

KEEN HAYNES

# A History of Latin America

INDEPENDENCE TO THE PRESENT



VOLUME 2

SIXTH EDITION

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# **A History of Latin America**

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**Independence to  
the Present**

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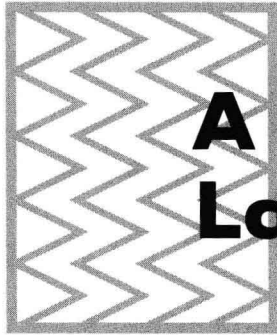
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# **A History of Latin America**

# PREFACE

THE SIXTH EDITION of *A History of Latin America* has two major objectives. First, it seeks to make available to teachers and students of Latin American history a text based on the best recent scholarship, enriched with data and concepts drawn from the sister social sciences of economics, anthropology, and sociology. Because the book is a history of Latin American *civilization*, it devotes considerable space to the way of life adopted at each period of the region's history. To enable students to deepen their knowledge of Latin American history and culture on their own, it includes an updated bibliography, "Suggestions for Further Reading," limited to titles in English.

The second objective of this edition has been to set Latin American history within a broad interpretive framework. This framework is the "dependency theory," the most influential theoretical model for social scientists concerned with understanding Latin America. Not all followers of the theory understand it in precisely the same way, but most probably agree with the definition of *dependency* offered by the Brazilian scholar Theotonio dos Santos: "A situation in which the economy of certain countries is conditioned by the development and expansion of another economy to which the former is subject."

Writers of the dependency school employ some standard terms that we use in this text: *neocolonialism*, *neoliberalism*, and *center* and *periphery*. *Neocolonialism* refers to the dependent condition of countries that enjoy formal political independence. *Neoliberalism* refers to the policies of privatization, austerity, and trade liberalization accepted willingly or unwillingly by the governments of dependent countries as a condition of approval of invest-

ment, loans, and debt relief by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. (The IMF and the World Bank prefer to give such policies the innocuous-sounding name of "structural adjustment programs.") The term *center* is applied to the dominant group of developed capitalist countries, and *periphery* to the underdeveloped or dependent countries.

Periodically dependency theory has come under attack from scholars, mostly North American, who announce its "collapse." The most recent announcements of dependency theory's "collapse" have been linked to the seeming triumph of neoliberal ideology and its creation, the so-called "global economy." Claiming that the neoliberal tide can lift all ships, including the countries of Latin America and the rest of the Third World, and pointing for proof in the case of Latin America to such macroeconomic indicators as increased exports (often based on intense exploitation of finite natural resources and subject to sudden changes in price and demand), large inflows of foreign capital (often speculative and volatile), and the like, these critics argued that dependency theory was basically flawed and outmoded, that its analysis of Latin America's problems had lost all meaning in the light of today's world.

But a rapid glance at the results of over a decade of application of neoliberal therapy to Latin America's problems suggests that in all essential respects the economic and social crisis of the area has worsened and its dependency vis-à-vis the core capitalist powers has deepened. Our text documents these conclusions in detail. Here are a few telling facts.

According to the UN's Economic Commission on Latin America and the Caribbean, the number



of Latin Americans living in poverty went up from 197 million in 1990 to 209 million in 1994, a 6 percent increase. In 1987 the area's foreign debt stood at \$426 billion; by 1996, after paying \$648 billion on the debt, it had risen to \$611 billion, and by the end of 1997 it had risen again to \$644 billion—three times what it had been in 1982. In Mexico, often regarded as a shining light of the neoliberal revolution, by 1996 55 percent of the population, 14.7 million more than in 1994, lived in extreme poverty. In Argentina, between 1990 and 1994, the “golden years” of President Menem's neoliberal restructuring, the gross domestic product increased by one third, but unemployment almost doubled, reaching almost 19 percent by 1995. The inequities of the area's income distribution remain staggering. In Brazil, in the early 1990s, the richest 20 percent of the population received 67.5 percent of the national income. By contrast, the poorest 40 percent of the national population received 7 percent of their country's income in Brazil, 5.7 percent in Mexico, 5 percent in Venezuela, 4.9 percent in Chile, 2.7 percent in Guatemala, and 4.9 percent in Colombia. The growth of Latin American poverty, it should be noted, forms part of a pattern of growing impoverishment on a global scale, particularly in the Third World. In April 1999 James Wolfensohn, president of the World Bank, noted that the number of people living on less than \$1 a day had risen from 1 billion a few years ago to about 1.3 billion and would likely reach 1.5 billion by 2000.

