

INSURRECCIÓN Y  
MOVILIZACIÓN SOCIAL



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Of Structures, Culture and Other Demons: A  
Review of Late Eighteenth-Century Andean  
Insurrections

*De estructuras, culturas y otros demonios: una revisión de las  
insurrecciones andinas de finales del siglo XVIII*

*De estruturas, culturas e outros demônios: Análise das  
insurreições andinas no final do século XVIII*

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### **Abstract**

This review essay visualizes eighteenth-century popular insurrections not as casual or isolated episodes, but rather as symptomatic expressions of social tensions and heightened conflict; feelings that increased in intensity during the latter half of the century and culminated in the Great Rebellion of 1780-1783 in the Southern Andes, the 1765 Quito uprising and the 1781 Comunero Revolt in Nueva Granada. The article examines journal articles and monographs that address these revolts, acknowledging that academic production on late eighteenth-century insurrections in the Spanish colonies is itself suspended within larger scholarly debates that address insurrections outside the Andean context and incorporate questions raised by scholars of peasant revolts and agrarian conflict in other fields and time periods.

**Key Words:** Rebellion, Revolt, Insurrection, Political culture

### **Resumen**

Este ensayo observa las insurrecciones populares del siglo XVIII no como episodios casuales o aislados, sino como síntomas de un sentimiento generalizado de descontento social e intensificado conflicto. Sentimientos cuya intensidad se incrementó durante la segunda mitad del siglo XVIII y culminó con la Gran Rebelión de 1780-1783 en el sur de los Andes, el levantamiento en Quito de 1765 y la Rebelión de los Comuneros en la Nueva Granada de 1781. Este artículo examina los trabajos que hacen referencia a estas revueltas, reconociendo el hecho que la producción académica de las insurrecciones de finales del siglo XVIII en las colonias americanas forman parte de los amplios debates académicos que abordan las insurrecciones fuera del contexto Andino, e incorpora preguntas promulgadas por los estudiosos de las revueltas campesinas y el conflicto armado en otros campos y otros periodos.

**Palabras clave:** Rebelión, Revuelta, Insurrección, Cultura política

### **Resumo**

Este ensaio não analisa as insurreições populares do século XVIII como episódios casuais ou isolados, mas como sintomas de um sentimento generalizado de insatisfação social e de intensificação dos conflitos. Esse sentimento aumentou durante a segunda metade do século XVIII e culminou com a Gran Rebelión de 1780-1783 do sul dos Andes, com a insurreição em Quito de 1765 e com a Rebelión de los Comuneros na Nova Granada de 1781. A autora examina a literatura especializada que faz referência às revoltas, advertindo que a produção acadêmica sobre as insurreições nas colônias americanas de final do século XVIII fazem parte dos amplos debates acadêmicos que abordam as insurreições fora do contexto andino, incorporando perguntas formuladas pelos pesquisadores das revoltas camponesas e dos conflitos armados em outros campos e em outros períodos.



**Palavras-chave:** Rebelião, Revolta, Insurreição, Cultura política

From the beginning of the colonial enterprise, Latin America witnessed a remarkable convergence of social, cultural, political, and economic forces. Under the Spanish colonial project, social, legal, and institutional structures played a crucial role in the construction of this society. Moreover, these structures served as the overarching framework under which historical actors, criollos, mestizos, casta or native were able to negotiate their place and create a social reality that was distinct from officially constructed ideals. Scholars of colonial Spanish America often depict this society as one that is highly stratified, built on hierarchies of class, race and gender. But in spite of this high level of stratification, social actors created spaces where they negotiated their social position, transgressed the social order, and participated in insurrections. Variation and complexity characterized colonial reality. Colonial historians have painted a picture of a society where some women, mestizos, slaves, natives, and castas could negotiate their living conditions and improved their status vis-à-vis the colonial state. The realities created by ongoing negotiations between these social groups created a hybrid society. For the colonial state—itsself variegated and complex—dealing with these processes of negotiation, often ranged from processes of informal accommodation, official redress through the legal system or outright repression of armed insurrections.

For the case of large-scale popular insurrections, colonial scholars agree that the overall incidence of rebellion in Spanish America was rare. In fact, when scholars do speak of mass popular revolts, they typically look to the second half of the eighteenth century. This scholarly consensus posits that under the Bourbon crown, particularly after 1760, Spanish America witnessed a marked increase in instances of civil disorder. In a 1995 article published in the *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, historian Anthony McFarlane compared the trajectory of four cases of popular revolts in colonial Spanish America. According to McFarlane after 1760, Quito, Peru, New Granada and Mexico experienced a series of revolts characterized by “collective actions [...] generally directed against tax collectors, local officials who abused their power, intruders into community lands, or rivalries with neighboring communities.” Although McFarlane is quick to characterize these revolts as typically “of a small scale, and of short range duration” He allows for instances where these revolts “took on a more impressive and widespread range” (McFarlane, 1995 : 314).

All of the authors explored in this review essay recognize eighteenth-century popular insurrections not as casual or isolated episodes, but rather as symptomatic expressions of social unrest and heightened conflict; feelings that increased in intensity during the latter half of the eighteenth century and culminated in the

1765 Quito uprising, the 1781 Comunero Revolt in Nueva Granada, and the Great Rebellion of 1780-1783 in the Southern Andes. It examines works that address these revolts, acknowledging the fact that the academic production on late eighteenth-century insurrections in the Spanish colonies is itself suspended within larger scholarly debates that address insurrections outside the Andean context and incorporate questions raised by scholars of peasant revolts and agrarian conflict in other fields and time periods. The narrative's theme rests on what the author considers has been a recent historiographical move away from strict materialist explanations of why people rebel, toward a more nuanced analysis of causation. While the analysis offered by the recent scholarship does acknowledge the role played by economic grievances, it highlights the existence of other explicatory factors—that begin to fall outside the material register and fall instead on a political, cultural and symbolic one. This final point is critical. Economic grievances cannot be artificially separated from the cultural realm, challenging historians to rely on a vast arsenal of sources and interpretations that highlight the complexity of social reality.

Although the majority of works reviewed in this essay focus on armed revolt in the Viceroyalty of Peru for the second half of the eighteenth century, a bias expressed by the higher number of monologues and journal articles that examine the 1780-1783 cycle of insurrection in the southern Andes, it also includes works that deal with other instances of popular armed insurrections, particularly in the viceroyalty of Nueva Granada. It distinguishes between revolts with a large indigenous leadership base, and other mestizo-led revolts. It does so in order to acknowledge a larger set of academic debates that ground their analysis on the economic bases of popular revolts and question if ethnicity has played a key role in shaping these movements. Moreover, it includes scholarship that points to the latter half of the eighteenth century, as a particularly turbulent period of time in colonial history characterized by a marked increase in civil disorder triggered by Bourbon administrative reforms.

