Americans to look to their own democratic accomplishments as the path to the future. He warned his fellow midcentury republicans not to look to European technological innovations as a path to a just future: “Don’t you see that by means of the telegraph and railroads, insurrections can be more rapidly suffocated?”⁶⁶ Of course, this was precisely the goal of those seeking to increase the power of the state and control popular mobilization. Unlike earlier in the century, the state could now rule over and successfully discipline subjects, instead of negotiating with citizens. In Colombia the slow rise of such power under the Regeneration after the 1880s signaled an end to an Atlantic radical republicanism. Elites succeeded in excluding subalterns from republicanism, but at the cost of effectively abandoning their leading role, and the place of democratic republicanism more generally, in the political trajectory of the Atlantic World.

The last gasp of the radical, inclusive nineteenth-century Atlantic republican project came in Cuba’s wars for independence. I would argue the national visions of José Martí and the Cuban patriot soldiers looked back as much to nineteenth-century democratic republicanism as they did forward to the twentieth-century debate on the problem of race. Ada Ferrer traces a similar rise and fall of the national project in Cuba (although much more abbreviated temporally) to what we saw in Colombia. She sees the Cuban wars for independence and their ultimate failure to achieve an inclusionary society as a harbinger of the twentieth-century “problem of the color line,” quoting, of course, W. E. B. DuBois.⁶⁷ However, we can also look on the Cuban struggle

Atlantic World for him, but for Latin America overseas trade accelerated at this time, if now part of a global, rather than Atlantic, system. McNeill, “End of the Old Atlantic World,” pp. 246, 251.

⁶⁵ *La Libertad* (Mexico City), 3 September 1884.

⁶⁶ Francisco Bilbao, “El Evangelio Americano,” in *Las Obras Completas de Francisco Bilbao*, ed. Manuel Bilbao (1864; repr., Buenos Aires: Imprenta de Buenos Aires, 1865), 2:421.

⁶⁷ Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*, p. 202.

against colonialism and racism as the inheritor of nineteenth-century republican struggles to define the nation and the place of lower-class and racially diverse citizens within it.

THE END OF ATLANTIC REPUBLICANISM

The triumph of the elite project to take control of Atlantic republicanism should not, however, erase the successes of the previous half century. Indeed, a reappraisal of republicanism as a vital historical force powered by subaltern discourse and action would also help solve the problem, raised by Donna Gabaccia, of uniting the various studies of the Atlantic world—the red Atlantic (radical movements from below), the black Atlantic (the African diaspora), and the white Atlantic (European expansionism and capitalist developments) at least for the period of roughly 1750–1900.⁶⁸ The republican movements of the Americas united a reaction to European expansion with radical movements for liberty, equality, and fraternity (especially efforts for both abolition and rights for Afro-Americans). Please, do not read liberty, equality, and fraternity as Western, or worse, European, unless, by those concepts you could include, say, a landless, illiterate ex-slave of African descent who would invest those terms with meanings and vitality as important as English workers or French intellectuals.⁶⁹ The Enlightenment, democracy, and republicanism were not something exterior to Spanish America, but created, manipulated, reframed, and invigorated by elites, but more importantly, subalterns across the Atlantic world.

So what processes and dates should mark the end of what we might call Atlantic republicanism, at least concerning Spanish America? The Age of Revolution simply did not end in Spanish America in 1825 or 1826, but only truly flourished in the subsequent half-century, when subalterns seized the discourses and practices of Atlantic republicanism and made them their own. Therefore, I propose the collapse of the

⁶⁸ For a discussion of red, white, and black Atlantics see Gabaccia, "A Long Atlantic," pp. 1–27; and David Armitage "Three Concepts of Atlantic History," in *The British Atlantic World, 1500–1800*, ed. David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave, 2002), pp. 14–15.

⁶⁹ Of course, cultural theorists have long stressed how subalterns appropriate metropolitan tools—language and literature especially—for their own ends. I am saying that they are not appropriating them, but cocreating them.

democratic republican project in Spanish America as a useful marker. Thus Atlantic history (or the “red” Atlantic) ends not with 1888 and the final abolition of slavery in the Americas, a moment of triumph however circumscribed by subsequent events, but with 1898 and defeat, as the United States moved to expropriate Cuba’s national republican project. A global Age of Empire began to overshadow Atlantic politics in Spanish America, for if most societies were not reconquered by imperial powers, an external and internal neocolonial project—economic, political, and cultural—replaced the democratic republican movements that flourished across nineteenth-century Central and South America.