



THE BAJÍO REVOLUTION

Remaking Capitalism, Community, and Patriarchy
in Mexico, North America, and the World

JOHN TUTINO

The Bajío Revolution

BUY

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*Remaking Capitalism, Community,
and Patriarchy in Mexico,
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JOHN TUTINO

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*For Mexicans everywhere
still working to make livable families and communities,
and for
Jane,
María, and Israel,
and
Gabriela,
my core family pursuing the same goals at home and beyond*

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PROLOGUE

Between Silver and Maize

New Spain and Mexico in the World, 1550–1880

In 1802, “las muchachas”—the girls—occupied the home of manager don José Antonio Rico at Puerto de Nieto, a large landed estate set between the mining center of Guanajuato, then the world’s top producer of silver, and Querétaro, the Americas’ leading textile city, in the rich basin northwest of Mexico City known as the Bajío. The families of Puerto de Nieto lived by paid labor and tenant cropping, making maize and more to sustain cities, towns, and mines—and the global trade that Guanajuato’s silver fueled. The Bajío was a primary engine of commercial capitalism, driving trades that linked China and India to Africa and the Euro-Atlantic World. Its social relations were precociously capitalist. Producers were drawn to work in mines, in textile workshops, and at landed estates by commercial relations of production. The families living and laboring at Puerto de Nieto negotiated patriarchal ways of work to sustain mines, textile towns, and global capitalism.

Don José Sánchez Espinosa, a priest, landed patriarch, and agrarian capitalist based in Mexico City, held estates from the outskirts of the capital, through the Bajío, north to San Luis Potosí. Since the early 1790s, in times of silver boom and imperial wars, he had instructed manager Rico to cut workers’ salaries and maize rations at Puerto de Nieto—constraining lives to maximize profit. In 1802, Rico prepared a list of tenants, ready to demand higher rents and begin evictions. While men kept working and women struggled to sustain families, the girls saw futures at risk. Rico reported the invasion of his home and office and the muchachas’ demand that evictions end. He said nothing about negotiating to end the occupation, a silence suggesting that concessions were made. Still, estate maize planting rose 20 percent that year, indicating that evictions happened.¹

The people of Puerto de Nieto carried on as their lives deteriorated until September 1810. Then don Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, pastor at Dolores just north, proclaimed his famous *grito* demanding rights to local

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rule as Napoleon occupied Spain, breaking Spain's empire at its center. Seeing power challenged, thousands of men struggling to sustain families on estate lands, including dozens of the *muchachas'* fathers, brothers, and neighbors at Puerto de Nieto, raised machetes to claim maize standing ripe in the fields. The rising came laden with contradictions: Hidalgo sought power in defense of property; the throngs around him fought for sustenance—and attacked property to gain it. Together they invaded the mining city of Guanajuato: Hidalgo claiming silver to fund his fight; popular rebels, rural and urban, taking maize to feed insurgents and families.

When Hidalgo faced political defeat early in 1811, rebels from Puerto de Nieto and estates all around Guanajuato returned home to press a decade of popular insurgency, taking estate lands to make maize to feed families and sustain guerrilla bands. While men fought, women (including *muchachas* who were now young adults) joined in cultivation to sustain families and communities in a decade of revolution that broke Guanajuato mining and the historic Asian trades it sustained.

Guerrillas fed by insurgent communities ruled the lands around the Guanajuato mines into 1820. Then, exhausted military powers set a pacification that recognized estate property—and family rights to cultivate estate lands. Rico returned from refuge in Querétaro to find commercial cropping gone. Families held strong at Puerto de Nieto, some living as prosperous *rancheros*, others making sustenance and a bit more. Women were more than 30 percent of leading *rancheros*, better *rancheras*, some surely former rebel *muchachas*. They unsettled patriarchy in a community that made maize to feed families first. With neighbors all around, they remade life in the Bajío.²

They also remade world trade. During the decade of revolution, rural insurgents repeatedly invaded Guanajuato. Joined by urban rioters, they sacked mines, shops, and the homes of the wealthy. Mining collapsed, cutting New Spain's silver flows in half by 1812—a devastating 30 percent fall of the global money supply. Historic trades in fine Indian cottons and Chinese silks broke, opening the world to industrial cloth made in English mills using cotton made by enslaved hands in the US South.

By 1820, anonymous insurgents had claimed new lives making maize to sustain families at Puerto de Nieto and across Guanajuato. In their fight, they took down silver production and cut key global trades. They undermined the Spanish regime restored after Napoleon's defeat in 1814, setting the stage for the difficult birth of Mexico as a nation in 1821. And



Map P.1 The Bajío and the Mesoamerican heartland, 1550–1880.

they opened the world to a new industrial capitalism drawing women and children to labor in English mills while forcing enslaved hands to plant cotton on US southern lands. Unknown people made a revolution in the Bajío and remade the world. Popular insurgents, men and the women who sustained them, drove a pivotal turning point in Mexican, North American, and world history.

History at the Intersection of Capital and Sustenance

The Bajío was pivotal to the origins of global capitalism from the sixteenth century. A new world began in the 1550s when the emperor of Ming China declared silver the only money for trade and taxation in the world's largest and richest domain.³ Half a world away in regions newly claimed by Spain, mines at Taxco and Pachuca near Mexico City, at Guanajuato and Zacatecas to the north (and at Potosí in the Andes), turned to make silver to meet rising Chinese demand. The opening to profit was unprecedented. The challenge was to find producing peoples. Europeans had arrived in the Americas carrying smallpox, plague, typhus, and other diseases unknown in the hemisphere, setting off a great dying among native people without immunities. In the Mesoamerican regions becoming New Spain, nearly 70 percent had died when the stimulus of silver came in the 1550s. The dying neared 90 percent as silver soared after 1600.⁴

Silver promised unimagined profit, while people who might work in mines and make maize for sustenance became scarce. That contradiction defined the origins of New Spain and shaped early capitalism. It reminds us that history is made at the intersections of pursuits of power and profit and necessities of work and sustenance, mediated by social relations of production. Drives to power and debated legitimations have long focused historical visions. Studies of social relations of production emphasize how producing peoples have been drawn to serve power. The ways of sustenance essential to power, production, and life rarely gain primary attention. Yet they are essential to capitalism and regime powers, communities and family life everywhere.⁵

From the 1550s to the 1870s, in New Spain and Mexico, silver drove pursuits of power and profit while maize sustained life. That long history frames the Bajío revolution—and demands a rethinking of the origins and transformations of global capitalism. While silver was pivotal to global capitalism from 1551 to 1873, maize had fed Mesoamerica and much of the Americas long before the rise of silver. It continues to feed Mexico and the world long after silver's demise—in radically changing ways.⁶

For millennia, Mesoamerican families made maize and more to sustain themselves and their communities, while regimes from early Olmecs, through imperial Teotihuacán, to the late-rising Mexica (Aztecs) forged military power backed by religious legitimations to extract the staple as tribute to maintain temple cities, armies, and trades.⁷ When Iberians came to

the Americas, Mesoamerican ways held through the first decades of Spanish attempts to rule New Spain. Facing depopulation and social dissolution, European power seekers allied with surviving native lords to claim maize and work as tributes from family growers while tributaries and tributes became ever scarcer. Native work gangs were sent to pan for gold—which quickly panned out. For decades after don Fernando Cortés' imagined conquest in 1521, people vanished, power waned, and land became vacant.⁸

The Chinese turn to silver in 1551 brought unprecedented chances to profit in a world opening to global trades. Natives knew silver deposits at Taxco south of Mexico City; they began mining in the 1530s, taking small gains in limited trades. With the Chinese turn, mining accelerated at Taxco and rose at Pachuca, northeast of the capital. But making silver on a global scale required tunneling, milling, and refining to profit. The *patio* process that used mercury to extract silver from midgrade ores was perfected at Pachuca in the 1550s—drawing mercury from mines at Almadén in Spain. Globally integrated extractive and industrial processes required capital, technology, and labor—which was often skilled and always faced risks, whether underground in mines prone to collapse and flooding, in mills that crushed ore and limbs, or in refineries working with poisonous mercury.