For its treatment of Andean native insurrections, this essay includes the events that unfolded in the Andes during the Great Rebellion of 1780-1783. The treatment given in this review to the literature on the Tomas Katari, Tupac Amaru II, and the Tupac Katari revolts of Peru and Alto Peru, unfolds following a chronological (here chronology refers to scholarship published during the second half of the twentieth century) and thematic approach. This approach acknowledges the existence of early foundational texts, published before Steve Stern's 1987 publication of *Resistance, Rebellion and Consciousness in the Andean Peasant World*; an influential text that in some ways transformed scholarly pro-



duction, particularly in the Anglophone world. It goes on to survey recent works that in some measure adopt and address Stern's methodological revisions. Finally, it closes by providing some discussion on how recent works interpretations on revolts move away from strict materialist explanations of why people rebel, providing nuanced analyses of causation that still acknowledge the role played by economic grievances but point to the existence of other explanatory factors.

### **Recreating the Tupac Amaru Rebellion and the Re-writing of History: Foundational Texts on Andean Native Insurrection**

Perhaps the best-known case of massive native insurrection in the Andes during the late colonial period is that of the Tupac Amaru II rebellion. On November 4, 1780, José Gabriel Condorcanqui (Tupac Amaru), captured Spanish corregidor Antonio de Arriaga in the province of Tinta and started a widespread native insurrection of seismic proportions that spread from its epicenter near the city of Cuzco to distant reaches of the Spanish colonial domain. As the supposed heir to the Inca throne, Tupac Amaru's movement helped fuel other ongoing local revolts and at times ignited rebellious sentiment extending to Peru's central and northern highlands, reaching Alto Peru and echoing further to the north in the viceroyalty of Nueva Granada. The repercussions of José Gabriel's movement are varied. Uncovering both individual and collective motives for this revolt continues to challenge scholars of native insurrection in Spanish America.

This section will concentrate on Leon G. Campbell's article, "Recent Research on Andean Peasant Revolts, 1750-1820", published in a 1979 issue of the *Latin American Research Review*. The following pages trace the trajectory of academic trends in the writings of early scholars of Andean native insurrections; locating late eighteenth-century Andean native revolts within foundational texts and debates that envisioned mass uprisings along the lines of the Tupac Amaru revolt as either a nationalist or separatist movement with the goal of reestablishing an Incan state. In keeping with Campbell's approach, it will end with a brief discussion on scholarship published since the 1960s; particularly works he classifies as "administrative histories" and works that collectively tried to uncover the socio-economic bases that may have led to revolt.

For Campbell, a review of the secondary literature on Andean peasant revolts written at the time he published his article revealed three distinct points of view. According to Campbell, early histories of post-independence era Peru were in large measure representative of the coastal creole classes that fought for independence from Spain and wrestled control from royalist forces and their stronghold in the Peruvian highlands. Consequently, these histories--written during the

nineteenth and early twentieth centuries--often ignored late eighteenth-century native revolts, or tangentially included them only as preludes to "the glorious period of creole independence." Next, Campbell detects a shift in works published after WWII. These writings reflected a rise in Peruvian nationalist sentiments. Accordingly they exhibited "less of a chauvinistic, creole-centered view of history, but still argued for the reformist and separatist aspects of the rebellion" (Campbell, 1979 : 17). Finally, Campbell singles out two historiographical trends that emerged since 1960. The first of these emerged in the wake of Peru's 1968 military coup. As such, scholars writing in this vein adopted a point of view in line with the revolutionary's regime official history, a history that insisted on seeing the Tupac Amaru rebellion as the forerunner of Peruvian Independence, and equated Velasquez's reform programs with the Indigenous leader's struggle for social justice. These works expressed the need to counter assertions made by anti-establishment historians that Peru's independence simply transferred political power from Spanish-born *peninsulares* to Peruvian creoles, re-writing Peru's national history for explicitly political purposes. Rather than subscribe to Peru's "official" history, Campbell identified a second group representative of Campbell's second trend that "eschewed the perennial debate over Indian separatism in favor of exploring the economic and social matrix of the later colony that produced these revolts." In so doing, a number of these scholars deployed a number of quantitative and "socio-historical" techniques to test traditional assumptions about potential sources of causation (Campbell, 1979 : 17).

In the 1960s—early works that searched for the "precursors" to Peruvian independence, incorporating native insurrectionary movements as examples of the march to national consciousness and anti-colonial sentiments—gave way to works that instead attempted to provide a meticulous analysis of the rebellions themselves. These works emphasized the process of rebellion and made attempts to uncover their multiple ideological strains, trace their multi-ethnic composition, and their internal logic as the events unfolded. The results and arguments proposed by this new vein of scholarship were varied. While most these scholars looked toward socio-economic variables to provide the bases of explanation for the events they were studying, their approach and the emphasis they placed on specific triggers for rebellion differed. Here Campbell draws a distinction between what he considers as "administrative" histories of the revolts and regional studies—some of which placed great emphasis on economic motives—while others began to move away from strict materialist explanations providing examinations of other forms of social organization and intra-community social structures.

“Administrative” histories explained the late eighteenth century as a period of increased social conflict and unrest, among indigenous and non-indigenous groups alike. These histories saw late Bourbon administrative reforms--the legalization of the reparto de mercancías, the increase in the alcabala tax, the establishment of tobacco and aguardiente monopolies, the arrival of visitador general Jose de Areche after 1777, and the intendancy system—as potential triggers that helped to explain a rise in social unrest during this time period. Revisiting earlier works that explained rebellion in terms of economic pressures, land-tenure patterns, fiscal reforms, and the reparto system Campbell posits that, “the economic causes of revolt are often more apparent than real and may not fully account for groups joining or opposing these protests.” Accordingly, he offers a few examples of regional studies that began to move away from this set of “apparent” economic causes, seeking to complicate the analysis of popular insurrection. For instance, Brooke Larson’s doctoral dissertation looked at class and social structures before and after Katari in Cochabamba region (Alto Peru). In it she found that differences in social status and intra-community dynamics offer more poignant explanations than an analysis of economic structures alone (Campbell, 1979 : 30).

### ***Rebellions and Revolts in Eighteenth-Century Peru and Upper Peru: Scarlett O’Phelan Godoy’s Move***

Scarlett O’Phelan Godoy’s 1985, *Rebellion and Revolts in Eighteenth-Century Peru and Upper Peru*, published in Spanish by the Peruvian Centro de Estudios Rurales Andino in 1988, marked a definite move towards an analysis of late eighteenth-century native insurrection that understood causation in terms of a generalized feeling of social unrest, cumulative frustrations, ideological perspectives, and economic pressures. O’Phelan Godoy divides her analysis into five chapters; each of these deals with a particular aspect of popular rebellions and revolts in the Andean region. The following passages highlight some of O’Phelan Godoy’s central arguments, based on a brief outline of her key arguments, it ends with a more in-depth analysis of the book’s final chapter, where the author examined the Tupac Amaru rebellion in light of the arguments she laid out in the earlier half of her work.

