

The Role of Globalization (Political, Economic, and Intellectual) and Transnational Networks of Violence in the Independence Wars of Gran Colombia

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“He who serves a revolution ploughs the sea,” Simón Bolívar said near the end of his life, a weary metaphor that at once dramatizes the fragility of power and hints at the transoceanic arenas in which his goal actually unfolded.¹ This paper takes that ocean seriously and aims to answer the question: To what extent did early nineteenth-century globalization and transnational networks of violence shape the Independence Wars of Gran Colombia? The thesis of this paper is that globalization, understood as intertwined political, economic, and intellectual networks, structured and shaped the struggle for independence. Gran Colombia’s key advances were not merely “national” breakthroughs, but they were enabled and constrained by global flows of resources, legitimacy, and ideas. Bolívar himself, formed by Parisian and Caribbean experiences and by London-centered networks, embodied these entanglements. In order to answer the research question, this paper will test three different hypotheses. First, political globalization, that means transnational recognition and support, especially from Haiti, Britain, and later the United States were crucial for legitimizing and consolidating Bolívar’s goals. Second, economic globalization: the war’s material foundations came from the integration of arms, loans, and manpower into global markets. These included British arms and finance, privateers, and British and Irish legionaries. Lastly, intellectual globalization: ideas of the Enlightenment and revolution spread through diasporas and lodges (from Paris to Cádiz, London, and the Caribbean), giving people a sense of unity and the ability to organize. This paper poses these inquiries because national narratives alone fail to elucidate how legitimacy abroad, resources from global markets, and the di-

¹ Bolívar: “Letter to General Juan José Flores (9 November 1830)”, in: Bushnell (ed.), *El Libertador*, p. 145.

verse array of ideas available to Bolívar delineate the constraints and opportunities of his actions.

This paper seeks to integrate (a) world-systems theory to contextualize Gran Colombia within the evolving core–periphery dynamics of the early capitalist world-economy; and (b) the notions of *Staatsferne Gewalt* (Riekenberg) and embedded violence (Hilgers & Macdonald) to examine the non-state, transnational actors, including mercenaries, privateers, slavers/antislavers, lodges, and diasporas, who engaged in violence and politics beyond the confines of state monopolies. By re-reading Gran Colombia through these lenses, the paper aims to reframe familiar episodes, Pétion's Haitian support and the emancipation pledges; British recruitment and finance; privateering economies; and masonic lodges as constitutive, not ancillary, to independence. This, in turn, speaks to a broader Atlantic history of revolutions whose successes and limits were made in the backrooms between states and transnational networks.

Most classic English-language books about the wars in New Granada and Venezuela read the story mainly from inside the region. They focus on leaders, llanero cavalry, and shifting coalitions. For instance, John Lynch's biography stands out in this regard. His chapters on Boyacá and Carabobo are rich on strategy and personality, but foreign help is mostly a side note, not a major factor of how armies were fed, paid, and given legitimacy abroad.² Anthony McFarlane's big picture view opens up the social and geographic lens, but the Atlantic ties seem more like background than the real ways that contracts and flags became muskets, wages, convoy protection, and recognition.³ Recent research of Matthew Brown, Joanna Crow, and Jonathan Lea alters this perspective and inquires into the actual mechanisms of movement. They show that a short Colombian document from 1817 gave agents in London "powers" that allowed private companies to buy weapons and uniforms, hire ships, and find men to work for them. They say that even though the British government stayed neutral, merchant credit and risk-taking kept Bolívar's army well-supplied in very real ways, and they back this up with names, contracts, and timing.⁴ On the sea, David Head explains how Spanish American privateers operating from U.S. ports used insurgent letters of marque and American neutrality law to bring prizes into courts,

² Lynch: *Simón Bolívar: A Life*, pp. 108–129.

³ McFarlane: *War and Independence in Spanish America*, pp. 3–5.

⁴ Brown/Crow/Lea: "Financing a Revolution", in: *Journal of Latin American Studies* 56 (2024), pp. 389–413, here pp. 389–393, 400–407.

turning captures into money and supplies.⁵ Edgardo Pérez Morales work contributes to the Cartagena side of this story and shows how privateers helped local authorities claim revenue and project republican power along the coast.⁶ Finance ties it all together. Frank Dawson places Gran Colombia's 1824 bond in London's 1822–1825 boom, which meant quick access to cash for war and then a shock after the Goldschmidt failure in 1826.⁷ John Muse-Fisher compares early U.S. and Colombian public finance and shows why thin taxation pushed Bogotá toward foreign loans and customs pledges, making outside markets crucial for keeping troops in the field.⁸

On economic globalization and foreign manpower, the Anglophone literature is rich and is increasingly becoming more refined. Matthew Brown, Joanna Crow, and Jonathan Lea map the London-centered merchant and credit networks that delivered arms, kit, transport, and ultimately the British Legion in 1817–19. They precisely show that, when formal British recognition delayed, private “powers” and commercial paper stood in for state capacity and converted sovereignty claims into shipments and pay chests.⁹ David Head's study of Spanish American privateering from U.S. ports complements this by showing how Baltimore, New Orleans, and Galveston served as gray-zone platforms for arming cruisers under Spanish American letters of marque; he links the business model to neutrality politics in the early U.S. republic.¹⁰ These works together show a material pipeline for Bolívar that ran through countinghouses, shipyards, and enlistment rooms far from the Orinoco. For intellectual and political globalization, newer Caribbean-focused histories emphasize how revolutionary ideas and maritime labor overlapped. Edgardo Pérez Morales's portrait of Cartagena's privateers shows Haitian connections, polyglot crews, and the city's open door to men of color from the French Caribbean; ideology traveled with sailors' contracts and prize courts, not just pamphlets.¹¹ Legal-diplomatic studies fill in the constraints: Arielli, Frei, and Van Hulle show how Britain's 1819 Foreign Enlistment Act tried to control recruiting without completely stopping it. This helps explain why Gran Co-

⁵ Head: *Privateers of the Americas*, pp. 1–3, 49–55.