Still, in times of pandemic dying, indigenous and mixed men proved ready to take risks to gain unprecedented pay that often included ore shares. European and African newcomers joined native survivors in mining centers and in Mexico City, the capital of finance and trade, administration and justice, religion and education, crafts and more that tied New Spain to rising global trades. The challenge was sustenance. Maize had been made for millennia across Mesoamerica, feeding families, communities, and temple cities. Now, after waves of death, land was open, people were scarce, and survivors had little incentive to make maize to feed mining centers or the rising global city.

Profit seekers and regime builders had to adapt. In the Mesoamerican heartland surrounding Mexico City and the Taxco and Pachuca mines, Spanish officials and clergy worked with native lords to found self-governing indigenous republics granted lands more than sufficient to sustain themselves and make surpluses to feed the capital and the mines. Vacated lands were granted to Spaniards who built estates to raise wheat, sugar, and livestock—staples of European life. Most surviving native families remained in communities, making maize to feed themselves while sending men to labor seasonally at nearby estates, gaining cash making old-world crops in a new commercial economy. Working family land to make maize and estate lands

to gain cash, men in reconsolidated Mesoamerican communities sustained surviving families—and a rising silver capitalism.⁹

Just north of the militarized states and maize-making communities of Mesoamerica, the Bajío had remained home to independent peoples who hunted, gathered, and made maize free of state powers before 1520. Then, from the 1550s, in the face of Chinese demand for silver, Spanish profit seekers came north aiming to exploit silver at Guanajuato and Zacatecas beyond, joined by Mesoamerican allies who maligned the region's independent peoples as Chichimecas, sons of dogs. True to their history, Chichimecas mounted decades of guerrilla resistance while diseases drove a dying that all but vacated the basin by the 1590s. As mining took off, Spaniards (and a few Otomí allies) claimed lands to build commercial estates, aiming to profit by feeding mining centers and new textile towns. Mesoamerican commoners came too, some to work in mines and workshops, most to try life on estate lands—where landlords paid ample salaries and guaranteed maize rations to men who labored to make maize and more for estate profit.¹⁰

Around 1600, New Spain solidified a dynamic silver economy set in two distinct regional ways of making maize. In the Mesoamerican heartland, native survivors kept land to make sustenance in self-governing republics, with men working seasonally for wages at nearby mines and estates. In the Bajío, Mesoamerican migrants became resident laborers on estate lands, gaining secure employment and sustenance to make maize and more in service of growers who profited by feeding mining centers, textile towns, and grazing estates in the basin and across the arid lands stretching north. Two ways of making maize sustained the silver capitalism that fueled global trades after 1600.

In both, hierarchies of patriarchy cemented social relations of production, tying working men to Spanish powers and silver capitalism. In heartland republics, native nobles, nearly always men, ruled local councils and raised maize to supply urban markets; commoners, mostly men, made maize on family plots to sustain household. In addition, local notables, always men, organized labor gangs enabling men and boys to gain wages in estate fields. In the Bajío, landlords, most men plus a few inheriting women, set only men to manage the men who labored as dependents on estate lands. Adult men gained salaries, maize rations, and chances to rent small plots to plant more. Sons gained wages as seasonal hands. Contrasting patriarchal structures locked in men's primacy making and/or gaining the necessities of life.

Still, women were essential producers everywhere: they made and raised children; they labored hours every day to grind maize and make the tortillas

essential to meals; they kept gardens and small animals; they made cloth and clothing; they traded in local markets. Women worked endlessly, more than most men, to sustain families and communities—subsidizing estate profits and silver capitalism. Facing scarce producers, profit seekers enabled viable lives among working survivors in two variants, one in independent communities, the other on estate lands—both structured by patriarchy; both sustained by women's endless essential labors.¹¹

In parallel yet distinct ways, men and women made maize and more to sustain the silver capitalism that fueled a rising world of commercial capitalism. About a third of Spanish American silver crossed the Pacific to Spanish Manila, where Chinese merchants gained pesos in exchange for fine silks and porcelains and Indian cottons. The rest crossed the Atlantic to Seville, dispersed across Europe and the Islamic world, with a major part flowing to India, where pesos bought the fine printed cotton cloth demanded by African princes and merchants as the price of humans bound into slavery. That silver capitalism sustained by maize boomed to 1640 and carried on in times of recession and still-sparse population to 1680. Then silver soared to new heights while population began to grow, generating rising profits and new pressures on producing families.

In the heartland after 1700, men in self-governing republics made maize to the extent they could while population growth left families with land ever less sufficient to sustenance. To compensate, men increased their seasonal labors at nearby estates that began planting maize to feed mining centers and Mexico City. The maize still made on family lands and the wages of seasonal labor combined to supply women with the essentials to make sustenance. Heartland families became less independent yet remained in landed republics, still negotiating patriarchy within families to keep sustainable lives through the eighteenth-century silver boom.¹² When heartland communities faced rising land and labor conflicts after 1750, they gained mediations in viceregal courts.¹³ When Bajío insurgents challenged regime power and silver capitalism after 1810, the people in most heartland communities stayed at home and at work.

In the Bajío, the eighteenth century saw silver soar and population grow while families still lived as estate dependents and gained secure sustenance. Then, from the 1790s, amid imperial wars, landlords cut salaries and maize rations, raised rents, and pressed evictions on tenant families—knowing that new population pressures made them replaceable. Deepening social predations corroded men's access to the necessities of sustenance and threatened women's ability to maintain families across the basin that sustained the

world's leading silver mines.¹⁴ Without community rights, estate residents faced landlord power with little access to judicial mediation. The *muchachos* protested at Puerto de Nieto; others resisted as they could. Most struggled and adapted—frustrated and angry as once secure patriarchal ways of sustenance dissolved.

Then, in 1810, amid imperial wars, regime crisis, and drought-driven scarcities, Hidalgo's political revolt called men to arms to challenge Spanish imperial rule. Seeing power shaken and uncertain, thousands of men across rural Guanajuato took arms to claim maize—and in time, land to make it. In a decade of revolution, they gained estate land for family production while women took new roles making maize to feed families, communities, and guerrillas. Men fighting to restore patriarchy relied on women making maize—rattling patriarchy. With pacification in 1820, family growers, women prominent among them, ruled maize making on estate land. The insurgent men and sustaining women of Puerto de Nieto and estates all around the Guanajuato mines claimed new lives. Family autonomies making maize were the means, goal, and gain of the Bajío revolution.¹⁵ Women's efforts in support of those goals challenged patriarchy. Families gained autonomy making maize while women claimed new participations in production and community life.

In their fight for family rights to make maize, Bajío revolutionaries broke mining at Guanajuato and rattled it across New Spain. China's exports collapsed; and the once dominant global empire became an importer of opium delivered from India by British merchants who drained China's historic stocks of silver. India's exports of fine cottons broke too, opening markets to industrial cloth made in English mills using cotton raised by enslaved hands in the US South.¹⁶ Fighting to gain autonomous lives on the land, Bajío revolutionaries opened the world to an industrial capitalism grounded in slavery.¹⁷

In that world of change, in 1821 military men who had fought for a decade to contain the Bajío revolution proclaimed an independent Mexican empire.¹⁸ Silver broken, trade fallen, state revenues scarce, and maize makers entrenched on the land, independence brought decades of conflictive politics to an imagined Mexican nation. Without silver, power seekers flailed; with maize, families held strong on the land.

Still, silver remained valuable in the world of early industrial capitalism. British capital came to Mexico in the 1820s, funding a regime without revenues and aiming to revive the mines. Regime debts soared, mines never profited, and British investors retreated. Then, in the 1830s, Bajío capital-

ists revived mining and built new industries, forging a new silver-industrial capitalism fed by family growers. New possibilities opened for Mexico and Mexicans: capitalists found profit while adapting to families strong on the land; women kept active roles in maize-making families as mining rose to historic heights at Guanajuato in the 1840s and 1850s—led by doña Francisca de Paula Pérez Gálvez.

The silver-industrial capitalism fed by family maize makers prospered in the Bajío through the war that took the lands from Texas to California into the United States in the 1840s. The new Bajío was rattled when battles provoked by the French invasion of the 1860s focused there. Still, the new silver-industrial capitalism grounded in family maize making only broke in 1873—when the United States joined England and Germany on a gold standard, ending silver's role generating capital made in Mexico.

