Chapter 30

The Consolidation of Latin America, 1830-1920

OUTLINE

I. Introduction

Latin America in the 19th century was shaped by internal divisions, the threat from foreign imperialism, and cross border disputes. Its political leaders were shaped in the era of Enlightenment beliefs and accepted concepts common in the West, such as progress and rights in property. Despite some common ideology, the new nations faced numerous problems inherited from their colonial past.

II. From Colonies to Nations

A. Introduction

By the late 18th century, Creole elites in Latin America were prepared to separate from Spain, but fear of racial and class conflicts prevented successful action. Revolution occurred only after the Napoleonic wars disrupted the government of Spain.

B. Causes of Political Change

The revolutions in Latin America were part of a series of rebellions from the American Revolution through the French Revolution. In 1791, slaves under Toussaint L'Ouverture successfully overthrew the colonial government of St. Domingue and established the independent republic of Haiti. The more radical aspects of the French revolution and the specter of black rebellion in Haiti frightened the Creole elites of Latin America. What precipitated rebellion was the breakdown of the Spanish monarchy during the Napoleonic wars. In Latin America, Creoles set up independent governments that claimed to rule in the name of the exiled Spanish monarch.

C. Spanish-American Independence Struggles

Rebellion in Mexico began in 1810 under the leadership of Father Miguel de Hidalgo, who called on the support of mestizos and Indians. Hidalgo’s movement failed for lack of Creole support, but a second revolutionary movement with more Creole support broke out in 1820. Under a Creole military officer, Augustín de Iturbide, the revolutionaries seized Mexico City and proclaimed Iturbide emperor in 1821. Mexico initially maintained control over Central America but separated from its southern neighbors in 1838. In northern South America, Simon Bolívar emerged as the leader of the revolutionary forces. Between 1817 and 1822 he defeated Spanish forces in Venezuela, Colombia, and Ecuador to form the new nation of Gran Colombia. After 1830, these nations split into independent states. In southern South America, the revolutionary leader was José de San Martín. An Argentinean, San Martín mobilized
resistance in his native colony then crossed the Andes to Chile. By 1824, San Martín had carried the revolution into the most conservative colony of Peru and defeated the Spanish forces there. All of Spanish South America had won independence by 1825.

D. Brazilian Independence

Independence in Brazil was achieved by different methods. Early movements for independence failed because of the general fear of slave uprisings. In 1807, the entire Portuguese royal family fled their home country in the face of a French invasion and emigrated to Brazil, where a government in exile was set up. The Portuguese king, Dom João VI, ruled his empire from Rio de Janeiro. Brazilian ports were opened to international commerce. When the king returned to Portugal in 1820, his son proclaimed independence in Brazil in 1822. Brazil became a monarchy under Dom Pedro I.

III. New Nations Confront Old and New Problems

A. Introduction

Most of the independent nations accepted the need to establish representative governments, rights to private property, and free trade. There was less agreement over the position of the Roman Catholic Church in the new states. Revolutionary ideals led to the abolition of slavery in all states except Brazil and the remaining Spanish colonies. Voting rights tended to be restricted by race to favor Creoles, and women remained without voting rights. Indian populations and people of mixed origins remained outside the egalitarian principles of the new governments.

B. Political Fragmentation

Mexico quickly abandoned its experiment with monarchy and established a republic in 1832. Its government remained unstable until the 1860s. In Central America initial attempts to form a unified government gave way to individual states in 1838. Cuba and Puerto Rico remained within the orbit of Spanish colonialism. Consolidation also failed in South America. New Granada, Bolívar’s attempt to unify northern South America, failed in 1830. The attempts of Rio de la Plata to transform revolutionary leadership into a political union failed. Paraguay, Uruguay, and Chile remained independent. Peru and Bolivia temporarily united but formed separate governments in 1839. Poor transportation and communication networks magnified the problems of national integration.

C. Caudillos, Politics, and the Church

Decades of war gave rise to regional military figures, or caudillos, who dominated local areas and sometimes seized national governments. Caudillos often operated out of self-interest, but they were capable of seeking support from regional elites or from Indians, peasants, or the poor. Disagreements also arose within the new governments over the degree of centralization the new republican governments should have. Federalists wished regional governments to establish policies, while centrists wanted powerful, central administrations. Liberals tended to support federalist policies, while political conservatives wanted centralized governments and supported corporate institutions, such as the Catholic Church. Liberals attempted to limit the role of the Church in civil affairs. Political parties representing these points of view sprang up in many of the new republics. Regardless of political view, leaders in Latin America tended to come from the class of wealthy landowners. Rapid political change was the rule in Latin
America in the first half century after independence. Constitutions and leadership came and went swiftly. Brazil, with its monarchy, was perhaps the most stable government in the region.