⁶ Pérez Morales: *No Limits to Their Sway*, pp. 4–6, 142–147.

⁷ Dawson: *The First Latin American Debt Crisis* (1990), pp. 54–60, 186–190.

⁸ Muse-Fisher: “Financing a New Nation”, in: *Journal of Global History* 7 (2012), pp. 3–26, here pp. 13–20.

⁹ Brown/Crow/Lea: “Financing a Revolution”, in: *Journal of Latin American Studies* 56 (2024), pp. 389–413, here pp. 390–393, 399–401, 405–407.

¹⁰ Head: *Privateers of the Americas*, pp. 63–69, 92–101.

¹¹ Pérez Morales: *No Limits to Their Sway*, pp. 1–3.

Colombia could still get British and Irish soldiers even though Whitehall said it was neutral.¹²

When it comes to secret societies, the scholars no longer ask whether such lodges existed or not, but they ask how much they mattered and when. The most convincing recent work treats Masonic lodges as real, organized spaces for trust-building, information exchange, and coordination among exiles and emissaries. Karen Racine's synthesis on transatlantic networks contends that Spanish American activists in London and Cádiz utilized lodge circles and allied salons to amalgamate practical assistance with ideological validation; she emphasizes lodges not as puppet-masters but as connective tissue that diminished distances and reduced uncertainty for both conspirators and fundraisers.¹³

However, while the English-language literature is extensive on privateers, finance, and British volunteers, the deepest reconstructions of lodge politics are in Spanish; using both languages is essential. In English you can find enough to argue the case, but the Spanish-language studies of Cádiz, the Caribbean, and exile communities simply contain more names, meeting places, and minutes.

1. Case Study Analysis: Gran Colombia's Independence Wars

Gran Colombia came about through war and making things up as they went along. Between 1810 and 1826, a multi-front conflict broke out in Spain's American empire and created a room for republican experiments that had to be imagined while being fought for. The republic that Bolívar and his allies first called Colombia in 1819 and later called Gran Colombia brought New Granada, Venezuela, and Quito together under one constitution at Cúcuta in 1821. The military geography was very harsh. There were riverine lowlands that led to Andean corridors, royalist strongholds in Pasto and along the Caribbean coast, and the llanos to the east, where cavalry fought battles. The political geography was just as bad: creole rivalries, regional autonomies, and uneasy alliances with pardos and llaneros who changed sides as leaders came and went. John Lynch captures the double-bind well: Bolívar's victories (Boyacá in 1819, Carabobo in 1821, Pichincha in 1822) opened possibilities while multiplying de-

¹² Arielli/Frei/Van Hulle: "The Foreign Enlistment Act...", in: *The International History Review* 38 (2016), pp. 640–645, here pp. 640–645.

¹³ Racine: "Transatlantic Connections", in: Calderón/Leal (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Latin American Independence*, pp. 186–187.

mands for order, pay, and patronage across a space far larger than the institutions then available to govern it. The sources from the period make one point unmistakable. War-making and state-making proceeded together, and both were transnational. Bolívar's own chronologies acknowledge Haiti's decisive aid in 1816;¹⁴ British and Irish volunteers swelled patriot ranks after 1817; foreign-flag privateers attacked Spanish commerce from Cartagena to the Gulf; and loans floated in London underwrote muskets, uniforms, and pay chests.¹⁵ None of this was a coincidence. It was structural to the way the war was fought, the coalitions that were formed, and the republic that came out of it. That is why it is not just a theoretical luxury to look at Gran Colombia's history through the lenses of world-systems theory and embedded and non-state violence. It elucidates the survival of a nascent state within a world economy that was already exerting significant pressure on its peripheries, and in a security domain characterized by the entanglement of state and non-state forces. The rest of the paper tries to test three hypotheses (political, economic, and intellectual globalization) by assembling evidence first, then analyzing how these flows patterned Colombia's war and early state-building.

1.1 Political Globalization

Recognition and alliance-building took place on schooners and in salons, but their effects were real in the republic's camps and congresses. Haiti came first. After the collapse of the Second Republic of Venezuela, Bolívar regrouped in the Haitian Republic, where President Alexandre Pétion provided arms, volunteers, and safe harbor on the explicit condition that slavery is abolished after independence. Pétion ordered his general at Les Cayes to hand over "two thousand muskets and bayonets" to Bolívar, plus "as many cartridges for these guns as you can," and to load them discreetly on a vessel for Bolívar's use.¹⁶ Bolívar's own timeline of 1816 admits that he returned to the mainland "with the help of Haiti," a short but telling acknowledgment in a collection otherwise sparing with external credit.¹⁷ That bargain mattered in the field. Abolitionist decrees followed, and the patriot coalition widened in social com-

¹⁴ Bushnell (ed.): *El Libertador*, "Chronology", p. xv.

¹⁵ Bushnell (ed.): *El Libertador*, "Chronology", p. xv; Brown/Crow/Lea: "Financing a Revolution", in: *Journal of Latin American Studies* 56 (2024), pp. 389–413.

¹⁶ Pétion: "Letter to General Marion, 26 January 1816", in: Dubois/Glover/Mbembe (eds.), *The Haiti Reader*, p. 33.