The power of silver as capital in trade was set by imperial China in the 1550s. The United States joined its industrial-imperial allies to break silver's power in the 1870s. Maize makers across Mexico pressed on. Heartland communities faced corrosions of autonomies as populations grew while liberal powers privatized their lands. They joined Emiliano Zapata to drive a second revolution in 1910, gaining land to make maize to sustain families—and a new national industrial capitalism. Then, after 1950, medical capitalism delivered antibiotics that fueled unprecedented population explosions and urban growth, followed by a “green revolution” that made maize with machines and chemicals, driving families off the land. A century after the industrial powers broke the power of silver as capital, a new globalizing capitalism ended family maize making in Mexico and across the world.¹⁹

Maize, Mesoamerica's great contribution to human sustenance, remains essential—now made by capitalist growers in the United States who profit feeding a world of people crowded in burgeoning cities where they face lives of dependence laced with insecurities. In urbanizing globalizing times, patriarchy, too, has collapsed as a way to sustenance in Mexico and across the world. Yet too many men cling to once-entrenched, long-contested, and now impossible primacies, becoming violently assertive while women struggle to sustain families facing marginality and insecurity. Our world of globalization concentrates power while soaring numbers of women and men search for sustenance in times of social insecurity and proliferating violence.²⁰

Bajío revolutionaries remade capitalism in New Spain as it became Mexico. They broke lives of dependence newly laced with insecurities and claimed ways and means for families to make maize to sustain themselves—rattling patriarchy in the effort. They opened the way to a new silver

industrial capitalism that would flourish for decades—led by a powerful woman. Simultaneously, the global reverberations of their revolution opened the world to a new Anglo-American industrial capitalism grounded in slavery that in time would lash back to block Mexico's historic capital independence set in silver—and later turn into a globalization that undermined family maize making in Mexico and around the world. Knowing the Bajío revolution—locally and globally—is essential to understanding Mexico, the United States, and a world driven by concentrating capitalist powers and fed by capitalist maize.

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XXII PROLOGUE

INTRODUCTION

The Revolution(s) That Remade Global Capitalism

The Bajío revolution remade New Spain as it became Mexico. It rerouted capitalism in North America and the world. Yet it remains unknown. It does not appear in histories of New Spain becoming Mexico, in studies of the Age of Revolution from 1770 to 1850, or in works exploring revolutionary conflicts in world history. Why? Historical studies have long focused on leaders and ideologies—and the popular risings that transformed the Bajío after 1810 produced no recognized or remembered leaders. No ideologues proclaimed grievances or visions for a better future. No leaders or factions emerged to claim roles in the struggles to make a Mexican state that began in 1821.

People in communities on estate lands, like the *muchachas* and their families at Puerto de Nieto, facing deepening predations in times of imperial war and regime breakdown, took arms in 1810 to press shared visions of justice without plotting or planning. They acted in families and communities, women meeting at home, in fields, and local markets; men entrenched in mountain bastions to ready attacks and avoid retaliation. They fought long and hard, men in guerrilla bands, women in sustaining communities to claim control of maize making to sustain families first—without leaders or manifestos and without a state defining their gains.¹ They did not seek political power or ideological fame while fighting to claim autonomous lives making maize on the land. They succeeded and forced local powers and global capitalists to adapt—to be condemned and then erased from history.

A Revolution Foretold, Documented, Despised, and Erased

There is ample record of their risings. Hidalgo's 1810 political revolt is celebrated by Mexicans as the start of their fight for national independence. His *grito* opened the way to mass rural risings. During four violent months, he dreamed of political rights while struggling to contain his followers' attacks on property. Power holders mobilized in defense of property, crushing the revolt early in 1811. An enduring focus on Hidalgo and his politics has deflected history from the popular risings he unleashed. A close reading of his brief revolt, however, documents the beginnings of a revolution he helped begin and could not contain.²

Unlike Hidalgo, Epigmenio González remains all but unknown.³ A storekeeper with a shop on the plaza across from Querétaro's great Franciscan church, he joined debates in the summer of 1810 led by corregidor (magistrate) don Miguel Domínguez; councilman, merchant, and landlord don Pedro de Septién; and Hidalgo, too—provincial men seeking political rights in times of imperial crisis. While they talked, González wrote a plan to force estates to lease lands to family growers. He would preserve property while delivering production to families—precisely the outcome of revolution in 1820.

Domínguez, Septién, and Hidalgo all rejected González' plan. When viceregal forces broke their debates on September 15, the storekeeper was arrested, his papers confiscated, the plan hidden away through years of insurgency and long after. González had heard laments of evictions and knew the dreams of family planting shared by so many who came to his counter. Arrested before Hidalgo's rising began, González could not join or guide the revolution. He did foresee its goals and outcomes.

Don José Sánchez Espinosa knew everything González knew, and more. A priest and landed oligarch, he cut salaries and rations and pressed the evictions that raised the muchachas' ire at Puerto de Nieto in 1802. He learned from manager Rico's letters that local men took arms with Hidalgo in 1810, taking maize to feed families, and that in 1811 they rose again to forge guerrilla bands. In 1820, the priest-patriarch acquiesced in tenant family production as women kept leading roles in a much less patriarchal community—all documented in Rico's endless letters and detailed accounts.

Meanwhile, Sánchez Espinosa kept production and patriarchy alive at La Griega, east of Querétaro. Parallel letters and accounts detail how his

managers first armed a small troop of Hispanic men, then delivered rising salaries, rations, and maize lands to an Otomí majority, keeping the peace, maintaining production, and holding patriarchy by undoing the impositions that provoked insurgency at Puerto de Nieto. After 1820, Sánchez Espinosa tried to revive commercial cropping at La Griega, but with mining collapsed and markets flooded with family maize, profit never returned.

Don José Sánchez Espinosa helped provoke the Bajío revolution, resisted it, and kept records detailing its origins and conflicts, limits and reverberations. His correspondence and accounts detail the rising's popular bases, women's new powers, and enduring social inversions at Puerto de Nieto. They also record the concessions that blocked insurgency at La Griega, and his inability to revive agrarian capitalism at estates famously profitable before 1810.⁴ Arguably, the landed priest-patriarch knew the Bajío revolution better than anyone but its popular protagonists. In his efforts to thwart their fights and gains, he documented their struggles and transforming impacts.

Lucas Alamán despised the Bajío revolution. Born in 1792 to a Guanajuato mining family, he lived the fruits of silver capitalism. He avoided the violence of revolution by staying in Europe from 1810 to 1820. Returning to join the efforts to make a Mexican nation, he helped draw British capital to mining in the 1820s, then led Mexico's turn to industry in the 1830s. In the 1840s and 1850s, he saw silver revive at Guanajuato and industry rise at Querétaro while he struggled to forge a national regime set in New Spain's Catholic traditions.

Celebrated or reviled as the father of Mexican conservatism, in the early 1850s Alamán wrote a five-volume *Historia de Méjico*, detailing the conflicts of 1808 to 1824.⁵ Honoring the silver riches and Catholic culture of New Spain, he narrated the long struggles that led to Mexican independence. He saw popular insurgents' violence as purely destructive, undermining silver and breaking the trades that made New Spain a kingdom of wealth and power. Taking land to make maize and feed families ate estate profits. Yet as Alamán wrote in the 1850s, Guanajuato silver reached historic heights while industry flourished at Querétaro. Why was he so angry? Surely because the revolutionary turn to family cropping broke the power of the landed oligarchs he admired, longed to join, and expected to back the regime of his dreams.

The Bajío revolution was foretold by González, opened by Hidalgo, recorded by Sánchez Espinosa, and despised by Alamán. In the 1820s, English

emissary Henry Ward came to Mexico hoping to revive silver in service of British trade. He recognized the conflicts of 1810 to 1820 as a disruptive revolution and labeled them as such.⁶ The social war that remade the Bajío and New Spain was seen as revolutionary in its time—lamented and rejected by the powerful.

Then liberals took control of Mexican politics and intellectual life from the 1850s. They saw no greatness and little good in the Spanish Catholic past honored by Alamán. They would not credit Bajío revolutionaries with breaking Mexico's landed oligarchs, even as their fall facilitated the liberals' rise to power. As free traders linked to British interests, they opposed Alamán's industrial project. The one vision liberals and Alamán shared was that families making maize on the land ate profit. Conservatives and liberals saw Epigmenio González' dream as a nightmare imposed by popular revolutionaries.