IV. Latin-American Economies and World Markets, 1820-1870

A. Introduction

Great Britain’s determination to recognize Latin American independence forestalled European plans to restore the Spanish empire. The United States also supported the independence movement through the Monroe Doctrine of 1823. Britain’s support for the new nations was tied to the opening of trade with Latin America. Britain rapidly replaced Spain as the region’s largest trading partner. The dominance of the British hindered the development of Latin American industries and reinforced the economic dependence of Latin America in the world trade network.

B. Mid-Century Stagnation

From 1820 to 1850, the postindependence economy of Latin America remained stagnant. After 1850, in response to European demand for Latin American products, the economy quickened. Enhanced trade permitted greater state development of important infrastructure, such as roads and railroads. The pattern was established that the Latin American economy was strictly dependent on levels of imports supported through the world trade network. Uneasy alliances between peasants and conservatives prevented rapid economic change proposed by the urban middle class.

C. Economic Resurgence and Liberal Politics

In the last quarter of the 19th century, another surge in the European economy produced greater demand for Latin American products. Economies expanded rapidly. The economic growth created support for liberal policies and led to liberal governments after 1860. Attempts to impose European economic models on Latin American economies often failed. Immigrants from Europe entered Latin America to fill a labor demand that ignored Native American populations. Wealthy landowners continued to monopolize the countryside at the expense of small farmers.

D. Mexico: Instability and Foreign Intervention

The federalist constitution of 1824 failed to address the inequitable distribution of land or the status of the Indian population of Mexico. It was quickly abandoned in favor of military leadership. For much of the period after 1835, Antonio López de Santa Anna served as the most important military and political figure in Mexico. Santa Anna enjoyed mixed results in fighting off foreign attempts to intervene in Mexico. Anglo-American settlers in the northern province of Texas rebelled and declared independence. Failure to suppress the Texas independence movement led to the United States’ annexation of the region in 1845. The United States won the Mexican-American War and forced the cession of Texas, California, and much of Mexico’s territory north of the Rio Grande River. Mexico’s failures in foreign policy at last led to the removal of Santa Anna as the chief political figure of the republic. Liberal rebellion against the caudillo resulted in Santa Anna’s ouster and the creation of a liberal constitution. Conservatives rejected the liberal constitution and turned to France as an ally. French forces overthrew the republic and placed Maximilian von Habsburg on the throne.
as emperor in 1862. When French forces were withdrawn, liberals returned to power under Benito Juárez in 1867. Juárez continued to govern until his death in 1872.

E. Argentina: The Port and the Nation

The port of Buenos Aires dominated the region of Rio de la Plata. In the 1820s, liberal government was established in the port that sought to stimulate the economy. The leader's preference for a strong, central government provoked the opposition of cattlemen in the plains outside the port. By 1831, a conservative government under Juan Manuel de Rosas replaced the liberals. Rosas’s federalism favored the ranchers at the expense of Indians. After Rosas’s fall in 1852, a period of political confusion ensued until the creation of a united Argentine Republic in 1862. Liberal reformers sought to manipulate the economic boom after the 1860s. Using profits from increased trade, the liberal government established education systems, built roads, and constructed railroads. The liberal government carried out the final conquest of Indians in Argentina.

F. The Brazilian Empire

In Brazil, a functioning republic existed behind the facade of monarchy. Independence was achieved in 1822 under Dom Pedro I, who ruled as king. When Dom Pedro I was deposed in 1831, a series of regencies ruled in the name of the young Dom Pedro II. Between 1831 and 1840, regional governments opposed centralized rule from Rio de Janeiro. After 1840, Dom Pedro II ruled in his own name as a liberal, and sought to increase economic growth. The Brazilian economy was revolutionized by the emergence of coffee as an export crop. As coffee production expanded, slavery was intensified as a source of coercive labor. As with other liberal governments of the period, Dom Pedro II improved the country’s infrastructure and sought foreign investments to capitalize internal projects. Extensive European immigration into Brazil broadened the labor force and reduced the need for slavery. In 1888, slavery was finally abolished. Weakened by long participation in an unpopular war and by opposition from the Church, the monarchy did not long survive the abolition of slavery. In 1889, a military coup deposed the emperor and established a republic.

V. Societies in Search of Themselves

A. Introduction

There was tension in Latin American culture between the heritage of Europe and the need to express Americanism.