Meanwhile the deepening Latin American dependency has assumed a more sinister form. The drug traffic to the United States and Europe has virtually become the life support system of the economies of Bolivia, Colombia, and Peru, and its influence, as recent revelations show, has reached into the highest levels of officialdom in countries like Colombia and Mexico. Another symptom of growing dependency, directly linked to the impact of neoliberal policies on the Mexican economy, is the swelling flood of illegal immigrants seeking to cross the U.S.-Mexican border and the violence inherent in U.S. policies like Operation Gatekeeper, de-

signed to prevent it. According to a study by the University of Houston, “Death at the Border,” from 1993 to 1996 nearly 1200 immigrants died while attempting to cross the U.S.-Mexican border. In the light of these and other compelling facts, it appears that dependency theory continues to have a large relevance for Latin America. It remains, in the words of Professor Peter Evans, “one of the primary lenses through which both Latin American and North American scholars analyze the interaction of classes and the state in the context of an increasingly internationalized economy.”

As we prepare this book for the press, a rush of events provides compelling evidence of a crisis of the “global economy” project and the neoliberal theory on which it rests. An economic storm, beginning in the Far East in 1997, left the economies of Indonesia, South Korea, and other “Asian tigers” in ruins, spread to Russia, and by early 1999 threatened Latin America. Especially affected were such countries as Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Venezuela, Mexico, and Colombia, which had commercial ties with Asian markets and suffered sharp declines in the prices of their raw material exports. Particularly worrisome was the plight of the biggest Latin American economy, that of Brazil, which experienced a loss of more than \$25 billion of its foreign reserves through capital flight in two months. An IMF-led effort to bail out Brazil with a \$41.5 billion loan in return for “structural adjustment” budget cuts of \$21 billion was unlikely to do more than increase Brazil's huge foreign debt and the social inequities of a country which had the world's most inequitable income distribution. Michel Camdessus, the IMF's managing director, himself described the situation as “the crisis of a system.” The famed financier George Soros proclaimed “the crisis of global capitalism.” The board of directors of the International Forum on Globalization drew its own conclusion: “After more than 50 years of this experiment, it is breaking down. Rather than leading to economic benefits for all people, it has brought the planet to the brink of environmental and social catastrophe. The experiment has failed” (*New York Times*, Nov. 24, 1998).

A word about the organization of this text. In its planning, the decision was made to reject the approach that tries to cover the post-independence history of the twenty Latin American republics in detail, including mention of every general who ever passed through a presidential palace. Most teachers will agree that this approach discourages students by miring them in a bog of tedious facts. Accordingly, it was decided to limit coverage of the national period in the nineteenth century to Mexico, Argentina, Chile, and Brazil, whose history seemed to illustrate best the major issues and trends of the period. In addition to covering these four countries, the survey of the twentieth century broadened to include the central Andean area, with a special concentration on Peru, and Cuba, the scene of a socialist revolution with continental repercussions. The second edition added a chapter on Central America, where a revolutionary storm, having toppled the U.S.-supported Somoza tyranny in Nicaragua, threatened the rickety structures of oligarchical and military rule in El Salvador and Guatemala. The fourth edition recognized the political and economic importance of the Bolivarian lands of Venezuela and Colombia by including a chapter on the modern history of those countries.

To accommodate alternative course configurations, the present edition of *A History of Latin America* continues to be published in two volumes as well as in a complete version. Volume 1 includes Latin American history from ancient times to 1910, and Volume 2 covers Latin American history from Independence to the present. An expanded introduction to Volume 2 has been added to provide some background for those students who do not take the first half of the course.