Refusing to see the dynamism of the silver economy honored by Alamán and Ward, Mexican liberals blamed an imagined Spanish imposition of a closed, anti-economic society for long difficulties of nation making.⁷ Denying the reality of New Spain's dynamic silver capitalism, no revolution breaking its power and remaking the world was imaginable. Liberal myths erased the Bajío revolution.

Anglophone observers versed in black legends of Spanish cruelties easily adopted Mexican liberal visions. There was no need to explain Mexican independence: people powerful and poor fought to escape the horrors of Spanish rule. Then, left incapable by Hispanic Catholic legacies, they could neither rule nor prosper. Fixated on political conflicts, global liberals would not see the new silver-industrial capitalism set in family maize making—the legacy of the Bajío revolution. The revolution imagined by González, opened by Hidalgo, documented by Sánchez Espinosa, recognized by Ward, and despised by Alamán vanished. There was no need to explore how it opened the world to British industry and drove the expansion of slavery in the United States. There could be no call to explain how rising US power later blocked the promise of a Mexican capitalism fed by families making maize on the land.

Bajío insurgents made a revolution within Hispanic capitalism, keeping Catholic cultural ways in all their diversity. They forged new lives on the land, opened new roles for women, forced changes on powers above—and opened markets for capitalists beyond. Their revolution was not political or ideological, not state-made in a state-making world, not secular in a secularizing world. For pushing against that world, the Bajío revolution was fought, denigrated, and erased.

Revolution Silenced, Revolution Erased: Haiti and the Bajío

The Bajío revolution was not the first rising of people facing deepening predations to break a new-world engine of early global capitalism, claim the land to make family sustenance, and turn the course of history. In 1790, French Saint-Domingue was the leading center of a plantation capitalism still rising across Atlantic America. It generated soaring profits from sugar made by enslaved hands, drawing unprecedented numbers of bound Africans, mostly men, but women too, to brutal labors in cane fields and refining mills. Social predations defined plantation slavery. They deepened as growing numbers of captives taken in African wars came bound to labor in Saint-Domingue.

A long history led to the Haitian Revolution. Europeans first made sugar with bound hands on the Mediterranean islands of Crete and Cyprus, aiming to sustain crusading invasions into lands holy to Muslims and Christians. Crusaders planted cane from East Africa and set Muslim captives taken in marches through the Balkans to labor in fields and mills. Sugar and slavery (the bound workers were Slavs) began to serve European power around 1000. After the Crusades, production spread west along Mediterranean shores where Africans taken in war and sent in caravans across the Sahara labored in bondage. When plantations came to Atlantic islands in the fifteenth century, sugar and slavery served Portuguese planters and Genoese financiers—with bound Africans the primary working hands.⁸

Sugar crossed the Atlantic early in the sixteenth century, planted in small scales on Caribbean islands and in New Spain. It flourished in northeastern Brazil after 1570, again led by Portuguese planters and Genoese financiers. Early on, enslaved Africans came in small numbers, bought for the knowledge of cane cultivation and sugar making gained in Atlantic islands. Native Tupí taken in armed raids were bound to serve as permanent workers. Others living in Jesuit missions fed themselves while laboring seasonally in cane fields. Sugar proved profitable while natives making cane fell to deadly old world diseases. Around 1600, with profits rising and natives dying, Genoese financiers and Portuguese planters turned to buying growing numbers of enslaved Africans to labor in Brazil as coerced sugar makers. The plantation complex reset in slavery proved enduringly profitable in Atlantic America.⁹

The silver capitalism that relied on indigenous producers in Spanish America and the plantation capitalism driving enslaved laborers in Portuguese Brazil rose together from 1580 to 1640 while Hapsburg kings set in Madrid led both Iberian empires. That integration mattered, as silver was

essential to sugar and slavery. The African princes and merchants who took captives in war and sold them into slavery demanded South Asian cottons as primary payment, and Indian merchants demanded silver to sell cloth to Europeans. Spanish American silver fueled Portuguese trade during the decades of merged empires. Silver capitalism and plantation capitalism rose together, distinct yet inseparable.

In 1630, Dutch forces invaded northeastern Brazil, challenging Hapsburg power while looking to join sugar and slave trades. In response, Portugal broke with Madrid in 1640 and Brazilians reclaimed the northeast in the 1650s (as the first sugar boom waned). The Dutch then took the capital, machines, and enslaved hands key to sugar capitalism to the Caribbean, first to British Barbados, then to Jamaica.¹⁰ Plantation ways spread northward, leaving rising empires fighting to gain access to the silver still monopolized by Spain and pivotal to the slave trade. The famous Atlantic triangular trades linking Europe, Africa, and the Caribbean were framed and sustained by larger global trades linking Spanish American silver, South Asian cottons, and African slave sellers. Plantation empires and slave traders seeking access to silver fueled wars that escalated after 1750.

After the Seven Years' War of 1757 to 1763 and through the war for US independence, sugar and slavery soared to new heights of profit and predation in British Jamaica and French Saint-Domingue. In both, the enslaved exceeded 90 percent of the population; in both, new racial restrictions limited the chances of free people of color. There were differences too: Jamaica remained focused on sugar while Saint-Domingue added coffee and cotton; in Jamaica, free men of African ancestry were blocked from roles as landed slaveholders, while in Saint-Domingue the *affranchi* might prosper, often making coffee on modest plantations.¹¹ Meanwhile, in times of war and peace, access to New Spain's silver remained essential to the rising slave trades that dragged growing numbers of captured African warriors to Caribbean plantations. Britain and France competed over access to silver and Indian cottons, ultimately increasing the debts that broke the French monarchy and opened the way to revolution in Paris and soon in Saint-Domingue.¹²

Dynamic growth drove predations that set deepening grievances upon the enslaved in both Jamaica and Saint-Domingue. Regime breakdown only came to Paris. And that breakdown opened the way to revolutionary risings in the French colony—with the *affranchi*, unique to Saint-Domingue, key actors demanding rights. In 1791, amid the early conflicts of the French Revolution, declarations of rights ricocheted across Saint-Domingue. On

rich northern plains, groups of the enslaved took arms to fight for freedom. When Paris assemblies offered rights to French men in Saint-Domingue, French planters aimed to monopolize new participations. When *affranchi* planters claimed the same rights, they armed enslaved Africans, offering limited freedom to men who might serve their masters' power. As conflicts spread, growing numbers turned on masters to make fights over rights as Frenchmen a war for rights as men. Through years of conflict, the enslaved fought for freedom—and the right to make sustenance on the land: “Throughout the colony, a new kind of life was taking root, one based on independence and subsistence, one that for many ex-slaves embodied true freedom.”¹³ Production for family sustenance on the land became the means, goal, and gain of Haitian revolutionaries.

As Haiti became an independent Black nation in 1804, armed ex-slaves built lives of family sustenance on former plantation lands. Liberators who proclaimed freedom yet pressed freedmen to return to labor as sugar workers, from the agents of revolutionary France to the once-enslaved Toussaint L'Ouverture, could not sustain power. State builders saw exports as essential to state revenues; former enslaved people saw freedom as incomplete without lives making sustenance on the land. Armed ex-slaves had their way. They broke plantation production to set families on the land, joined by women who refused to return to cane fields and sugar mills.¹⁴

Saint-Domingue was the Americas' leading buyer of bound people and exporter of sugar, coffee, and cotton. In independent Haiti, families turned to making sustenance on the land, some raising coffee as a complement. Rejecting Haitians' self-liberation and destruction of plantations and trades, the Atlantic powers isolated the Black nation—while sugar and slavery boomed in Cuba, coffee and slavery remade Brazil, and cotton and slavery expanded to shape the United States.