The book’s initial chapter provides an overall picture of the colonial economy, zeroing in on the mining sector as the “central nerve” of the economy. Tied to mining, O’Phelan analyzes how agriculture and textile production supplied the markets in this sector. Here, she highlights the importance of deploying a regional analysis; one where the role of commercial networks, particularly the networks

developed around the mines of Potosi is taken into account. Chapter three deals with the *reparto de mercancías* and the impact it had on both indigenous and non-indigenous groups. For O'Phelan Godoy, the reparto system needs to be understood as a means employed by the Spanish authorities to promote an internal market that could cope with the expansion of the mining sector during the second half of the eighteenth century. The following chapter looks into the implementation of Bourbon fiscal reforms, enacted in the 1770s. These series of fiscal reforms included the drastic increase in the *alcabala* tax, the establishment of royal monopolies on commodities, and the placement of Custom Houses throughout urban centers. O'Phelan Godoy's final chapter directly addresses the Tupac Amaru rebellion.

This chapter explores the rebellion's internal organization during the first and second phase of the struggle, distinguished mostly in terms of its leadership. During the first or the Quechua/Cuzco based phase, Tupac Amaru personally organized the movement. After his capture and execution, the second phase carried on under the leadership of members of Amaru's family who subsequently joined the Aymara led movement of Julian Apaza Tupac Katari in Alto Peru. It traces similarities and differences between the two phases of struggle and ends with an analysis of conjunctural factors that in the author's opinion "influenced the regional spread of the movement and the social composition of its leadership" (O' Phelan Godoy, 1985 : 213). For this chapter, the author draws her analysis of the Tupac Amaru rebellion from a set of seventy-four trial records of accused rebels, compiled during the initial phase of the movement, and thirty-two additional ones from the second. The innovation in O'Phelan's analyses originates in her ability to use these records to shed light into the social and economic background of the rebels. Particularly if as the author asserts, "There are many accounts of the Tupac Amaru rebellion in existence but they have, on the whole, been restricted to a general description of the principal events which took place during the struggle" and "this is the first time that it has been possible to analyze and compare the entire trials which followed the rebellion" (O' Phelan Godoy, 1985 : 210).

Godoy's discussion of how "conjunctural dynamics" shaped the rebellion's trajectory includes a wide-array of factors. She points to questions of ethnic identity, family connections, commercial networks, ideological strands, and personal motives for joining Tupac Amaru's movement. In addition to these factors, Godoy explores the role of economic pressures and the way in which these dynamics influenced the actors' structural position vis-à-vis other rebels, the movement's leadership and the colonial state. For Godoy, economic fac-

tors play an important role, particularly since they helped shape the rebellion's trajectory. For instance, O'Phelan draws a connection between Tupac Amaru and the Aymara leader Tupac Katari based on the fact that they shared "similar commercial backgrounds." According to the author, since both of these leaders and several other rebels who were involved in the rebellion engaged in muleteering, they possessed "a great deal of geographical mobility, and must have had contacts in regional markets aside from their obvious connection with textiles and agriculture" (O'Phelan Godoy, 1985 : 257). Moreover, the connection she draws between Amaru's and Katari's position as muleteers allows her interpretation of the extent to which economic factors played a role in fueling Amaru's movement to shift the emphasis from the detrimental effects of the *reparto* system towards a different set of explanations. Godoy's focus shifts gears as she looks towards Bourbon fiscal policies. According to Godoy, her interpretation of the available evidence points to the "chronological correlation between the introduction of the Bourbon reforms implemented by Visitador Areche from 1777 onwards, and the increase in social unrest which reached a climax with the Great Rebellion on 1780-81" (O'Phelan Godoy, 1985 : 258).

While Godoy acknowledges the importance of understanding the *reparto* system, she sees it as part of a wider system of Crown-sponsored reform programs, whose effects in shaping the course of the Amaru movement were far greater than the effects of this system. She concedes that the *reparto* did have an effect in fueling minor and uncoordinated revolts, particularly after its legalization in 1751-56, but questions the centrality of its role in molding the nature of the Tupac Amaru rebellion. Instead, she concentrates her analysis on discovering which factors within this wide-ranging program of reforms had the biggest impact in shaping the character of the leadership and the regional nature of the rebellion. In doing so, she finds that the increase in the *alcabala* tax from four to six percent and the establishment of Custom Houses in the viceroyalty's urban centers had a considerable impact on the livelihood of both indigenous and non-indigenous groups. O'Phelan Godoy's connections between the *alcabala* (sales tax) increase and the opening of regional Custom Houses follows the incidence of social unrest. According to Godoy:

There is indisputable evidence which suggests that 'the principal cause of general unrest and the increase in violence was the new tax charged on goods of Spanish origin and home produced articles'... Hence it is highly probable that unifying factors such as the Customs Houses and the *alcabala* tax, explain the significant presence not only of muleteers, but also of small farmers, small merchants, miners, and artisans, from both Lower and Upper Peru, in the leadership structure of the movement (O'Phelan Godoy, 1985 : 258-261).

In the final pages of her book, O'Phelan Godoy concludes her analysis reemphasizing the effects late eighteenth-century Bourbon administrative and fiscal reforms had on the Southern Andes. However, she also stressed the role these reforms had in generating unrest and rebellion, not only in the Viceroyalty of Peru, but also in Quito, Nueva Granada and Buenos Aires. Consequently, Godoy sees any description of eighteenth-century upheavals as "rebeliones indígenas" as potentially misleading, particularly since both mestizos and creoles participated in these upheavals, and the reforms enacted by the Bourbon state cut across class and ethnic lines. Instead Godoy wants to emphasize the importance of kinship ties in "the organization of local revolts and far reaching rebellions." For Godoy, "the lack of a political party during the colonial period, and a peasant economy based on domestic units of production, helped to make kinship ties an effective means of involving the people in social movements. The reciprocity between relatives, as well as the solidarity among the members of Indian communities and between caciques proved effective in mobilizing the people during the unrest." Finally she wants to note that agrarian conflict, common in nineteenth century Peru "appears not to have played a significant part in eighteenth-century social upheavals." Instead Godoy suggests that in the eighteenth century, "agrarian problems were indistinct from fiscal ones and overshadowed by them." This suggestion indicates a need to analyze social movements during the colonial period "in terms of the particular political and administrative conditions" generated by specific "conjunctures" (O' Phelan Godoy, 1985 : 280).

At the time of its publication, this book marked a significant shift in the study of Andean late colonial revolts. Godoy's most significant contribution is her attempt to uncover personal motives in the trial records she analyses. Her examination of insurgents helped to shed light into their social and economic background as well as their personal motives, but her analysis and the records she utilizes fall short, providing a portrayal of the movement's leadership while largely by-passing the rank and file. Moreover, despite Godoy's attempt to incorporate kinship ties, personal motives, and the rebel's social background into her story, the bulk of the analysis featured in *Rebellion and Revolts in Eighteenth-Century Peru and Upper Peru* highlights the role of colonial economic structures and claims to offer an in-depth analysis of how Bourbon modifications to colonial economic structures, primarily through fiscal reform, provided an important trigger that mobilized participant groups. Notwithstanding these objections, the emphasis placed on material conditions coupled with the author's attempt to incorporate an analysis of non-economic factors, however limited, marked the beginning of shift to an analysis of causation that acknowledged the role played

by economic grievances but also pointed to the existence of other explicatory factors—factors that begun to fall outside the material register and fell instead on a political, cultural and symbolic one.