¹⁷ Bushnell (ed.): *El Libertador*, "Chronology", p. xv.

position.¹⁸ Lynch notes that the combination of Haitian materiel, Caribbean volunteers, and llanero recruitment shifted the balance in the Orinoco basin between 1816 and 1818, laying the foundation for the 1819 campaign across the cordillera.¹⁹ In parallel, Bolívar's correspondence shows an eye fixed on Atlantic opinion. In the Jamaica Letter of 1815 he framed Spanish American emancipation as a question of hemispheric equilibrium, writing that the "magnificent position" of Panama could make it "the emporium of the universe," a line that was part geopolitical calculus and part invitation to commercial republics to take interest.²⁰ The sound here is unmistakable: independence was being argued in a register meant for foreign chancelleries and merchant houses as much as for creole patriots.

Formal recognition by great powers followed in stages and mattered for legitimacy, credit, and commerce. The United States moved first. The Anderson–Gual Treaty, signed in Bogotá on October 3rd 1824 and entering into force in 1825, placed the relationship on a conventional footing of peace, amity, navigation, and commerce.²¹ Its early articles declared perpetual friendship and set reciprocal commercial rights; later articles spelled out consular protections and rules of navigation. In concrete terms, the treaty recognized Colombian sovereignty, normalized trade, and signaled to other actors in the Atlantic that dealing with the new republic was lawful. It also built on diplomatic facts on the ground. The U.S. Office of the Historian records that Manuel Torres was received by President Monroe as minister plenipotentiary of Colombia in June 1822, the act that constituted U.S. recognition.²² The United States thus tied diplomatic form to a policy of guarded but real sympathy with Spanish American independence, even as it policed its neutrality laws at home.

Britain's road to recognition was more circuitous because London's global balancing ran through peace with Spain, naval supremacy, and expanding trade without premature entanglement. The critical point is that by the mid-1820s, the British government had concluded that de facto independence in northern South America was irreversible. By 1825, Britain negotiated a Treaty of Amity, Commerce and Navigation

¹⁸ "Decree for the Emancipation of the Slaves", Carúpano, 2 June 1816, in: Bushnell (ed.), *El Libertador*, p. 229.

¹⁹ Lynch: *Simón Bolívar: A Life*, pp. 108–129.

²⁰ Bolívar: "The Jamaica Letter", in: Bushnell (ed.), *El Libertador*, p. 78.

²¹ United States–Gran Colombia: *General Convention of Peace, Amity, Navigation and Commerce* (Anderson–Gual Treaty), Bogotá, 3 Oct. 1824, in: *Colección de tratados públicos de los Estados Unidos de Colombia*, pp. 40, 42.

²² Robertson: "The Recognition of the Hispanic American Nations by the United States", in: *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 1 (1918), pp. 239–269, here p. 259.

with Colombia, the text of which was subsequently laid before Parliament; ministers defended it in the Commons in early 1826 as prudent acknowledgment of realities and a means to secure British commercial access.²³ The letter of British neutrality remained, but its spirit shifted decisively toward engagement. As Malcolm Deas cautions, the step was a “*rather unheroic political act*” that arrived only “*after years of ambiguity*,” though, “*given Britain’s naval supremacy*,” still “*an important one*.”²⁴ The politics behind this were interesting. The Foreign Enlistment Act of 1819 criminalized subjects who fought for foreign belligerents, an assertion of neutrality that Spanish diplomats demanded.²⁵ Yet, as Arielli, Frei, and Van Hulle clearly show, enforcement was inconsistent and punctuated by proclamations in 1823 and 1825 that threatened penalties but rarely delivered them, a choreography that let Whitehall satisfy Madrid while tolerating substantial British participation in Spanish American wars of Independence.²⁶ The result was a British state that did not officially sponsor Bolívar yet steadily recognized, traded with, and in practice enabled his project. London creditors themselves spelled out the link between punctual debt service and diplomatic standing, warning that nothing would help recognition more than “vindicat[ing] in the eyes of the world” Colombia’s integrity in honoring its engagements.²⁷ A few months later, at the City of London Tavern on 10 July 1822, Zea was toasted by MPs and figures like Wilberforce, an evening where finance, politics, and legitimacy literally shared a table.²⁸

Political globalization also ran through lesser but vital channels: consuls, envoys, and treaty-makers who extended a sinew of law across the Caribbean and North Atlantic. The Anderson–Gual convention’s provisions on consular jurisdiction, neutral rights, and ship treatment mattered greatly to a state trying to move men and supplies across hostile waters.²⁹ And throughout, Bolívar kept writing for international audiences. In the Angostura Address of 1819 he sketched institutions for a “mixed” people and appealed to a language of law that could travel; in the Jamaica Letter he cast the

²³ United Kingdom–Colombia: *Treaty of Amity, Commerce and Navigation*, Bogotá, 18 Apr. 1825; see: *Hansard*, House of Commons, 6 Feb. 1826, vol. 14, cols. 111–117.

²⁴ Malcolm Deas, “Prologue,” in *The Role of Great Britain in the Independence of Colombia* (Bogotá: Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, 2011), p. 8.

²⁵ *Foreign Enlistment Act*, 59 Geo. III c. 69 (1819).

²⁶ Arielli/Frei/Van Hulle: “The Foreign Enlistment Act...”, author manuscript (2016), pp. 10–11.

²⁷ Dawson: *The First Latin American Debt Crisis* (2022), p. 27.

²⁸ Dawson: *The First Latin American Debt Crisis* (2022), p. 31.