B. Cultural Expression After Independence

The end of Spanish colonial dominance opened Latin America to other European influences in the decades after independence. French neoclassical tradition was particularly influential. Romanticism shifted Latin American attentions to symbols of Americanism, such as Indians, gauchos, and slaves. Historical studies reflected the European concepts of positivism and progress. By the 1870s, the political dominance of liberalism produced more realistic literary efforts, which often criticized social and political systems. Popular culture remained largely unaffected by trends among the elite.
C. Old Patterns of Gender, Class, and Race

Women, many of whom had been active in the independence movements, gained little power during the 19th century. They were excluded from active participation in politics and remained subject to patriarchal authority in their households. The one area of advance for women was broader access to public education and subsequently to positions as teachers. By the end of the 19th century, educated women were in the forefront of the nascent feminist movement in Latin America. Although legal distinctions were often removed, the old social hierarchy based on color and ethnicity was tacitly retained. Indians remained virtually outside the social system of Creoles and mestizos. Socially and economically, the liberal decades led to increasing control of resources, including land, by an elite of white Creoles. After the 1870s, economic change and immigration fostered the creation of greater urban centers, but Latin America remained predominantly agrarian and dependent on the world trade system.

VI. The Great Boom, 1880-1920

A. Introduction

The Latin American export economy produced a social and political alliance between large landowners, miners, and export merchants, all of whom depended on commerce for prosperity. Although commodities varied from one nation to the next, all of Latin America depended on exports to Europe. Such complete dependence made the Latin American economy vulnerable to shifts in market demand and prices. Exports dramatically increased between 1870 and 1900. The expanding economy attracted capital from abroad, both from Europe and the United States. Although foreign capital provided the impetus for expansion, it placed Latin American industries and transportation corporations in foreign hands.

B. Mexico and Argentina: Examples of Economic Transformation

Porfirio Díaz, one of Juárez’s generals, was elected president of the Mexican republic. As was typical of liberal regimes, Díaz’s government attracted foreign investment, built up the nation’s infrastructure, and initiated industrialization. Although the appearance of democracy was retained, Díaz’s government suppressed all political opposition. Much of the economic growth in Mexico was at the expense of urban laborers and the peasantry, both of which were largely Native American. In 1910, popular dissatisfaction with Díaz’s regime resulted in the Mexican Revolution. Argentina also had a liberal government whose popularity depended on maintaining the boom in the export economy. Unlike Mexico, where labor was provided by indigenous peoples, Argentina’s labor force expanded through immigration from Europe. European-born workers brought with them socialism, and a Socialist Party emerged in Argentina in the 1890s. A series of strikes followed by government repression typified the first decades of the 20th century. The middle-class Radical Party promised political reform and enlightened labor policies to gain power in 1916. When faced with strikes, it, too, reacted repressively. The models of Mexico and Argentina (oligarchies composed of the traditional aristocracy and the middle classes uneasily presiding over disgruntled laborers and peasants) could be found in other Latin American states where liberal modernization met resistance.

C. Uncle Sam Goes South

American capitalists turned to Latin America for investment after the American Civil War. The United States’ first armed intervention in Latin America, the Spanish-American War between 1895 and 1898, was intended to open the door to the valuable sugar plantations of the
Caribbean. As a result of the war, the former Spanish colonies of Cuba and Puerto Rico were reduced to dependency on the United States. When Colombia proved reluctant to support American plans in Central America, the United States backed Panama’s independence movement in return for extensive rights to build a canal in the new nation. Latin American nations became increasingly critical of U.S. intervention in the region.

VII. Global Connections: New Latin American Nations and the World

During the 19th century, the former colonies of Latin America constructed new nations. There were many difficulties. Latin America was forced to forge economies in a world trade network already dominated by European nations. Unlike much of the developing world, Latin America cast off European imperialism in the 19th century. The new nations carried with them colonial social systems that were strictly hierarchical and in which a small Creole elite dominated the economy and politics. Native Americans, former slaves, and peasants shared little in the economic expansion of the second half of the century. In a sense, Latin America was the first region of the world to undergo the problems of decolonization. Latin America maintained ties to the West by imitating Western models and because of the growing influence of the United States. Its dependent economy also kept it connected to the world.
TIMELINE

Insert the following events into the timeline. This should help you to compare important historical events chronologically.

Bolívar begins war for independence
Haití declares independence
Juárez initiates La Reforma in Mexico
fall of Brazilian empire, beginning of republic
Mexican-American War begins
Spanish-American War begins

TERMS, PEOPLE, EVENTS

The following terms, people, and events are important to your understanding of the chapter. Define each one.