### **From the Viceroyalty of Peru to Nueva Granada: the 1765 Quito uprising and the 1781 Comunero Rebellion**

Unlike the Great Rebellion of 1780-83 in the Southern Andes or the Comunero Revolution of 1781 in Nueva Granada, the 1765 Quito rebellion has received limited scholarly attention. This lack of attention may well be explained by the rebellion's limited repercussions, especially when one compares it to other great regional, social, and political movements like the Tupac Amaru II rebellion or the Comunero Rebellion. If the 1765 Quito rebellion has indeed been overshadowed by those great rebellions, historian Anthony McFarlane wants to rescue it from obscurity. According to McFarlane, this rebellion was a significant episode in the history of rebellion in colonial Spanish America, particularly if we view it as "part of a conjuncture of rebellions that affected the southern regions of the viceroyalty of New Granada during the early 1760s and signaled the first widespread, if scattered resistance to Bourbon fiscal reform among urban and rural communities." This rebellion stands as an important moment in a major regional conjuncture of resistance to Bourbon administrative and fiscal reforms enacted under Spanish King, Charles III. Conversely, it "constitutes a striking episode in that wider, pan-continental movement better known for its great regional exemplars in Peru and New Granada" (McFarlane, 1990 : 253)

McFarlane's analysis of the 1765 Quito uprising reconstructs the insurrection as a major urban rebellion precipitated by changes in taxation. Triggered the attempt made by Nueva Granada's viceroy to extend the *arguardiente* monopoly and to alter the sales tax in Quito. McFarlane highlight how this uprising united different social groups in a common reaction against royal policy. While McFarlane's analysis delineates changes in colonial economic structures, he considers that to explain the conflict solely on these terms, limits our understanding of how other factors like ideology, intra-elite conflicts, class and ethnic tensions fueled the flames of discontent. For McFarlane, the rebellion in Quito can be explained in part as "the expression of several overlapping disputes within the urban elite and government." So that even if in its later stages, the rebellion showed more direct symptoms of struggle between rich and poor, "such activity remained on the fringes, and the rebellion cannot be regarded as a struggle between the upper and lower classes of urban society" (McFarlane, 1990 : 250)

A reaction to Bourbon administrative and fiscal reform, McFarlane views the Quito rebellion as a protest against Crown policy, but not necessarily as an anti-colonial movement, or a rejection of the King's authority. In this way, "the rebellion remained a protest against a policy, not against the power from which the policy emanated" (McFarlane, 1990 : 250). On terms of ideology the Quito rebellion "did not put forward any written program or systematic account of the ideas that the participants might have held." Notwithstanding this fact, McFarlane identifies the presence of ideological currents in the records he examines. The arguments put forth by Creole leaders and their allies in the records of Quito's *cabildo abierto*, and the official correspondence McFarlane examines, "allude to a belief in a kind of constitutionalism in the conduct of state business." So that when Creole opponents of Bourbon policy sought to protect their economic interests, "they did not disguise this, for they saw it as a right, facilitated and sanctioned by the traditional procedures of government, with their lengthy consultations, delayed deliberations, and tendency to respect the status quo" (McFarlane, 1990 : 251-252). McFarlane sees this tendency to view the relationship between the Spanish King and its loyal subjects in terms of a pact, that set limits concerning the distribution and exercise of power within the colonial state, as the main ideological drive behind the Quito uprising. This idea of an "unwritten constitution" or colonial pact between the Spanish King and his subjects is not unique to McFarlane's interpretation of the Quito uprising, as evidenced by John Phelan's earlier study of the 1781 *Comunero* revolt in Nueva Granada.

Like O'Phelan Godoy's study of eighteenth-century revolts in Peru and Upper Peru, here we see McFarlane's attempt to incorporate an account of how ideology shaped the Quito rebellion succeeds in its portrayal of its leaders, but fall short in its portrayal of the rebellion's rank and file. Does this manifest a bias in the selection of sources on the historian's part? Or should it be understood in terms of source availability? In other words, is it intrinsically harder to unveil the experience of common people, in so far as they only occasionally appear on the historical record? For the colonial period, does the study of indigenous and rural revolts offer more opportunity to study common people than the study of urban multi-class and multi-ethnic revolts? Whether or not these questions accurately portray the historian's dilemma, it should be noted that most of the works reviewed up until this point reflect at least some of these tensions.

John Phelan's 1978 publication *the People and the King: the Comunero Revolution in Colombia 1781*, grew out of his previous work *the Kingdom of Quito in the Seventeenth Century*, where he explored the inner-workings of the bureaucracy in



order to examine the factors that enabled the colonial administration to conciliate and ameliorate tensions. In the *The People and the King*, Phelan takes up this theme of bureaucratic accommodation and official negotiation and applies it to his analysis of the 1781 Comunero revolt in the viceroyalty of Nueva Granada. Repeatedly shouting, “viva el rey, muera el mal gobierno” close to twenty thousand Nuevo Granadinos from the district of Socorro and its surrounding areas marched to the village of Zipaquira, roughly a day’s distance from the viceregal capital in Bogotá, to demand that the King’s ministers repudiate a series of aggressive fiscal and administrative changes that included a royal monopoly on tobacco, aguardiente, and an increase on the alcabala tax. As news of the rebels’ proximity spread to the capital, Bogotá’s archbishop Antonio Caballero y Góngora, acknowledging that the number of military troops stationed in the city was negligible signed the capitulations made by the rebellion’s leaders in the name of the Charles III. After colonial administrators regained control of the situation the capitulations of Zapaquira were revoked. Although this event has been interpreted by some scholars as the precursor of political independence and by others as a frustrated social revolution from below betrayed by creole officials, John Phelan contends that it was neither. As Phelan points out the implicit political ideology of this movement was not influenced by Enlightenment thinkers or the French philosophes, but rather the generation of 1781 fed on the doctrines of sixteenth and seventeenth-century Spanish theologians, such as those proposed by Jesuit priest Francisco Suarez. According to Phelan:

The citizens of New Granada, their kingdom constituted a political body (*corpus mysticum politicum*), with its own traditions and procedures designed to achieve the common good of the whole community. That common good according to the rebels was being flagrantly undermined by the fiscal changes introduced by Charles III’s bureaucrats.

For Phelan, the crisis of 1781 was essentially political and constitutional in nature. Although Phelan acknowledges the potential of Bourbon fiscal policies to act as triggers, he posits that the central issue for the rebels’ chieftains was not necessarily the increase in taxes, but rather “who had the authority to levy these new fiscal exactions.” Consequently, what was at stake was the rebels’ capacity to express and defend their position vis-à-vis excessive or illegitimate government encroachment. This is demonstrated by Phelan’s analysis of the correspondence exchanged between Comunero leaders and the colonial authorities in Bogotá. From this, Phelan concludes that the uprising was inspired by notions concerning the common good of the community, its right to express its interests in

negotiation with local government, and the right to defend itself against abuse, by force if necessary (Phelan, 1978 : 18).