The reverberations of Haiti's revolution came in a different way to New Spain. Saint-Domingue and its revenues lost, in May 1808 Napoleon invaded Spain, aiming to claim the silver flows still rising in New Spain. He captured Madrid and its Bourbon monarchs, breaking Spain's imperial regime.¹⁵ He failed to gain New Spain's silver and faced guerrilla resistance in Spain that corroded his power in Europe.¹⁶ Without a legitimate monarch in Madrid, political debates consumed Mexico City until a September military coup toppled the viceroy to ensure that silver kept flowing to fight Napoleon in Spain. Mining boomed for two more years while drought-driven profiteering in scarce maize deepened outage in families facing predations across New Spain.¹⁷

As in Saint-Domingue two decades earlier, imperial breakdown and social predations merged to provoke the revolution that exploded in 1810 in the Bajío. There, free, often ethnically mixed people made silver, cloth, and maize as dependent producers. Now, in times of surging silver, imperial war, and the Haitian Revolution, new predations assaulted patriarchal ways of sustenance, driving the 1810 insurgency that broke silver capitalism and claimed family production on estate lands by 1820.

The sequential revolutions that broke commercial cultivation and entrenched family production in Saint-Domingue and the Bajío from 1790 to 1820 illuminate pivotal processes and key tensions in the rise of global capitalism. Long ago, Fernand Braudel emphasized the dominant trajectory that shaped the long course of capitalism: profit-seeking powers concentrated capital and wealth by linking diverse producing and consuming peoples across an ever more integrated world of trade. Early on, dispersed centers of production and nodes of trade were sustained locally by families and communities on the land: rice growers in China and South Asia; maize makers across the mainland Americas; wheat and meat makers in Europe. In early commercial capitalism, a world of profit and trade was fed by family growers who produced for sustenance and took small gains from the commercializing world they fed.¹⁸ Then, during centuries of change, capitalist powers drew growing numbers across the globe to lives of dependent production in service of profit and trade. Before 1800, such lives remained exceptional, even in Europe. They became more prevalent in the nineteenth-century industrial world—and the norm in our times of globalizing urbanization.

Plantation America and the Bajío developed as precocious historic exceptions—in radically different ways. Both profited by building lives of laboring dependence, the former mobilizing the coercions of slavery, the latter drawing producers to lives of commercial dependence. Then, when dependent people pivotal to capitalist power faced deepening predations after 1780, enslaved producers in Saint-Domingue and commercial dependents in the Bajío took arms to claim autonomies on the land. Their revolutions broke engines of early global capitalism and built communities making sustenance on the land. They turned the course of capitalism—without derailing its long-term rise.

The end of slavery and plantation production in Haiti opened the way for their expansions in Cuba, Brazil, and the southern United States—all supporting the rise of the industrial capitalism emerging in England and the northern United States. A decade later, the fall of silver in the Bajío opened global markets to Anglo-American industrial textiles. New Spain's silver

gone, Chinese exports collapsed and the South Asian cottons historically bought with silver and sold in Africa to buy people enslaved to work on Atlantic plantations fell to British industrial cloth made of cotton raised by soaring numbers of enslaved hands in the US South.¹⁹ The ultimate sign of Asia's fall: China's stores of silver were drained by British merchants who delivered opium from India to people facing imperial collapse.²⁰

In unimagined and unintended ways, the revolutionaries who broke plantation capitalism in Haiti and silver capitalism in the Bajío opened the world to new industrial powers drawing women and children to mechanized mills—and enslaved men and women to labor across the Americas.²¹

One global trade held. Rattled by the scarcity of silver, the Atlantic slave trade fell 17 percent in the decade beginning in 1811, saving perhaps 140,000 Africans from bondage and transport to New World plantations—another gain delivered by Bajío revolutionaries. The international trade in bound humans rebounded in the 1820s, nearing the peaks set before the Haitian Revolution.²² As machine-made cottons flowed to Africa to pay for enslaved people, trade in humans revived, despite British and US treaties calling for its demise. Rising numbers of Africans were dragged to Cuba and Brazil while a burgeoning internal trade sent hundreds of thousands from the Chesapeake to the cotton South. People sold in bondage neared a historic peak, an old predation sustaining a new industrial capitalism.

The Haitian Revolution was long known for its assault on slavery yet “silenced” in mainstream histories.²³ The Bajío revolution remains unknown, erased from history. There were complex reasons for the silencing and the erasure. But ultimately, historians and citizens have refused to see that popular revolutionaries fighting to end predatory dependencies and build lives of family autonomy on the land turned the course of history after 1790. Recent scholars have detailed the popular bases and radical outcomes of the Haitian Revolution at home and the spread of plantation slavery in its wake. It is time to recognize the anonymous people who made the Bajío revolution, claimed new lives on the land, broke silver-driven global trades, and opened the world to an industrial capitalism set in expansions of plantation slavery.

People Making Revolution—and Remaking Capitalism

Revolutionaries without leaders, without ideologies, and without aspirations to power are not easy objects of study. Transformations forced from below without formal plan or regime sanction often seem lost in chaos or a result of chaos. Yet recovering the lives and actions of anonymous revolutionaries and

the changes they forced without a plan, yet with clear logic, brings new historical understanding. Pervasive presumptions of the dominance of power holders and power seekers become untenable as histories as contested and negotiated between powerful and producing peoples, men and women, come to the fore.²⁴

The pursuit of such understanding requires a search for everyday people: the men and women who took the risks of fighting to gain and maintain sustainable lives—and their neighbors who stood aside to negotiate in less violent and risky ways. In the search, power holders imposing predations and struggling to keep land, profits, and eminence appear in new light. So do global actors turning Mexico's challenges to their own advantage. The Bajío revolution opens histories in which the people act and the powerful react. The sources that reveal the lives and goals of each group differ, yet they intersect to reveal contested power relations and complex histories often laden with contradictions.

The lives of producing people and insurgent communities often appear only in fragments—in land records and estate accounts, in managers' letters and reports of counterinsurgency commanders, in state builders' archives and census counts, in ideologues' visions and economic promoters' plans. More detailed if skeletal histories of laboring lives and maize-making families can be reconstructed from the accounts of work and rents kept at Sánchez Espinosa's Bajío estates. Notably, the sources that open glimpses of producing peoples' lives also reveal state makers' and profit seekers' struggles.

The fragmented sources that open the lives of the people who drove the Bajío revolution and shaped its outcomes are complemented by narratives written from perspectives of power. In the 1820s, US emissary Joel Robert Poinsett and British diplomat Henry Ward came to Mexico with outsiders' eyes—and hopes of turning Mexican challenges to US and British advantage.²⁵ They had much to learn and wrote detailed reports easily recognized as prejudiced. Yet read in the context of the conflicts between the people who made a revolution and power seekers struggling to contain its transformations, the outsiders illuminate key Mexican challenges.

In the late 1830s, Frances "Fanny" Calderón de la Barca, Scottish wife of Spain's first ambassador to Mexico, came to live among the women of Mexico City's struggling oligarchy. She recorded their attempts to keep eminence alive with eyes sympathetic to power, wary of the people, and open to women's assertions. She joined in private engagements and public encounters that reveal much about insecure socialites, assertive crowds, and women's will to endure.²⁶

Then, in the 1850s, two Mexican political intellectuals, the liberal Guillermo Prieto and the cleric José Guadalupe Romero, detailed life in the Bajío as the new silver-industrial capitalism peaked and began to face challenges.²⁷ Lucas Alamán sent Prieto to exile in conservative Querétaro, where the liberal's opposition to industry and Catholicism made him almost as much an outsider as the Anglophone visitors of the 1820s. A cathedral canon, Romero detailed life in his home state of Guanajuato, where deeply religious peoples had made a revolution, built new lives on the land, and sustained a new capitalism driven by silver and generating new industries. He honored Catholic Guanajuato and resented liberal intrusions. Both showed their prejudices—yet read in the light of local power struggles, changing economic trajectories, and the lives of the people who sustained everything, they illuminate the Bajío remade in revolution.

The protagonists of the Bajío revolution long remained anonymous, seen only in fragmentary records of productive lives and rebellious acts, condemned by those they threatened, deposed, and forced to adapt. The analysis that follows relies on critical engagements with distinct and often contradictory sources to uncover the lives, reconstruct the struggles, and reveal the transformations driven by the unknown people who made the revolution that transformed New Spain as it became Mexico—and turned the course of global capitalism.