²⁹ United States–Gran Colombia: Anderson–Gual Treaty, Bogotá, 3 Oct. 1824, in: *Colección de tratados...*, pp. 40, 42.

newborn republics as parts of the same Atlantic debate that had produced the American and French revolutions.³⁰ If political recognition is a hinge between war-making and state-making, Gran Colombia's hinge was forged abroad as much as at home, in Port-au-Prince, London, and Washington as surely as in Bogotá and Angostura.

1.2 Economic Globalization

The British network of credit, kit, and transport was at the heart of the war effort. As Matthew Brown clearly explains, "*Colombia began its independent life with constant reminders that it was both morally and financially indebted to the British.*"³¹ This debt affected what quartermasters could buy, when, and on what terms.

The Orinoco does not grow guns, money, uniforms, or credit. They come in groups and on contract. The economic infrastructure of the independence war was international by necessity, and it became more so as campaigns went on and more land was gained. Brown, Crow, and Lea give the best recent account of the British networks that funded and supplied the Colombian war effort when the British government in London couldn't help. Their article demonstrates that a single Colombian document giving "Powers" on London intermediaries unlocked a web of private partnerships able to procure arms, clothing, and shipping, and to recruit men.³² The point is not that a faceless market delivered generic goods. It is that patriots built trust-based channels into the City and docklands to convert revolutionary legitimacy into contracts and cargo. Colombia was also the first Latin American country to borrow money from the City after Waterloo, and Bolívar moved fast. On 24 December 1819, he gave power to Francisco Antonio Zea to look for up to five million pounds in Europe and to pledge customs, mines, lands, and other state property as security. This was the formal power of attorney that turned recognition politics into cash and cargo.³³ When Zea reached London, patriots' agents had already bought on credit and owed "over £500,000" to British merchants for munitions, uniforms, and the enlistment of thousands of volunteers. Zea's first job, on 1 August 1820, was to consolidate those debts into 10 percent debentures secured on the state tobacco monopoly and a fifth of Colombia's gold and silver output, a deal with Herring, Graham and Powles

³⁰ Bolívar: "The Jamaica Letter", in: Bushnell (ed.), *El Libertador*, p. 78.

³¹ Matthew Brown, "Britain and the Independence of Colombia," in *The Role of Great Britain in the Independence of Colombia* (Bogotá: Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, 2011), p. 29

³² Brown/Crow/Lea: "Financing a Revolution", in: *Journal of Latin American Studies* 56 (2024), pp. 389–413, here pp. 389–393, 400–407.

³³ Dawson: *The First Latin American Debt Crisis* (2022), p. 23.

that restored enough credibility to keep supplies moving.³⁴ Zea then finished the 1822 loan, which was backed by import and export duties, mines income, and tobacco revenues. It was issued as beautiful Ackermann-engraved bearer bonds with a six percent coupon and a face value of 80. The contractors didn't pay commissions, early interest, or a sinking fund up front. For Bogotá's quartermasters, the key was reliability: they needed to know that they would get regular payments for muskets, kit, transport, and pay. Even the prospectus sales talk about Colombia's "unbounded" resources and a coming tranquility was part of making Colombian paper insurable and tradable in the core market that mattered.³⁵

The material side is clear: British muskets and uniforms show up in campaign returns, and shipping records show that ships left British and West Indian ports for Cartagena, the Magdalena, and the Orinoco. The manpower side is even more impressive. After 1817, a lot of British and Irish legionaries, mostly from Liverpool, Dublin, and London, joined the army. Why they were at Boyacá in 1819 and Carabobo in 1821 is not a consequence of romantic nationalism. Instead, it is a military fact, with units commanded by British officers operating in integration with patriot forces. Matthew Brown's article mentions that roughly seven thousand³⁶ foreign adventurers served in Colombia's army and about one thousand in its navy, with only around a hundred taking part in the Pisba crossing, and that foreigners in the regrouped army at Pantano de Vargas and Boyacá "may well have been decisive," which ties demobilized

³⁴ Dawson: *The First Latin American Debt Crisis* (2022), pp. 26–27.

³⁵ Dawson: *The First Latin American Debt Crisis* (2022), pp. 28–31.

³⁶ The numbers are debated, however, Brown's findings took as evidence in this paper. Other estimations: Lambert estimated that the Irish Legion was composed of some 2,000 men in total, but the number involved in the rebellion at Riohacha was only around a quarter of that figure. Ascertaining exactly how many rebelled at Riohacha is not easy. Earlier units sent out from Ireland were incorporated into the British Legion in late 1819, and Mariano Montilla wrote that of the 800 Irishmen originally supposed to have left Margarita with him, because of illness and disease only 678 were able to do so. Eight months later, the Jamaica papers recorded the arrival of just 544 men from Riohacha, of whom 95 were suggested to have been Riohacheros. Benjamin M'Mahon thought that the number of Irishmen was closer to 200. Francisco Burdett O'Connor claimed that his regiment of Irishmen (261 strong when it left Margarita) stayed loyal to the patriot cause at Riohacha. It therefore seems likely that a considerable number had already casually deserted, or died, between leaving Margarita and departure from Riohacha. "La Narración de Mariano Montilla": *General de Division Mariano de Montilla: Homenaje en el Bicentenario de su nacimiento 1782–1982*, vol. 1 (Caracas 1982); *Dublin Evening Post* (= *DEP*), 31st August 1820; Lambert, *Voluntarios británicos e irlandeses* (note 10), vol. 2, p. 302; Francisco Burdett O'Connor, *Independencia americana: recuerdos de Francisco Burdett O'Connor, coronel del ejército, libertador de Colombia y general de división de los del Perú y Bolivia. Los publica su nieto T. O'Connor d'Arlach* (La Paz 1915), p. 39.