According to Phelan, the citizens of New Granada were heirs to a tradition of bureaucratic de-centralization that had slowly but steadily evolved under Habsburg and early Bourbon rule. The 'unwritten' constitution provided that basic decisions were reached after formal consultation between the royal bureaucracy and the King's colonial subjects. This informal agreement meant that whenever tensions or disagreements arose between what central authorities ideally wanted and what local conditions and pressures would realistically tolerate, a workable compromise would typically be reached through a process of negotiation and bureaucratic accommodation. Thus, the 1781 Comunero rebellion can be understood as a constitutional clash "between imperial centralization and colonial de-centralization" (Phelan, 1978 : 29)

A revision of Phelan's conclusions brings forth questions regarding selection of sources and methodology. If Phelan, Like McFarlane draws the bulk of his sources from official correspondence and documents produced by Bogotá's *audiencia*, can we or should we expect his conclusions regarding motives and potential causation of insurrection to be radically different? Taking this into consideration, should we, like Phelan, take the sentiments expressed by the documentation, particularly the correspondence between rebel leaders and the city's authorities at face value? Or is it possible to read their statements through an instrumentalist lens? Even if, we accept the position expressed by the rebels in their letters as an instrumentalist move that sought to legitimize their movement in the eyes of colonial administrators, then how do we go about uncovering their real motives? Moreover, if an analysis of the movement's leadership ranks presents this many problems, then should we instead look for documents that express the view of their followers? Do such documents exist and if they do are they sufficiently extensive or unbiased? As stated above, all of these questions express the historian's dilemma- an on-going quandary that challenges facile solutions.

### ***Steve Stern's Resistance, Rebellion, and Consciousness in the Andean Peasant World: Some Methodological Suggestions***

In 1987, historian Steve Stern published an edited volume offering a reappraisal of the study of peasant rebellion and consciousness in general and of Andean insurrection in particular. According to Stern, in the aftermath of the Second World War, scholars and social scientists throughout the Western world grappled to understand large-scale political realignments and social transformations. Decolonization, revolution and Cold War-era policies provided fruitful

ground for scholars and intellectuals to question the origins of civil and social unrest. (Stern, 1987 : 3) In their attempt to understand potential sources of unrest a number of these scholars turned to the agrarian bases of conflict, in Western and non-Western societies alike. Barrington Moore's 1966 study *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World*, connects contemporary political cultures, whether democratic or authoritarian, to a historical precedent of agrarian conflict and transformation. For Moore, the roots of democratic versus authoritarian governments originated during an earlier time of lords, peasants and nascent bourgeoisie. Eric Wolf's 1969, *Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century*, focused on the third-world peasantries and their reactions to the advance of capitalist enterprise. According to Wolf, the great revolutions of the twentieth century—Mexico, Russia, China, Vietnam, Algeria, and Cuba—could be interpreted as “peasant wars.” Fueled as subsistence-oriented farmers, subject to the exactions of the state, a landed elite class and the advance of capitalist enterprise held on to their land and defended their rights by force if necessary. Both Moore and Wolf mapped out the economic bases of these societies, incorporating new historical actors into their analysis and describing the relationship between landlords and peasants in order to understand the political trajectories followed by the nations they analyzed from the early modern period to the present day. These early studies of agrarian structures adopted the analysis of economic and social variables as windows through which potential sources of conflict could be discerned. At the time of their publication, these studies provided an analysis of the economic, social, and political structures in agrarian societies that allowed scholars to explain why non-western nations lagged behind their western counterparts—one of the key historiographical quandaries of the period—fueled by scholars of Marxist persuasion and in Latin America by scholars from the Dependency school. Assessing whether or not the cycle of late eighteenth-century Andean insurrections explored by the authors here examined can be seen as precursors to the emergence of modern states and its subsequent political culture lies beyond the purview of this essay. It is however important to acknowledge the existence of a current historiographical gap in studies for the late colonial period, particularly in relation to the viceroyalty of Nueva Granada and the Andes more generally. There are two noteworthy exceptions, albeit chronologically located in the nineteenth century: Brooke Larson's *Trials of Nation Making: Liberalism, Race, and Ethnicity in the Andes, 1810-1910* and Cecilia Mendez's *The Plebeian Republic: The Huanta Rebellion and the Making of the Peruvian State, 1820-1850*.

In his overview of early studies on peasantries and agrarian conflict, historian Steve Stern points to the 1970s as a particularly prolific decade. According to Stern, scholarly works that tackled agrarian sources of social and political unrest did so from several angles. Some tried to assess the impact of “modernization” on peasants, trying to understand how the transition to capitalist economic structures destabilized social relationships between the subsistence-based peasantry and the expansionist landed estate. If earlier studies magnified the role of economic structures as potential causes of agrarian revolt, a number of sophisticated studies published in the late seventies and early eighties built on these economic bases, adding social and political dimensions to their analysis of peasants and agrarian conflict. Some of these studies include, E.P. Thomson’s 1971, “The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century”, James C. Scott’s 1976, *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia*, and his 1985 *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. These studies delved into questions of internal social differentiation among peasant groups, as well as larger questions regarding consciousness and political scope of action for participant groups. While most of these studies offer nuanced interpretations of peasant and agrarian conflicts, Stern explores several widespread theoretical assumptions that underlie these works.

According to Stern, the theoretical assumptions that underlie early works on peasant revolts and agrarian conflict find their ground on a particular set of arguments. First, according to Stern, most scholars agree that the incorporation of predominantly peasant territories into a modern capitalist world economy had a destructive impact on the peasantry, at least in the medium run. This destructive impact led to a breakdown of traditional values and norms, upon which peasants relied for economic sustenance and social organization. Scholars have reached a consensus regarding the detrimental effects of “capitalist penetration” into subsistence-based economies, placing particular emphasis on the resulting social stratification of peasants into rich and poor. Hence for these scholars, “the political resolution of agrarian conflict and crisis is held to be the most important and decisive factor that shapes the history of countries with an important peasant tradition” (Stern, 1987 : 5). Finally, and perhaps for Stern the most problematic approach, starts the analysis of peasants and agrarian conflict under preconceived assumptions about peasants as parochial and reactionary political actors. This inherent parochialism in the nature of peasant revolts and the images of native insurgents as pawns moved by a set of external forces, rests on an academic trend that has viewed the peasantry in terms of their “objective” structural position vis-à-vis other historical actors and their society. Typically,

analysts that insist on the portrayal of peasants as mere pawns of external forces view rebels in terms that minimize the role of individual agency, emphasizing instead their reaction to price-cycles in the world market, the encroachment of capitalist enterprises on their lands, and policies enacted by a landed elite class or the state.