This history recognizes and insists that capitalism is as much about people as about ways and means of power. The chapters that follow focus on reconstructing peoples' lives. Too often, we only know the women and men who worked to sustain capitalism and then forced it to change in fragments. But by seeking out those fragments in diverse records—estate accounts and amnesty lists, property records, censuses, and more—we can reconstruct revealing patterns. People in-between—estate managers, counterinsurgent commanders, clergy, and more—set to serve the powerful, yet dealing daily with producing people, insurgents, and people making new lives generated letters and reports that revealed their own lives, the goals and actions of those they aimed to manage or control, and the long struggles and adaptations that led to revolutionary outcomes. Power holders—people seeking power, people clinging to power, and others living among them, men and women—generated private letters, detailed accounts, and published texts that reveal their goals, their adaptations to people pressing from below, and their struggles in times of regional conflicts, national challenges, and global reconstructions.

Over centuries, powerful people, producing people, and people in-between built a dynamic silver capitalism, locked together in productive

inequality as profit seekers negotiated to deliver lives of patriarchal security to scarce producers on rich Bajío basin lands. When that scarcity waned after 1790 in times of imperial wars and silver boom, profit seekers pressed new predations that undermined producers' lives, setting off conflicts in 1810 as producing men and women mobilized to take control of production for family sustenance. They forced the powerful to adapt—and opened the world to a rising industrial capitalism grounded in enslaved labor. In the wake of the Bajío revolution, producers entrenched on the land forced Mexican nation builders to adapt. From the 1830s, they jostled to build a new silver-industrial capitalism sustained by family maize makers—until the imperial capitalism built on industry and slavery in the United States lashed back to block its way forward.

A People's History of the Bajío Revolution—and Global Capitalism: A Preview

Exploration of the Bajío revolution must begin with an understanding of the region's pivotal role in founding global commercial capitalism, the goal of part I. Chapter 1 introduces the ecology of the Bajío, its Otomí-Spanish foundations before 1550, and the changes that began with China's turn to silver in the 1550s: Europeans opened mines at Guanajuato and built estates across the basin, dragging Africans to serve while Mesoamericans came to work the land.

Two Bajíos rose: greater Querétaro remained deeply Otomí as European merchants, estate builders, and manufacturers joined Otomí magistrates, landlords, and cultivators to forge a bicultural society that shaped the south-eastern Bajío. Just west around Guanajuato, Spanish power ruled upland mines and estates built on basin lands. There, landlords set enslaved African minorities among Mesoamerican majorities, leading in time to free amalgamating communities. To 1760, silver promised profit while people held scarce, enabling the Querétaro Otomí and the amalgamating people around Guanajuato to gain solid earnings, maize rations, and access to land in patriarchal ways of commercial production while women worked to sustain families, communities—and the mines that fueled global trades.

Chapter 2 turns to the imperial challenges, silver dynamism, and population pressures that merged to generate the predations that would drive the risings of 1810. It examines the imperial impositions that led to local riots at Guanajuato in 1766 and 1767. It follows the revival of silver in the 1770s and the challenges of sustenance that came with the deadly drought and famine

of 1785 and 1786. It focuses on the predations imposed on estate communities after 1790 as silver drove to new peaks in times of population growth, imperial war, and Haitian revolution. From 1800, revenue demands set new pressures on mine operators and estate owners. Then, in 1808, Napoleon broke the empire at its center, setting off political debates that rattled Mexico City while silver drove to peaks and drought, famine, and profiteering in maize fueled popular outrage, setting the stage for revolution.

Part II explores the decade of revolution. Chapter 3 details the origins, contradictions, and collapse of the Hidalgo revolt. It began in political debates at Querétaro in the summer of 1810. Talk of political rights rose as Epigmenio González dreamed of redistributions. Fears of popular risings stymied political action—until Hidalgo called his parishioners at Dolores took arms on September 16. He demanded political rights—to see thousands of men raise machetes to assault landed power. Hidalgo's revolt was marked by contradictions: leaders demanding political autonomy defended property while hungry and angry insurgents sacked estates, claimed food, and pressed for family autonomies.

Hidalgo's rebels sacked Guanajuato, taking silver and maize in the siege of the Alhóndiga. They marched to the edge of Mexico City—to face indifference among people in landed republics. Rebels retreated to sack Guanajuato again, then assembled west around Guadalajara. As Hidalgo defended property and refused popular demands for redistribution, the revolt broke at Puente de Calderón early in 1811. The rising he began shook viceregal power and silver capitalism—and fell to united defenders of power, property, and silver capitalism. Revolution had just begun.

Chapter 4 looks to the heart of the Bajío revolution. Many among Hidalgo's base, including men from Puerto de Nieto, returned home to take control of estate lands and join guerrilla bands while women sustained the fight by taking new roles in production and community life. Rebels again invaded Guanajuato, joining locals to sack mines and stores. As production fell and profit vanished, the mines turned to *buscones*, independent workers who sold ore to bidding refiners. Rural commanders reported endless chases, rarely able to contain guerrillas fed by rebel communities. Silver capitalism broke by 1812; agrarian capitalism dissolved as production to sustain families and insurgents ruled basin lands.

Insurgents carried on while the 1812 Cádiz constitution offered liberal political rights. They continued after Fernando VII reclaimed power in 1814 and blocked those rights. They fought through 1817, when Spanish liberal Francisco Javier Mina invaded with a gang of US freebooters declaring

liberty, seeking silver, and disrupting insurgency and counterinsurgency. In 1818, regime forces saw the impossibility of victory and turned to pacifying amnesties that granted insurgents rights to cultivate estate lands as tenants—and keep arms to defend their gains. Amnesty lists detail settlements across Guanajuato; accounts from Puerto de Nieto in 1820 reveal gendered social outcomes. Commercial cropping gone, tenants paid rents to plant maize while women remained leading growers. Silver capitalism and agrarian capitalism collapsed—and patriarchy was shaken.

While insurgents remade Guanajuato, their neighbors around Querétaro stayed at home and at work. Chapter 5 explores how Spanish-Otomí divisions and material concessions inhibited revolt at La Griega. An estate troop kept local order while managers delivered rising incomes and maize rations and new access to land to keep men at work. Spanish and Otomí families first regained secure sustenance, then lands to plant in hierarchies of tenant production, gaining autonomies while restoring the patriarchal dependencies that kept women at sustaining labors. For a decade, a mix of estate cropping and family maize making funded counterinsurgency—at costs that blocked profit. Then, with pacification in 1820, the estate cut back on secure employment and tenant cropping while agrarian capitalism failed to revive.

Facing insurgents pressing existential threats to property and profit, Mexico City oligarchs mobilized. Chapter 6 details efforts that blocked political rebels, preserved property—yet could not save silver capitalism. Don José Sánchez Espinosa backed don Juan Nepomuceno Oviedo, manager of his grazing estates north of the Bajío, to fight Hidalgo and then chase José María Morelos—until Oviedo gave his life blocking the political rebel's route to the capital in 1812. The priest-patriarch then set his son, the Conde de Peñasco, to lead troops defending the regime, first near the capital, then north in San Luis Potosí. Father and son preserved property by fighting insurgents and conceding production to working families. Profit stayed scarce.

Other oligarchs led parallel efforts. Doña María Josefa de Velasco y Ovando set her manager at Tulancingo, between the capital and the Real del Monte mines, to resist insurgents. The Conde de la Cortina raised a troop at nearby Tlahuelilpan to chase insurgents into 1816. Property held while profit vanished. The widowed Condesa de Regla, with great mines at Real del Monte and vast estates stretching north from the capital, set men and resources to defend the regime and family properties through the decade of insurgency. She, too, kept property while profit dissolved and debts mounted.

Bajío revolutionaries cut New Spain's silver flows in half by 1812, breaking global trades while opening markets for industrial England, driving

cotton and slavery across the US South. A new industrial capitalism began while the fall of silver and agrarian capitalism left the future of New Spain uncertain as families consolidated lives of autonomy making maize on the land—changes consolidated as pacification came to the Bajío in 1820.

Then, military commanders in Spain refused to sail to defend the empire in South America until Fernando VII restored the liberal Constitution of 1812.²⁸ Opposed to the restoration, royalist commander don Agustín de Iturbide, famous for defeating Morelos and brutalizing popular insurgents across the Bajío, called struggling elites to oppose the return to liberal rule. He allied with surviving political insurgent Vicente Guerrero in the Iguala rising that broke with Spain and proclaimed a Mexican empire in 1821. Military forces imposed an imagined new polity while silver and regime revenues were scarce—and families held strong on the land.