veterans and wage expectations to real battlefield weight.³⁷ He also traces the Irish Legion's 1820 mutiny at Riohacha to arrears of pay and to Caribbean commercial networks that offered quick exit options, underscoring how wages and opportunity shaped enlistment and desertion decisions.³⁸ Tim Fanning adds that his prosopography of Irish participation shows the mix of motives: post-Napoleonic demobilization, wages, and political idealism, and the very practical way that British Isles manpower became part of Spanish America's wars.³⁹ Mechanism that made this possible, again, was a British legal and political stance that prohibited enlistment on paper while tolerating and occasionally turning a blind eye to recruiters in practice. When combined with the expanded reach of British shipping and credit, this gray-zone environment sustained a flow of men whose experience of European drill made a difference on the field.

The City of London's boom-and-bust cycle in the mid-1820s is important to this story because it brought all of these flows together. Frank Dawson's classic history of the 1822–1825 loan bubble shows how British investors chased Latin American sovereign bonds and mining shares, bringing Colombia into the London market in 1824 with a loan of £2.5 million arranged by envoys like Francisco Antonio Zea.⁴⁰ The U.S. Office of the Historian's summary of a later diplomatic exchange, looking back to the 1820s, confirms that both the loan's amount and the fact that the failure of the London house of Goldschmidt in 1826 precipitated a payments crisis for Colombia.⁴¹ In the short run, the loans funded procurement and pay; in the long run, they tied the new republic to cycles of British capital. This is precisely where world-systems theory helps make sense of otherwise disconnected facts. Wallerstein's definition of a world-system as a social system structured by a geographical division of labor and rules of legitimation highlights how credit relations and trade flows bind peripheral polities to core markets.⁴² In the 1820s, Colombia's insertion into an Atlantic economy in which Britain was indisputably a core power meant that the republic's material war effort rose and fell with London's appetites and panics. The supply of muskets was

³⁷ Brown: "Soldier Heroes and the Colombian Wars of Independence", in: *Hispanic Research Journal* 7 (2006), p. 45.

³⁸ Brown: "Soldier Heroes...", in: *Hispanic Research Journal* 7 (2006), pp. 46–47.

³⁹ Fanning: *Paisanos*, chs. 3–5.

⁴⁰ Dawson: *The First Latin American Debt Crisis* (1990), esp. chs. 2–3.

⁴¹ U.S. Department of State: *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1904*, doc. 936.

⁴² Wallerstein: *The Modern World-System I* (2011 ed.), pp. 604, 607.

not simply a military variable; it was a function of core financing, insurance, and shipping.

Privateering sits at the intersection of these dynamics. From bases in Cartagena, Amelia Island, New Orleans, Baltimore, and Galveston, privateers commissioned by Spanish American republics struck Spanish commerce, sold prizes in U.S. ports, and drew in crews, investors, and suppliers across the North Atlantic littoral. David Head's study maps the American side of this economy, showing how letters of marque issued by insurgent authorities created legal fictions sturdy enough to pass through U.S. courts often enough to keep the trade going, even as American officials policed neutrality sporadically.⁴³ Edgardo Pérez Morales's work on Cartagena makes the complementary point from the Caribbean: privateers were maritime shock troops of sovereignty, their violence underwriting local claims to republican authority and revenue.⁴⁴ Economic globalization here was not only about formal bonds and loans. It was about a floating labor market of seamen and soldiers; about prize courts that laundered seized cargoes into hard currency; and about the navigation of overlapping legal orders in which British neutrality, U.S. neutrality, and Spanish claims were negotiated through practice as much as statute.

Finally, there is the question of fiscal state capacity within the new republic. John Muse-Fisher's comparative analysis of early U.S. and Gran Colombian state finance shows how limited Colombia's extractive and monetary instruments were in the 1820s compared to those of the early United States.⁴⁵ To keep armies clothed and paid, Bogotá relied on foreign loans, putting customs duties on the line, and deals with regional elites who controlled local revenue streams. The meaning is very clear: without foreign credit and access to the Atlantic trade, the war effort would have starved. With them, it became possible to make but it was vulnerable to external shocks. That double-edged dependence is not retrospective theorizing. In 1824 and 1825, quartermasters and treasury secretaries had to deal with the fallout from Goldschmidt's collapse and Congress's debates about how to pay off debts made in London while keeping the army in the field. This is what you can expect in a modern world economy: a periphery trying to become independent by using credit provided by the core, only to find out that the cost of access was exposure to cycles it couldn't control.

⁴³ Head: *Privateers of the Americas*, chs. 1, 3–5.

⁴⁴ Pérez Morales: *No Limits to Their Sway*, chs. 1–2, 6.

⁴⁵ Muse-Fisher: "Financing a New Nation", in: *Journal of Global History* 7 (2012), pp. 3–26, here esp. pp. 13–20.

1.3 Intellectual Globalization

Long before they were written down in constitutions, people, print, and lodges spread ideas. Bolívar's own writings show that his mind was busy with transatlantic debates about sovereignty, representation, and commerce. In the Angostura Address, he searched for institutions which can work for a society that was neither European nor indigenous alone. He also called for a senate to stabilize republican life. In the Jamaica Letter, he imagined a hemispheric congress and saw Panama as a future "emporium of the universe," a clear reference to a world where geography and trade would determine political arrangements.⁴⁶ These were not metaphors that stood on their own, but they owed intellectual debts to the Enlightenment and the revolutionary Atlantic, which were passed on through networks of exiles and diasporas. Here, London stands out, especially in the 1810s. Francisco de Miranda's long stay there before 1810, his relationships with British politicians and intellectuals, and the Spanish American circles that coalesced around him left a template that later patriots used when they returned to seek support.⁴⁷ Karen Racine's work tracks this London-based Hispanic community and shows how it created spaces (reading rooms, salons, lodges) in which ideas about constitutionalism, commerce, and hemispheric republicanism were debated by people who would later draft laws and raise battalions.