Complicating the view of a reactionary and parochial peasantry, while reassessing their role in agrarian struggles, requires historians to assess the dynamic interplay of material and cultural variables that provide the basis of conflict. Instead of tracing our explanations to any single overarching factor, whether economic, ideological, political, or social, agrarian conflict and instances of peasant revolts ask us to employ a wider range of theories and methodological approaches in order to expand our analysis and avoid reductionist arguments. It is precisely this reassessment of methodology that Stern addressed in his 1987 publication, the content of which I will now turn to.

Stern's first methodological revision proposes a thorough reconsideration of rebellions as short-lived spasmodic eruptions of violence in an otherwise politically inert landscape. Stern calls for the explicit analysis of preexisting patterns of resistance and conflict. To explain how preexisting patterns help shape a dynamic and fluid process of accommodation, Stern posits his concept of "resistant adaptation." Under this notion, violent episodes of rebellion are contextualized as short-term variants of "a long process of resistance and accommodation to authority" (Stern, 1987 : 12) Rather than envision individual cases of insurrection as isolated cases, or as moments of unusual rupture, scholars must first turn to the analysis of other forms of resistance and adaptation to change. In order fully to understand how preexisting patterns of resistance helped shape native revolts, scholars need to deploy Stern's second methodological proposal: rethinking the chronology of their studies. Here Stern advocates the incorporation of multiple time frames. Stern's third methodological revision problematizes views that emphasize the predictability of peasant political participation as primarily reactionary in nature. He calls for a revision of the way analysts treat peasant consciousness. Stern's last methodological revision posits that analysts should justify ethnic-blind analysis of revolts rather than use it as a starting point for their analysis. Perhaps most applicable to the Andean context, his call for the incorporation of ethnicity as valid analytical component in the examination of potential motives of native insurrections allows scholars to envision how ethnic identity shaped collective participation and culturally specific definitions of ritual violence, reciprocity, authority, and legitimacy. The following section will examine four recent monographs published between 1999 and 2003 on the

Tupac Amaru, Tomas Katari and Julian Tupac Katari late eighteenth-century Andean native insurrections. The interpretation of these works will keep Stern's early methodological propositions in mind, arguing that all four of these scholars incorporate his suggestions into their work and provide examples of studies that fall outside the purview of economic structuralist interpretations and fall instead inside a cultural register.

### **Of Material Conditions and Other Demons: the Adoption of Stern's Methodological suggestions and the Interpretation of Revolts through a Cultural Lens**

This section will outline the work of four scholars: Charles Walker's 1999, *Smoldering Ashes: Cuzco and the Creation of Republican Peru 1780-1840*, Ward Stavig's 1999, *the World of Tupac Amaru: Conflict, Community, and Identity in Colonial Peru*, Sinclair Thomson's 2002, *We alone will rule: Native Andean Politics in the Age of Insurgency*, and Sergio Serulnikov's 2003, *Subverting Colonial Authority: Challenges to Spanish Rule in Eighteenth-Century Southern Andes*.

Charles Walker's *Smoldering Ashes* draws on subaltern and postcolonial studies for his analysis of the late eighteenth-century Tupac Amaru rebellion and the emergence of nineteenth-century caudillo Agustin Gamarra in Cuzco, Peru. He is interested in shifting the analytical focus from Peru's elite classes to its native peasantry. In so doing, he seeks to uncover the role played by this nation's indigenous groups in the creation of the Peruvian republic. Rather than viewing indigenous historical actors as apolitical or politically marginalized, Walker posits that, "the vast population of highland Indians- often understood to be passive and usually presented as an anonymous mass rather than as individuals- is key to understanding the turbulent transition from colony to republic" (Walker, 1999: 13) In his view, historians have too often accepted contemporary views that deemed Indians incapable of possessing a political consciousness and indifferent to battles that unfold at the state's level or over the creation of said state. Incorporating Stern's third methodological suggestion into his analysis, Walker provides a corrective to assumptions that portray Andean peasants as parochial or reactionary social actors. To supplement his analysis of indigenous peasants as politically conscious social actors and uncover their role in the creation of Republican Peru, Walker employs theoretical tools borrowed from recent studies of political culture and works in the new cultural history. According to Walker:

These schools have reinvigorated political history by examining how political behavior and language change [...] both schools grant politics certain autonomy, rather than see it as a product of broader structural processes, particularly economic. They play close

attention to language, discourse, and practice, searching for patterns of behavior as well as shared and conflicting views on how politics was to be practiced in a particular period (Walker, 1999 : 16).

Like Stern and Thomson, Walker locates politics at the grass-root communal level, providing a powerful corrective to views of Andean peasants as apolitical beings void of political consciousness.

For his interpretation of the Tupac Amaru movement, Walker identifies three enduring academic trends. The first identifies the rebellion as an antecedent to independence, the second as an Inca revivalist project, and the third a massive but traditional form of political negotiation—exemplified by John Phelan’s 1978 study on the 1781 Comunero rebellion discussed above. While Walker eschews the uncritical adoption of any one of these traditions, he demonstrates the need to combine them with a proto-nationalist interpretation. Following the course of the Tupac Amaru rebellion, Walker underlines its proto-national platform. Although for Walker, multiple ideological currents including Enlightenment ideologies, neo-Inca revivalism, economic grievances, and discontent over Bourbon administrative and fiscal reforms helped fuel the rebellion, the movement’s political platform emphasized the bonds between all native-born Peruvians and the need to expel Spanish officials. However, Walker posits that social and racial divisions among the movement’s leadership rank undermined this platform. Moreover, the colonial state’s portrayal of the rebellion as a caste war heightened Spanish military efforts and fueled creole distrust of native insurgents. Peru’s Creoles, mestizos, Indians, and blacks, united under Tupac Amaru, shared an opposition to Spanish rule but they also mistrusted one another. This mistrust played an important role in the movement’s subsequent failure.

In line with Stern’s first methodological suggestion, Walker’s analysis of the Tupac Amaru rebellion understands its occurrence, not as an isolated event or as a moment of rupture in an otherwise passive indigenous existence, but as a continuation of long-term processes of adaptation, accommodation and resistance. Walker’s analysis of the years following the Tupac Amaru rebellion provides an account of how native communities continued to use the legal system to defend their rights. Walker points out that after the uprising’s defeat and the brutal execution of its leaders, the colonial state could not “re-conquer” Cuzco’s Indian population. Fear of another Indian uprising meant that state authorities could not arbitrarily increase the taxes or dissolve the autonomy enjoyed by caciques and local Indian authorities. Moreover, “the region’s stagnant economy discouraged the state and other members of the community, who vividly remembered

the Tupac Amaru uprising, from attempting to usurp Indian's land and exploit their labor.