Part III turns to the challenges faced by people proclaimed Mexicans in the new world of Anglo-American industrial capitalism and Mexican nation making that came in the wake of the Bajío revolution. Chapter 7 explores the difficulties faced by the political few as they attempted to found a Mexican empire in 1821, then a Federal Republic in 1824. Silver and state revenues held low while military powers and costs stayed strong, foundational challenges reported by Poinsett. Nation builders invited British capital to fund the republic while profit seekers drew British partners aiming to revive mining at Guanajuato and beyond. The linked efforts failed, as Ward detailed. He learned to appreciate the dynamism of silver capitalism before 1810, saw the challenges left by the decade of revolution, and came to understand how British capital imposed costs and rigidities that blocked profit as mines struggled to revive. In the end, British loans created soaring debts that drained state revenues while mines slowly increased production—without yielding profit. Economic collapse fueled political instabilities. There would be no quick revival of silver capitalism.

Meanwhile, families entrenched on the land in the new State of Guanajuato carried on making maize, consolidating autonomies, and limiting patriarchy—the gains of insurgency. Chapter 8 returns to Puerto de Nieto in the 1820s as a growing tenant community mixed prosperous rancheños and families making solid sustenance, paying modest rents when they could, refusing when crops failed. Women remained leading tenants, often overshadowing male kin. The community made in insurgency held strong while church and state faced new challenges. Some clergy saw impudent worshippers; a “ranchero” priest adapted to local devotions to serve Puerto de Nieto and nearby communities. The first governor of Guanajuato, unable

to revive mining or commercial planting, complained of ignorant and recalcitrant people—and insubordinate women.

As silver held low, agrarian capitalism gave way to family production in widening regions of the new Mexican nation. Chapter 9 focuses on the emerging State of Querétaro, a commercial, textile, and agricultural region pivotal to silver capitalism before 1810, where insurgency was limited after 1810 and where the fall of silver led to a consolidation of family cultivation in the 1820s.

Landlord distress spread across Querétaro while Sánchez Espinosa and his managers tried and failed to revive agrarian capitalism at La Griega. Profit gone, debts rose as many leased out properties seeking income that rarely came. Lead leaseholders struggled too, while family growers, Hispanic and Otomí, made maize as tenants, sharecroppers, and squatters. Census reports from 1826 show family cropping spreading across Querétaro. After Sánchez Espinosa's death in 1827, La Griega, too, turned to tenant production, favoring Hispanics and displacing Otomí—many of whom found new lives at nearby estates welcoming family growers. The family maize making claimed by insurgents across Guanajuato before 1820 ruled rural Querétaro by 1830—where, without insurgency, patriarchy held stronger.

With family growers dominant in Guanajuato and taking root across Querétaro in the 1820s, people long dependent on estate power in regions north and south pressed for parallel gains. With silver slow to revive and families feeding themselves and selling surpluses at low prices, oligarchs tried to resist, repeatedly failed—often challenged within by insistent women, as chapter 10 details. After his father's death in 1827, the Conde de Peñasco was the leading landed proprietor in San Luis Potosí. He flailed as families took control of cultivation and grazing on his lands, leading his wife to insult his efforts and challenge his power. When later attempts to revive profits at pulque estates between the capital and the Real del Monte mines failed in the face of resistant communities, a second wife took control, aiming to limit losses—with limited success. Frances Calderón de la Barca saw Peñasco's new bride as crass and scheming; she reported Cortina and Adalid women as nobly struggling; she honored Fagoaga women for keeping estates prosperous while doing charitable work among the urban poor—notable exceptions in times of oligarchic decline.

Into the 1830s, silver struggled while the family cultivation long entrenched in the heartland took hold across the Bajío and regions north. Upon that base, Mexican capitalists revived silver and built new industries, forced to adapt to family growers—the enduring triumph of Bajío revolu-

tionaries. The new postrevolutionary capitalism sustained by family maize makers focuses part IV.

Chapter 11 begins with the resurgence of mining at Guanajuato, led by don Juan de Dios Pérez Gálvez and his widowed sister doña Francisca de Paula, heirs to the once-rich Valenciana mines that had flooded as insurgency ended in 1820. In the 1830s, they raised capital locally to drain tunnels, gaining silver to fund a bonanza that came high above at La Luz in the early 1840s. New industries also began in the 1830s, promoted by Lucas Alamán and the Banco de Avío, the world's first development bank. Cayetano Rubio took capital from trade in silver to build Hércules at Querétaro, a great cotton mill drawing women to its machines. Meanwhile, *ranchero* and tenant growers fed families, mining centers, and industries while estates faced enduring debts, scarce profits, and fragmenting operations. Into the 1840s, mining revived and industry began, landlords struggled and families made maize on the land to sustain themselves and a new, more socially distributive capitalism.

The new Bajío flourished from 1845 to 1860, as chapter 12 details. Mining, industry, and family growers thrived during the war provoked by the United States in 1846. Invading armies never neared the basin as national authorities took refuge at Querétaro to gain revenues in Mexico's richest region. After the war, mining soared to new heights in the 1850s, led by doña Francisca de Paula Pérez Gálvez (her brother died in 1848). At her funeral in the 1860s, father Ignacio Montes de Oca, kin of the governor who condemned assertive women in the 1820s, credited her with reviving Guanajuato's mines—and Mexico's economy. Meanwhile, industry consolidated at Querétaro and spread across the Bajío while landed proprietors flailed—and family growers ruled on the land.

In 1853, Guillermo Prieto came to Querétaro, exiled by Antonio López de Santa Anna and Lucas Alamán. The liberal expected to see tradition set in exploitation. He met industrial dynamism, commercial lives, and Otomí family *huertas* (urban gardens). He praised *rancheros*—and saw their wives rule family finance. Awed by the plenty made and sold by family growers, Hispanic and indigenous, he lamented their diverse devotions. Then, in 1860, don José Guadalupe Romero surveyed life across Guanajuato. The cleric honored mining and lamented raucous lives at La Luz, then detailed production and worship across the basin. Families made maize everywhere; *huertas* blossomed where water permitted. Plenty reigned to sustain popular devotions often led by women. The liberal Prieto and the clerical Romero confirmed that the silver-industrial capitalism fed by family growers flourished through the 1850s.

It would not hold. The conclusion outlines how the global industrial capitalism enabled by Bajío revolutionaries struck back to break the new Mexico. While silver rose to new heights, industry spread, and family cropping held strong in the Bajío and beyond, the US invasion of 1846 took vast lands to forge an American West, blocking any resumption of the northward drive that marked silver capitalism before 1810. Taking Texas opened lands to the cotton and slavery that sustained British and US industries. Taking California gave the United States gold—capital to drive a capitalism less dependent on silver.

None of that inhibited the rise of the new Bajío before 1860. Still, conflicts fueled by the US incursion led to political wars that brought liberals to power in Mexico in 1860, while debates over the incorporation of once Mexican territories with or without slavery led the United States to Civil War in 1861. During that conflict, Mexican conservatives invited Napoleon III to mount the invasion that brought Maximilian of Hapsburg to an imagined Mexican Empire from 1864 to 1867. French forces and the emperor saw the silver-industrial wealth of the Bajío as essential to rule. They pressed battles to take Guanajuato during 1864 and 1865, breaking the dynamism of silver while troops took maize from family growers in years of drought, driving a crisis of sustenance. Then, in 1867, the fight to restore Mexican liberal rule brought a long siege to Querétaro, rattling industry, commerce, and life there.

Yet while the Bajío faced war, silver-industrial capitalism had spread across Mexico: silver peaked nationally while industry held across wide regions as liberals retook power in 1867. The Mexico forged by the Bajío revolution, shaken in its homeland, seemed poised to revive nationally. Then, in 1873, the United States—funded by gold mined in lands taken from Mexico—joined England and Germany on a gold standard. Radically devaluing silver, the leading industrial powers ended Mexico's capital independence. The capitalism financed by silver, energized by industry, and fed by family maize makers collapsed.