Janet Polasky's Atlantic-wide synthesis draws the larger image. The circulation of pamphlets, manifestos, and travelers' tales connected Paris, Philadelphia, London, Cádiz, Port-au-Prince, and Caracas well before formal alliances did. Revolutionary languages of rights and representation were not simply translated but re-authored in new settings, and Spanish American patriots were both consumers and producers in this traffic. If these intellectual circuits next to Hilgers and Macdonald's account of violence as embedded in subnational networks placed, it could be seen how lodges and diasporas did double duty. They were not just debating societies; they were organizational forms that mobilized resources and coordinated action across borders. Hilgers and Macdonald write that the violence experienced in the region is "embedded in structures, institutions, cultures, and identities," and that understanding it requires attention to the actors whose links to context position them as aggressors or victims.⁴⁸ That line travels well backward. In the 1810s, Masonic and quasi-Masonic

⁴⁶ Bolívar: "The Jamaica Letter", in: Bushnell (ed.), *El Libertador*, p. 78.

⁴⁷ Racine: *Francisco de Miranda*, esp. chs. 7–9.

⁴⁸ Hilgers/Macdonald: "Introduction...", in: Hilgers/Macdonald (eds.), *Violence in Latin America and the Caribbean*, pp. 3, 7.

lodges, expatriate clubs, and merchant houses doubled as recruitment offices, intelligence-sharing hubs, and fund-raising committees. They provided the organizational glue that turned ideas into networks and networks into ships, men, and muskets.

World-systems theory helps ground this intellectual exchange in material realities without reducing ideas to mere epiphenomena. Wallerstein's claim that a world-economy is held together by an extensive geographical division of labor reminds us why Bolívar's Panama image felt so natural to his readers. They already lived in a world tied up together by trade routes, insurance contracts, and newsprint. When Bolívar imagined a "society of nations" in the Americas, he was drawing with the grain of an emerging global economy that made transisthmian routes, Caribbean entrepôts, and Atlantic exchanges central to politics.⁴⁹ That is why the same lodges that read Rousseau also negotiated shipping rates, why the same pamphlets that denounced tyranny announced prize auctions, and why the same exiles who discussed the British constitution signed contracts for Brown Besses and blue cloth. Intellectual globalization in Gran Colombia's war was not a consequence of a privilege of peacetime. It was the connective tissue that made transnational mobilization legible and effective.

2. Discussion / Synthesis

It's easier to understand the three strands of evidence if you think of Gran Colombia as part of a world economy where access to credit, insurance, and law was not equal, and if you accept that in the 1810s and 1820s, networks that were on the edge of the state were often where the most important tools of coercion and coordination were kept, not in the new bureaucracies. World-systems analysis disciplines the first claim by reminding us that the republic's external ties were not a diplomatic garnish but the very medium through which war-making resources were acquired. Wallerstein's definition of a world-economy as a large social system held together by an extensive division of labor, and crucially not by a single political authority, clearly shows why the recognition and commerce provisions in the Anderson–Gual treaty mattered so much to Bogotá's quartermasters and consuls. In such a system, what looks like a legal formality between two polities is in practice a relay that connects a peripheral state to the core's circuits of capital and goods; it is no accident that the earliest articles in the 1824 convention spell out reciprocal amity and navigation and follow quickly with consular protections, since without recognizable flags and con-

⁴⁹ Wallerstein: *The Modern World-System I* (2011 ed.), pp. 604, 607.

suls, cargoes cannot be insured and seizures cannot be litigated in neutral ports.⁵⁰ This is precisely the kind of linkage Wallerstein has in mind when he describes the durability of the modern world-economy as lying in the rules that coordinate exchange among unequally placed actors.⁵¹ The British case is even clearer. When the 1825 treaty with Colombia was laid before the Commons in 1826 and ministers defended it as recognition of commercial realities, they were translating de facto insertion into British trade into de jure predictability that bankers and shipowners could price.⁵² The point is not that Britain suddenly became an ally, but it is that the City already was the financial clearinghouse of the Atlantic, so London's legal acknowledgment locked in lower transaction costs for Colombian procurement and shipping even as Whitehall maintained a doctrine of neutrality.

That legal-commercial hinge is inseparable from the second claim about the organization of violence. Tilly's intentionally harsh remark that state-building and war-making often function like a protection racket "with the advantage of legitimacy" is not a cynical aside but a methodological hint for our case. In the Colombian theater, legitimacy was thin on the ground in the early 1820s, and so coercion and protection were constantly outsourced to, bargained with, or produced by actors whose authority did not spring from offices in Bogotá.⁵³ Hilgers and Macdonald's insistence that violence in the region is embedded in networks and institutions rather than monopolized by tidy sovereigns helps to decode what privateers, London agents, recruiters, and lodge organizers were actually doing. Their claim that insecurity is a daily reality and that scholars must disaggregate actors and spaces to see how power is produced maps almost literally onto the Caribbean littoral, the Magdalena, and the Orinoco, where the police-military line was blurred and where a prize court or a consulate could have as much bearing on material outcomes as a cabinet decree.⁵⁴ Riekenberg gives that embeddedness a specifically Latin American genealogy by showing how long the region's public order has been negotiated among para-state and non-state entrepreneurs of violence. In our period, the upshot is that privateers and foreign

⁵⁰ United States–Gran Colombia: Anderson–Gual Treaty, Bogotá, 3 Oct. 1824, in: *Colección de tratados...*, pp. 40, 42.