In his 1979, review article Leon Campbell posited that “one of the real problems of understanding and explaining indigenous rebellion in the Andean region comes from our lack of knowledge about the colonial Indian.” He goes on to state the need for studies of the Andean region that follow similar approaches to those deployed by scholar James Lockhart and other proponents of colonial ethno-history through the analysis of a language-base (philological) analysis of native cultures and societies.<sup>1</sup> According to Campbell the analysis of colonial peasant revolts “might profitably be studied in terms of cultural factors contributing to the development of planned directed rebellions” (Campbell, 1979 : 30). A study of the Andean colonial Indian and his world, Ward Stavig's *the World of Tupac Amaru* is less concerned with recounting the events of this massive upheaval than with reconstructing a nuanced portrayal of the society that served as the stage for the events that unfolded between 1780 and 1783. As such, Stavig focuses on Quispicanchis and Canas y Canchis, two provinces in colonial Cuzco that became the core of insurrection during the Tupac Amaru rebellion. Stavig seeks to present a close and intimate portrayal of the lives of indigenous villagers. In so doing, Stavig's examination of judicial records sets the stage for an analysis of colonial *mentalités* and indigenous world-views. His analysis of indigenous day-to-day practices delves into questions of sexuality and family structures. In addition to this, he explores customary criminal practices, agrarian conflicts, labor relations in haciendas, mines, obrajes, and the ways in which everyday people responded to Bourbon fiscal reforms, labor policies and other economic grievances. Critics of Stavig's approach posit that his analysis of court cases, particularly his reconstruction of sexual mores and family structures, does not offer an accurate reflection of day-to-day indigenous realities. These critics point to the fact that court cases that deal with rape, pre-marital sexual encounters, incest and divorce portray exceptions deemed “abnormal”, rather than standard views in any society; In spite of this objection one could argue that by identifying behavior considered to be “deviant”, Stavig has opened a

<sup>1</sup> James Lockhart promotes Language-base (philological) analysis of cultures and societies. For Lockhart the analysis of Nahua society through the study of sources in Nahuatl provides a useful complement to the works of other colonial scholars. In the *Nahuas after Conquest* Lockhart draws from Nahuatl documents written between 1540 and 1770 including a variety of litigation records, testaments, native chronicles, annals, songs, literary sources and ethnographic accounts. Through a meticulous analysis of Nahuatl terms and language usage over time, he hopes to identify, trace and examine shifts in Nahua societal and cultural structures and the way in which these people imagined and understood their world vis-à-vis the Spanish world.



window to uncover “acceptable” standards of behavior for eighteenth-century indigenous communities in Quispicanchis and Canas y Canchis.

Sinclair Thomson’s *We Alone will Rule* provides an in-depth analysis of Andean native insurrections during the Great Rebellion 1780-1783. While Thomson’s study sustains a dialogue with a larger body of literature on late eighteenth-century Andean revolts his narrative focuses on the movement of Julian Apaza- Tupac Katari in Alto Peru. A student of Steve Stern, Thomson’s analysis of native insurgency simultaneously locates the sources of Andean social conflict on larger regional and long-term processes of change, as well as on local community politics. In doing so, he maps the relationships between caciques, community members and colonial officials in order to trace the transformation of colonial institutions and native ideologies; transformations that set the stage for late colonial large-scale insurgency and revolt. The result of dynamic regional trends as well as locally specific shifts, Thomson’s analysis of Andean native insurgency provides a powerful corrective to older assumptions about the parochial and reactionary nature of peasant revolts, and images of native insurgents as pawns moved by a set of external forces. For Thomson, like Stern, tracing institutional and ideological shifts over a longer period, roughly from the 1740s until the time of rebellion, provides a more nuanced picture of potential motives and the long-term historical context. Understanding why communities in the La Paz region took up arms against the colonial state requires a deeper analysis of sources of conflict, as well as a deeper analysis of intra-community politics and power struggles.

According to Thomson, throughout the eighteenth century, major transformations took place within native communities across the southern Andes. This century marked a period when, “the traditional system of authority and the form of community government by a native lord- known as *cacicazgo*- entered into irreparable crisis and gave way to a new and very distinctive arrangement of community political power.” This crisis of authority led to a breakdown of legitimacy among caciques and community members, a crisis which in turn led to a process of democratization of the community’s power base. For Thomson, this process of democratization sheds light into the way internal community power dynamics help shape external processes, “from the bottom up” (Thomson, 2002 : 9). Coupled with broader regional processes and structural changes—such as the *reparto de mercancías* and Bourbon administrative and fiscal reform—this crisis of authority and process of democratization left several marks on the historical record; expressed in a noticeable increase of legal petitions and court cases,

intra-community power struggles, minor revolts, like those covered by Scarlett O'Phelan Godoy in her 1985 study, and the Great Rebellion of 1780-1783.

Court cases and legal records make up the bulk of sources for this study. Tracing major institutional and ideological transformations, as well as relationships among caciques, community members and colonial officials, Thomson follows community petitions and court cases over the colonial legal system. In so doing—and particularly in relation to his analysis of the breakdown of cacique authority and legitimacy—Thomson examines three types of disputes. First, he analyzes succession disputes among noble families and intrusive mestizos. According to Thomson, these conflicts did not immediately revolve around the community's base, but they do reveal an important shift in community power dynamics and provide a source of analysis for the erosion of cacique authority. Thomson then examines disputes between caciques and their communities. Typically, these cases involved “excessive exactions by caciques, misappropriation of community tribute and resources, political malfeasance, neglect, and violence” (Thomson, 2002 : 70). Finally, Thomson explores disputes that addressed community grievances in relation to the *reparto de mercancías*, particularly in relation to cacique's ideal role as mediator between his community and the colonial state. For Thomson, the reparto system brought forth a set of mounting pressures upon communities that led to an increase in direct political intervention by colonial authorities in local government, and a redefinition of the cacicazgo as an institution.

Sergio Serulnikov's *Subverting Colonial Authority* explores colonial domination and peasant politics in the Aymara province of Chayanta in Alto Peru. Serulnikov's primary concern is to uncover how gradual processes in the Chayanta region shaped Tomas Katari's insurrection in the early 1780s, and how the Chayanta movement was representative of a prolonged process of social unrest. As such, the study begins in the 1740s with the start of what the author contends was of a new cycle of demographic, agrarian, and commercial growth, and concludes in the early 1780s when Tomas Katari's uprising shook the foundation of Spanish rule in the Andes. Focusing on the development of Tomas Katari's movement between 1777 and 1781, allows the author to “see the exceptional cycle of political unrest and cultural revivalism from a different perspective” than the one offered by studies of the Tupac Amaru or Tupac Katari movements. According to Serulnikov, “In contrast to its counterparts in Cuzco and La Paz, where most rebels sought a complete rupture with colonial institutions and society, the Chayanta movement never rejected altogether the existing system of justice and government until the last stages of conflict. Local riots and

ethnic insurrection, legal strategies and mass violence, form in the context of the Chayanta movement a continuum of social defiance” (Serulnikov, 2003 : 3).