The epilogue outlines the challenges Mexicans faced after the fall of silver. With independent capital gone, family maize makers pressed to carry on in the face of new challenges. US capital and markets shaped Mexico's prospects, limiting industry and favoring exports. Liberal rulers pressed land privatizations as the population grew, corroding family cultivation. A second revolution began in 1910, leading to an experiment in national-industrial capitalism reset in patriarchal family maize making. It held strong amid depression in the 1930s—and supported the United States in World War II.

Then, in a postwar, Cold War world, US pharmaceutical capitalism delivered antibiotics that saved generations of Mexican children, unleashing a population explosion fed by “green revolution” maize made by machines and chemicals. Families pressed off the land faced urban lives marked by poverty and insecurity while migrants sought new lives *al norte* in lands once Mexican. Mexicans everywhere now live dependent on maize made by capital, machines, and chemicals in the United States.²⁹

Our world has no memory of the laboring people who long sustained silver capitalism across the Bajío, faced assaultive predations from the 1790s, took arms to claim family sustenance in 1810—and made a revolution that turned the course of their own lives and global capitalism. Still, the dreams of family autonomy, challenges to patriarchy, and struggles to keep communities strong that drove the Bajío revolution shaped a new Mexican capitalism and set off global transformations.

We need histories that break the silencing, erasures, and deflecting concepts that mask and legitimate power. We need histories that link global capitalisms and changing regimes, their regional powers and local predations. We need histories that seek out the adaptations and negotiations, rebellions and revolutions that have made producing people, men and women, pivotal and at times powerful in struggles that have remade local lives, turned the powers that constrained them, and shaped the course of history. And we need to know the lives of autonomy that Bajío revolutionaries fought to claim, worked to sustain, and ultimately lost. Only then will we understand the world of dependencies that globalizing capitalism ultimately made.

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THE REVOLUTION(S) THAT REMADE GLOBAL CAPITALISM

NOTES

Prologue

- 1 The origins of the Bajío as a region foundational to global capitalism are detailed in Tutino, *Making a New World*; on the muchachas' protest, see 383–90.
- 2 The decade of revolution and its aftermath at Puerto de Nieto are the focus of Tutino, "Revolution in Mexican Independence."
- 3 Flynn and Giraldez, "Born with a Silver Spoon."
- 4 Crosby, *Columbian Exchange*.
- 5 See Warman, *Corn and Capitalism*, and the conceptual explorations in Tutino, *Making a New World*, 44–62.
- 6 For a parallel, different, and perceptive perspective on maize and its role as sustenance in Mexico, focused on women's long labors making tortillas and their recent liberations, see Gómez-Galvariatto, *El pan nuestro*.
- 7 López Austin and López Luján, *Mexico's Indigenous Past*.
- 8 For a critique of the notion of conquest—in Cortés' own words—see Cortés, *Relación de 1820*.
- 9 Tutino, *Mexican Heartland*, pt. 1.
- 10 Tutino, *Making a New World*, pt. 1.
- 11 For comparisons, see Tutino, *Mexican Heartland*, chap. 2; Lane, *Potosí*; and Mangan, *Trading Roles*.
- 12 Tutino, *Mexican Heartland*, chap. 3; on household negotiations of patriarchy, see Stern, *Secret History of Gender*.
- 13 Detailed in W. Taylor, *Drinking, Homicide, and Rebellion*.
- 14 Tutino, *Making a New World*, pt. 2.
- 15 For a larger perspective, see Tutino, "Revolutionary Capacity of Rural Communities."
- 16 The long global primacy of China is revealed in Pomeranz, *Great Divergence*. The impact of the fall of silver in China is detailed in Lin, *China Upside Down*. On India, see Parthasarathi, *Why Europe Grew Rich and Asia Did Not*.

- 17 On capitalism and slavery in the United States, see Beckert, *Empire of Cotton*; and Baptist, *Half Has Never Been Told*.
- 18 The rise of militarized rule in New Spain is the focus of Tutino, *Mexico City, 1808*.
- 19 This long era of conflict and change is the focus of Tutino, *Mexican Heartland*, pts. 2 and 3.
- 20 This transformation is explored in Tutino and Melosi, *New World Cities*.

Introduction

- 1 Since the 1990s I have searched for leaders and manifestos in public debates and diverse archives. I have found none.
- 2 The essential new study is Carlos Herrejón Peredo's transforming *Hidalgo: Maestro, Párroco, Insurgente*—here after cited: *Hidalgo MPI*.
- 3 His story was brought to light, and to me, by Herrejón Peredo, *Hidalgo MPI*.
- 4 Tutino, "Revolution in Mexican Independence."
- 5 See also Van Young's fine biography, *A Life Together*.
- 6 Ward, *Mexico in 1827*, 2 vols.
- 7 See Hale, *Mexican Liberalism*; and Hale, *Transformation of Liberalism*.
- 8 On the rise of sugar and slavery, the classic study is Verlinden, *Beginnings of Modern Colonization*.
- 9 Foundations are detailed in Schwartz, "Indian Labor and New World Plantations." On the long history of sugar and slavery in Brazil, see Schwartz, *Sugar Plantations*. For comparative perspectives, see Schwartz, *Tropical Babylon*.
- 10 The key study of the shift to the Caribbean is Dunn, *Rise of the Planter Class*.
- 11 All detailed in Burnard and Garrigus, *Plantation Machine*.
- 12 Recently revealed in E. Cross, *Company Politics*.
- 13 The classic work on the Haitian Revolution is James, *Black Jacobins*. New scholarship showing slaves as protagonists began with Fick, *Making of Haiti*, followed by Dubois, *Avengers of the New World*, quote on 230. Fick synthesizes the impacts of the conflict in "From Slave Colony to Black Nation."
- 14 This key point was made first by Fick in *Making of Haiti*, then confirmed by Dubois in *Avengers of the New World*.
- 15 See B. Stein and S. Stein, *Edge of Crisis*; and B. Stein and S. Stein, *Crisis in an Atlantic Empire*.
- 16 See Tone, *Fatal Knot*; and Cayuela Fernández and Gallego Palomares, *La Guerra de independencia*.
- 17 Tutino, *Mexico City, 1808*.

- 18 This builds on Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism*; Pomeranz, *Great Divergence*; Findlay and O'Rourke, *Power and Plenty*; and was developed for New Spain in Tutino, *Making a New World*; and Tutino, *Mexican Heartland*.
- 19 Allen, *British Industrial Revolution*.
- 20 Lin, *China Upside Down*; Platt, *Imperial Twilight*.
- 21 This complex hemispheric transformation is explored in Tutino, *New Countries*.
- 22 On the Atlantic slave trade, see Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery*, tables 3.4 and 7.4. On the US internal slave trade, see Baptist, *Half Has Never Been Told*.
- 23 Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*.
- 24 This is the integrating theme and goal of Tutino, *Mexican Heartland*.
- 25 Poinsett, *Notes on Mexico*; Ward, *Mexico in 1827*, 2 vols.
- 26 Calderón de la Barca, *Life in Mexico*.
- 27 Prieto, "Fidel"; Romero, *Noticias*.
- 28 Stites, *The Four Horsemen*.
- 29 On the fall of autonomies in the world of globalization, see Tutino, "Revolutionary Capacity of Rural Communities"; Tutino, *Mexican Heartland*, pt. 3; and the epilogue in the current volume. On urbanizing dependencies across the Americas, see Tutino and Melosi, *New World Cities*.

Chapter 1. A New World in the Bajío

- 1 This chapter synthesizes and revises the detailed analysis in Tutino, *Making a New World*.
- 2 On geography and precontact history, see Tutino, *Making a New World*, 65–71. On Mesoamerica and the arid regions stretching north, see López Austin and López Luján, *Mexico's Indigenous Past*.
- 3 The classic study of the impact of disease is Crosby, *Columbian Exchange*, building on demographic studies later collected in Cook and Borah, *Essays in Population History*.
- 4 On Otomí origins, see Tutino, *Making a New World*, 71–77; and Somohano Martínez, *La versión histórica*.
- 5 On Chinese demand and America silver, see Flynn and Giraldez, "Born with a Silver Spoon."
- 6 Tutino, *Mexican Heartland*, chap. 1, synthesizes the role of Chinese demand across Spanish America and the emergence of distinct silver societies in the Andes, Mesoamerica, and the Bajío.