⁵¹ Wallerstein: *The Modern World-System I* (2011 ed.), pp. 605–606.

⁵² United Kingdom–Colombia: *Treaty of Amity, Commerce and Navigation*, laid before the House of Commons, debate of 6 Feb. 1826, *Hansard*, vol. 14, cols. 111–117.

⁵³ Tilly: "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime", in: Evans/Rueschemeyer/Skocpol (eds.), *Bringing the State Back In*, p. 170; see also p. 181.

⁵⁴ Hilgers/Macdonald: "Introduction...", in: Hilgers/Macdonald (eds.), *Violence in Latin America and the Caribbean*, pp. 3, 7.

legionaries are not colorful appendices to the “real” war but the very conduits through which coercive capacity was mobilized when fiscal-administrative organs were embryonic. The City of London and Caribbean ports represent the world-systems aspect, while letters of marque, lodge statutes, and recruiting contracts exemplify the embedded-violence dimension of this story; they converge in the realm where legal structure and organized force coexist.

The evidence on financing and procurement makes the marriage of these two perspectives especially visible. Brown, Crow, and Lea show that a brief instrument conferring powers on Colombian agents in London unlocked a web of private contracting that delivered muskets, uniforms, transport, and men. Their reconstruction of how merchant risk and credit substituted for absent state-to-state military aid is a real-world instance of what world-systems theory predicts: a peripheral polity secures coercive resources by tapping the core’s private markets when official channels are blocked.⁵⁵ It also demonstrates what the embedded-violence lens predicts: the practical work of building coercive capacity happened in recruiters’ rooms, counting-houses, and outfitting yards where law, money, and violence were braided. The British and Irish legions sit at the crossover point. Raised in a legal gray zone created by the Foreign Enlistment Act’s letter and its lax enforcement, they were made possible by Britain’s neutrality regime even as they were disavowed by it, and once landed they bolted into Colombian command structures in ways that extended but did not replace indigenous military capacities.⁵⁶ The same is true for privateering too. Head’s account of American prize litigation shows how insurgent letters of marque, U.S. neutrality law, and entrepreneurial crews created maritime coercion that was nominally private yet functionally fiscal and strategic for the republics that commissioned it.⁵⁷ Pérez Morales’s Cartagena study supplies the Caribbean mirror, with privateers underwriting local sovereignty by converting captured cargoes into cash and by projecting republican authority into sea lanes.⁵⁸ In both cases, violence is organized beyond ministries yet sunk into their aims; the boundary between the state and its agents of force is porous by design.

⁵⁵ Brown/Crow/Lea: “Financing a Revolution”, in: *Journal of Latin American Studies* 56 (2024), pp. 389–413, here pp. 389–393, 400–407.

⁵⁶ Arielli/Frei/Van Hulle: “The Foreign Enlistment Act...”, in: *The International History Review* 38 (2016), pp. 640–645, here pp. 10–11; Fanning: *Paisanos*, chs. 3–5.

⁵⁷ Head: *Privateers of the Americas*, chs. 3–5.

⁵⁸ Pérez Morales: *No Limits to Their Sway*, chs. 1–2, 6.

Recognition and ideas are likewise co-produced in this synthesis. Bolívar's Jamaica Letter's audience were Europeans and North Americans. It borrowed heavily from a transatlantic language of rights and commerce; it is not simply a keyboard of metaphors but a bid to align Spanish American emancipation with the legal-commercial expectations of core audiences who might invest in it.⁵⁹ If people who study on this topic read the letter's image of Panama as a future emporium against Wallerstein's pages on the modern world-economy's dependence on long-distance exchange, the harmony is almost too neat; Bolívar is thinking like an Atlantic merchant as much as a republican theorist because the credibility of his project, abroad and at home, depended on showing that sovereignty would flow with trade winds and bills of exchange.⁶⁰ The lodges and expatriate circles described by Racine and the diasporic print circuits mapped by Polasky are the human carriers of that alignment. They translate a repertoire of Enlightenment and revolutionary ideas into organizational muscle that, in turn, lowers the transaction costs of recruiting, fund-raising, and information-sharing across borders.⁶¹ The conceptual payoff of combining world-systems and embedded-violence lenses is therefore simple. Political globalization lowers formal barriers to entry into core markets and legal orders. Economic globalization provides the resources once those channels are established. Intellectual globalization makes the whole group clear and acceptable to different groups of people. In the archives, they don't often show up in that order or in neat groups, but in reality, they all move together, making each other thicker.

Now, it has therefore seen the triad at work already: recognition doing legal work, resources moving by bond and brig, repertoires making those movements intelligible and durable. With that in place, the paper now deep dive into what these mechanisms do explain, what they do not, and how far they travel.

3. Causation, Limits, and Portability

In order to have a fair account, evaluating competing explanations for Colombian victories and consolidation and specifying what this paper's globalization mechanisms do and do not explain is crucial. Geography and demographics were important. The llanero cavalry tradition, Bolívar and his lieutenants' tactical leadership during the 1819 campaign, and the Spanish Empire's inability to supply troops in highland

⁵⁹ Bolívar: "The Jamaica Letter", in: Bushnell (ed.), *El Libertador*, p. 78.