- Toussaint L’Ouverture
- Father Miguel de Hidalgo
- Gran Colombia
- Dom Pedro I
- caudillos
- Monroe Doctrine
- Antonio López de Santa Anna
- Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo
- gauchos
- Domingo Sarmiento
- dependency theory
- Spanish-American War
- Joseph Bonaparte
- Augustín de Iturbide
- Josédé San Martín
- Dr. José Rodríguez de Francia
- centralists
- guano
- Manifest Destiny
- La Reforma
- Juan Manuel de Rosas
- fazendas
- Porfirio Díaz
- Panama Canal
- mask of Ferdinand
- Simon Bolívar
- Dom João VI
- Andrés Santa Cruz
- federalists
- positivism
- Mexican-American War
- Maximilian von Habsburg
- Argentine Republic
- modernization theory
- científicos
MAP EXERCISE

The following exercise is intended to clarify the geophysical environment and the spatial relationships among the important objects and places mentioned in the chapter. Locate the following places on the map.

Mark the boundaries of the independent states of Latin America. Mark the independence dates.

The authors of the text suggest that independence occurred in the reverse order of the dates of colonization. Is this true? What were the last areas to become independent? Are there any economic reasons that would account for the later independence movements?
MAKING CONNECTIONS

The following questions are intended to emphasize important ideas within the chapter.

1. What were the causes of political change in Latin America?
2. Contrast Brazilian independence with other independence movements in Latin America.
3. What was the federalist vs. centralist controversy? How were political parties involved?
4. Characterize the liberal politics of the period from 1850 to 1870. Who were the major liberal politicians in Latin American countries?
5. How successful was reform at resolving the problems of race, class, and gender?
6. What was the nature of the economic boom during the period after 1870? What were the potential drawbacks of the boom?
7. In what way did the United States enter the political and economic affairs of Latin America?

PUTTING LARGER CONCEPTS TOGETHER

The following questions test your ability to summarize the major conclusions of the chapter.

1. In what ways were the independent states of Latin America successful in shaking off the colonial past? In what ways were they still imprisoned in the patterns of colonization?
2. Compare and contrast the relationship of Latin American nations with the West at the end of the 19th century with the relationship of the West to colonies created through imperialism.
SELF-TEST OF FACTUAL INFORMATION

1. In what way was Latin America different than the other regions that remained outside the direct control of Western imperialism?
   a. Latin America had no economic relationship with the West.
   b. During the century of imperialism, Latin America cast off previous colonial controls through revolution.
   c. Unlike the others, Latin America had no previous political relationship with the West.
   d. The ideals of the Enlightenment had little impact on Latin America.

2. Toussaint L’Ouverture led the rebellion
   a. in Mexico among the Indians and mestizos.
   b. in northern South America.
   c. in the region of the Rio de la Plata.
   d. on the island of St. Domingue.

3. Who was the leader of the independence movement in northern South America?
   a. Father Miguel de Hidalgo
   b. Bernardino Rivadavia
   c. Simon Bolívar
   d. José de San Martín

4. How was the experience of the Napoleonic Wars different for Portugal than for Spain?
   a. Portugal was allied with the French emperor.
   b. The French attempted to invade Portugal but failed.
   c. The entire royal family of Portugal fled to Brazil and set up their capital there.
   d. Following the defeat of the Portuguese, the French took over the colonial administration of Brazil.

5. Which of the following statements concerning the political organization of Latin America until 1850 is most accurate?
   a. Most of Latin America was divided into units that mirrored the colonial viceroyalties.
   b. The excellent colonial road system enabled the creation of larger postrevolution states.
   c. Permanent consolidation and union was more typical of Central America than South America.
   d. Most attempts at consolidation and union failed.

6. Which of the following concepts was associated with Latin American liberal groups?
   a. retention of corporate groups
   b. the defense of the Catholic Church
   c. the rights of individuals and belief in private competition
   d. intervention by the state in commerce through protective tariffs
7. Which of the following factors did NOT account for the economic stagnation in Latin America from 1820 to 1850?

   a. the slow recovery of the mining sector after the wars of independence
   b. the lack of a transportation network and port facilities
   c. the lack of capital for investment in industry
   d. the absence of foreign markets for raw materials

8. By 1840, coffee became a major export product of

   a. Mexico.
   b. Argentina.
   c. Cuba.
   d. Brazil.

9. Which of the following beliefs is NOT associated with the concept of “modernization” or “westernization?”

   a. Development was a matter of increasing per capita production in any society.
   b. The more industrialized and urbanized any society became, the more social change and improvement were possible as traditional patterns were transformed.
   c. Change would take place through radical or revolutionary transitions rather than gradually.
   d. As the process occurred, there would be a natural movement toward more democratic forms of government and popular participation.

10. Which of the following sectors of the Latin American economy fueled the boom of the post-1880 period?

    a. industrial production
    b. the export of raw materials
    c. the internal marketing of raw materials
    d. the internal capitalization of transportation networks