Serulnikov’s approach addresses questions that speak to larger debates in colonial history, the study of late eighteenth-century popular insurrections and the cultural anthropology of the Andes and its indigenous communities. First, Serulnikov wants to analyze how long-term patterns of social conflict, accommodation, and adaptation shaped regional power structures in the Andean world and opened avenues of negotiation vis-à-vis the colonial state. He attempts “to shift the focus from the insurgency itself- usually conceived as exceptional moments of rupture- to the changing forms of, social meanings and political contexts of collective violence.” In agreement with Stern’s notions of “resistant adaptation”, the author insists that for the Andean region definite continuities existed between village disturbances, a long history of legal disputes and large-scale insurrections. By uncovering long-standing processes of indigenous resistance to colonial impositions and a process of individual and communal politicization, Serulnikov discredits notions of Andean parochialism. In this study, Serulnikov draws a clear distinction between Andean peasant insurrections and peasant-led riots in Mexico, contending that although scholars often compare Andean revolts to the riots analyzed in William Taylor’s 1979 study of colonial Mexico, Andean village revolts were not isolated episodes of social unrest conveying a purely local worldview. Here he wants to prove that insurgency in northern Potosi was preceded by two fairly long conjunctures in the 1740s and 1770s of widespread, public, though not necessarily violent, confrontation with rural overlords over taxes, ecclesiastical fees, assignments of labor obligations, land distribution and ethnic political autonomy among other issues (Serulnikov, 2003)

Serulnikov’s second point of debate addresses the structures of colonial rule and domination at “its most concrete and socially significant level: that of the administration of justice in Indian towns.” He reconstructs how colonial courts functioned in practice, revisiting and revising notions of colonial hegemony. Rather than view hegemony in terms of stable structures of domination, he offers a view in terms of processes. This view of colonial domination as processes or as “inherently ambivalent endeavors” opens spaces for the incorporation of resistance, adaptation and negotiation for both colonizers and colonized. Finally Serulnikov offers a “historical argument for the emergence of ethnic consciousness and solidarity in the context of a growing crisis of cultural hegemony, rather than an Andean Utopia associated with the propagation of millenarian notions of change and messianic expectations.” For the author, millenarian projects of epochal transformation linked to the Inca king’s “second coming” and the

revitalization of imperial memories linked to “Tawantinsuyu”, provide evidence of the demise of structures of colonial authority. As such these visions must be understood as the outcome of this process of demise rather than as its starting point (Serulnikov, 2003).

Like Walker, Serulnikov rejects cultural explanations that place an emphasis on notions of Andean utopias and that form part of an earlier Inca revivalist school. These explanations are grounded on assumptions of an enduring Andean memory and tradition. But as Walker points out invented traditions and cultural understandings vary greatly between social groups, they also change over time, are never stable units, and should be understood as processes. Serulnikov and Walker’s definition of culture as processes, speak to larger academic debates that question essentialized definitions of culture. If the invocation of “Tawantinsuyu” provided late eighteenth-century Andean rebels with an ideological tool, this did not emerge out of some long-term memory, but rather from a reworking of old and new cultural understandings. Although Incan revivalism formed an important factor in the movements’ timing and ideology, it alone cannot provide a sufficient explanation. Andean rebels did not solely look to the past, their movement and concerns were firmly anchored in the present, addressing contemporary concerns and incorporating ideologies garnered from before and after the conquest.

All four of the studies explored in this section, acknowledge the role played by material conditions and economic pressures, but they see these factors as one component in an intricate web of causation. In a spectrum where strict materialist explanations lie on one side, studies that offered nuanced interpretations and acknowledge that changes in colonial economic structures helped trigger popular insurrections, but negate their primacy, somewhere towards the center of this imaginary spectrum. So that if Scarlett O’Phelan Godoy’s 1985, *Rebellions and Revolts in Eighteenth-Century Peru and Upper Peru*, signaled a move, however slight, towards the center, then the analysis offered by Walker, Stavig, Serulnikov, and Thomson decidedly fall on the other side of Godoy and further away still from strict materialist explanations. Walker, Stavig, Serulnikov, and Thomson’s cultural move fall under a larger trend of scholarly production, which has in recent years challenged historians to look for innovative methodological tools and novel interpretations in their attempt to transcend strict materialist explanations and provide nuanced pictures of worlds where economic, social, political, cultural norms and identities intermingle to create an increasingly complex social reality. Praise-worthy for their ability to complicate narratives and rescue human motives from the tendency to succumb action under totalizing

social structures, there are new and exciting directions for further research; for instance a gendered interpretation of this late eighteenth-century revolts and the role women played in their development.

### **Concluding Remarks on Approaches to the study of Late Eighteenth-Century Andean Popular Insurrection**

This essay has given the reader an overview of key works on late colonial popular insurrections. Colonial scholars of Latin America, agree that the incidence of large-scale native insurrection was rare. In fact, when scholars do speak of mass native and popular revolts, they typically look to the second half of the eighteenth century. Scholarly consensus posits that under the Bourbon crown, particularly after 1760, Spanish America witnessed a marked increase in instances of civil disorder. Scholars see eighteenth-century popular insurrections not as casual or isolated episodes, but rather as symptomatic expressions of a general feeling of social unrest and heightened conflict; feelings that increased in intensity during the latter half of the eighteenth century and culminated in the 1765 Quito revolt, the Great Rebellion of 1780-1783 in the Southern Andes, and the 1781 Comunero Revolt in Nueva Granada. In doing so, the scholarship reviewed here acknowledges the fact that the analysis of late eighteenth-century insurrectionary cycles in the Spanish colonies are grounded within larger scholarly debates that address insurrectionary motives and incorporate questions raised by scholars of peasant revolts and agrarian conflicts in other fields and other historical contexts.

In a 1999 article published in *the Hispanic American Historical Review*, historian Eric Van Young suggests that

Cultural history and economic history (or other sorts of quantitatively based history, for that matter), though most often thought separate from each other, or even antithetical, because of epistemological, methodological, or boundary distinctions, may be usefully be united to the benefit of each...cultural history should actively colonize economic relations, as it has done political systems, on the imperialist assumption that all history is cultural history (Van Young, 1999 : 213).

This suggestion strikes at the heart of on-going academic debates that pit economic historians, accused by some of engaging in vulgar Marxism, against cultural historians, viewed by some as empirical lightweights. I want to suggest that recent monologues on the Tomas Katari, Tupac Amaru and Tupac Katari uprisings discussed in the preceding section approach the study of late eighteenth-century Andean insurrections in a fashion similar to Van Young's methodological proposition. They all move away from strict materialist explana-

tions of why Andean rebels took up arms towards a more nuanced analysis of motive and causation. As posited above, while the analysis of causation offered by these authors does still acknowledge the role economic grievances played, it also points to the existence of other explicatory factors—that begin to fall outside the material register and fall instead on a political, cultural and symbolic one. If as Van Young posits, the material realm structured by economic systems of exchange function as sites of meaning formation, then the separation of materially driven motives from culturally driven ones is both artificial and mistaken. In attempting to unravel the intricate web created by human motive and action, explanations that ignore the importance of culture and symbolic elements in shaping individual and collective motives posit arguments that reduce social relations to a realm where external and structural factors undermine human agency. Conversely analyses that by-pass the importance of material conditions ignore a substantial part of human life, namely the fact that we depend on material conditions to subsist.

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