⁶⁰ Wallerstein: *The Modern World-System I* (2011 ed.), pp. 605–607.

⁶¹ Racine: *Francisco de Miranda*, chs. 7–9; Polasky: *Revolutions Without Borders*.

theaters all had effects that no treaty or bond issue could replace. Lynch's careful narrative of Boyacá and Carabobo keeps this fact in view, reminding that opportunistic leadership and local alliances produced battlefield effects that were not warehoused in London.⁶² But when the questions of how campaigns could be kept going, how pay chests could be filled, how muskets and uniforms could be bought in large enough numbers to move from opportunistic raids to multi-front operations, and how a new flag could be used reliably in ports is asked, the globalization variables do important work. The limits are obvious and they cut in two directions. The first thing is volatility. Dawson's loan chronology and the 1826 Goldschmidt failure show how quickly the City could turn from fountain to drought and how that turn ramified in Bogotá's treasury.⁶³ The second is cost. Dawson's numbers show that the £2,000,000 loan could make at most £1,600,000 before taxes. After that, contractors took their cut, kept the early interest and sinking fund, and kept the difference between 80 and 84, plus fees on future coupons and redemptions.⁶⁴ The third is moral risk. Arielli, Frei, and Van Hulle's study of the Foreign Enlistment Act makes clear that neutrality regimes that facilitate gray-zone recruitment and outfitting can also produce indiscipline, legal exposure, and diplomatic embarrassment when courts or ministries decide to enforce what had been paper law.⁶⁵ Embedded violence is not an uncomplicated benefit. Privateers generated revenue and strategic pressure, but they also invited abuse and jurisdictional conflict, as Head's prize-court narratives and Pérez Morales's Caribbean scenes make plain.⁶⁶ Portability is not always the same, but often mixed. The general mechanisms travel well to Río de la Plata and Mexico in broad outline, where foreign loans, volunteers, privateering, and recognition similarly intersected with local military geographies. The specific configuration, however, was contingent. Haiti's early role in Bolívar's return, the timing of British recognition and treaty-making, and the particular diaspora networks that London provided in the 1810s produced a pathway that was not easily replicable in places without those exact alignments. What carries across cases is less a recipe than a grammar: in a world-economy, peripheral polities make war by stitching together recognition, markets, and ideas through embedded networks of violence and cooperation.

⁶² Lynch: *Simón Bolívar: A Life*, pp. 108–129.

⁶³ Dawson: *The First Latin American Debt Crisis* (2022), pp. 43–45.

⁶⁴ Dawson: *The First Latin American Debt Crisis* (2022), pp. 30–31.

⁶⁵ Arielli/Frei/Van Hulle: "The Foreign Enlistment Act...", in: *The International History Review* 38 (2016), pp. 10–11.

⁶⁶ Head: *Privateers of the Americas*, chs. 3–5; Pérez Morales: *No Limits to Their Sway*, chs. 1–2, 6.

4. Conclusion

If Bolívar feared he was ploughing the sea, globalization supplied the oars: recognition to keep a legal course, resources to move the hull, and repertoires to keep the crew in time. This paper aimed to answer the question of to what extent did early nineteenth-century globalization and transnational networks of violence shape the Independence Wars of Gran Colombia? The answer that emerges is not simply that globalization “mattered,” but that it structured the opportunity set, and the constraint set, within which Bolívar and his allies operated. Three claims stand out. First, political globalization supplied legitimacy and access: Haitian sponsorship linked material aid to emancipation; U.S. and British recognition and treaties normalized Colombian sovereignty within Atlantic legal regimes. Second, economic globalization furnished the sinews of war: arms and uniforms from British/American ports; London loans that front-loaded resources at the cost of future autonomy; mercenary markets; and a privateering economy that transformed maritime predation into budget. Third, intellectual globalization provided the grammar and the organizations of revolution: Cádiz liberalism, Enlightenment republicanism, and Haitian emancipatory ideals traveled through lodges and diasporic publics, allowing actors in Bogotá, Angostura, London, Port-au-Prince, and Philadelphia to imagine a shared project, and to coordinate across distance. In the light of the evidence shown throughout this paper, it is clear that these determinants are not separable. They interlocked through the intermediaries highlighted by *Staatsferne Gewalt*/embedded violence (recruiters, shipowners, lodge masters, consuls, editors, bankers) who, operating in gray zones of law and market, converted global flows into usable coercion and legitimacy. World-systems analysis clarifies why those flows took the shapes they did; the extra-state violence lens clarifies who harnessed them and how. The same mechanisms that enabled victory also carried the seeds of fragility: debt exposure after 1825; difficulties demobilizing quasi-private coercion; regional and social cleavages left unresolved by wartime centralism.

In a longer Latin American context (1810–2010), Gran Colombia's experience shows patterns that keep coming back: external recognition and finance as gatekeepers; capital markets limiting policy space; non-state coercion built into party, patronage, and criminal networks; and ideological repertoires that are made in one country but used in another. Bolívar's career (as a pilgrim in Paris and Rome, a protégé of Haiti, a fundraiser in London, and a strategist in the Caribbean) shows that he was a globalized revolutionary and a political entrepreneur whose successes and failures

were both made in the Atlantic. The meta-hypothesis thus asserts that early nineteenth-century globalization was multidimensional (political, economic, and intellectual), and the triumphs of Gran Colombia are most effectively elucidated not solely by endogenous “national” forces, but by the interplay of global structures and transnational actors. For the next hundred years and beyond, Latin American countries would continue to deal with that intersection, but with different results and the same limits.

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