Lastly, the recent history of all the countries under discussion has been brought up to date, and the rest of the book has been thoroughly revised to reflect current scholarship, particularly the respective roles of race, class, and gender in the region's historical development. Special emphasis is placed on such topics as the impact of neoliberal economic policies and the gathering revolt against them, the effects of the North American Free Trade Agreement, the growing urgency of environmental issues, and the heightened visibility of the women's movement.

The book has also benefited from the careful scrutiny of the fifth edition by colleagues who made valuable suggestions for revision:

James Brennan, University of California  
 Marshall Eakin, Vanderbilt University  
 José Morales, Jersey City State University  
 Charles Pregger-Roman, Castleton State College  
 Joan E. Supplee, Baylor University

Many but not all of these colleagues' suggestions were adopted; these individuals bear no responsibility for any remaining errors of fact or interpretation. We also want to acknowledge a special debt of gratitude to Professor Asuncion Lavrin who graciously shared her photo archive on Latin American feminism. We wish to recall, too, the many students, graduate and undergraduate, who helped us to define our views on Latin American history through the give-and-take of classroom discussion and the reading and discussion of their papers and theses.

Benjamin Keen  
 Keith Haynes

# INTRODUCTION



## The Geographical Background of Latin American History

**L**ATIN AMERICA, a region of startling physical contrasts, stretches 7,000 miles southward from the Mexican-U.S. border to the tip of Tierra del Fuego on Cape Horn. The widest east-west point, across Peru and Brazil, spans 3,200 miles. This diverse geography has helped produce distinctive development of each Latin American nation.

Latin America has two dominant physical characteristics: enormous mountains and vast river systems. The often snowcapped and sometimes volcanic mountain ranges—the three Sierra Madre ranges in Mexico and the 4,000-mile-long Andes in South America that make a western spine from Venezuela to Tierra del Fuego—form the backbone of the landmass. Nearly impassable for most of their length, these mountain ranges boast many peaks of over 22,000 feet. The mountains have presented a formidable barrier to trade and communications in Mexico and the nations of the southern continent. Not only do the mountain ranges separate nations from each other, but they divide regions within nations.

The enormous rivers most often lie in lightly populated areas. Three mammoth river systems (the Amazon, the Orinoco, and the Río de la Plata) spread over almost the entire South American continent east of the Andes. The size of the Amazon River Basin and the surrounding tropics—the largest such area in the world—has posed another impediment to the development of transportation and human settlement, although some rivers are navigable for long distances. Only with the advent of modern technology—railroads, telegraph, telephones, automobiles, and airplanes—has geographic isolation been partly overcome, a condition

that has helped create markets and forge independent states.

The number of waterways and the amount of rainfall vary greatly from region to region. Mexico has no rivers of importance, while Brazil contains the huge Amazon network. Lack of rain and rivers for irrigation in large areas makes farming impossible. Barely 10 percent of Mexico's land is fertile enough to farm; rainfall is so uncertain in some cultivable areas that drought strikes often and for years at a time. Mexico, with too little water, contrasts with Brazil, with too much. Much of Brazil's vast territory, however, is equally uncultivable as its tropical soils have high acidity and have proved infertile and incapable of sustaining agricultural crops.

On the other hand, Latin America has enormous natural resources for economic development. Mexico and Venezuela rank among the world's largest oil producers. Mexico may have the biggest petroleum reserves of any nation other than Saudi Arabia. Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia, and Peru also produce oil. Over the centuries, Latin American nations have been leading sources of copper (Mexico and Chile), nitrate (Chile), silver (Peru and Mexico), gold (Brazil), diamonds (Brazil), and tin (Bolivia). Much of the world's coffee is grown on the fertile highlands of Central America, Colombia, and Brazil. Much of the world's cattle have been raised on the plains of northern Mexico, southern Brazil, and central Argentina. Argentina's immense plains, the Pampas, are among the planet's most fertile areas, yielding not only cattle but sheep and wheat as well. Over the past five centuries, the coastal plains of Brazil have produced enormous amounts of

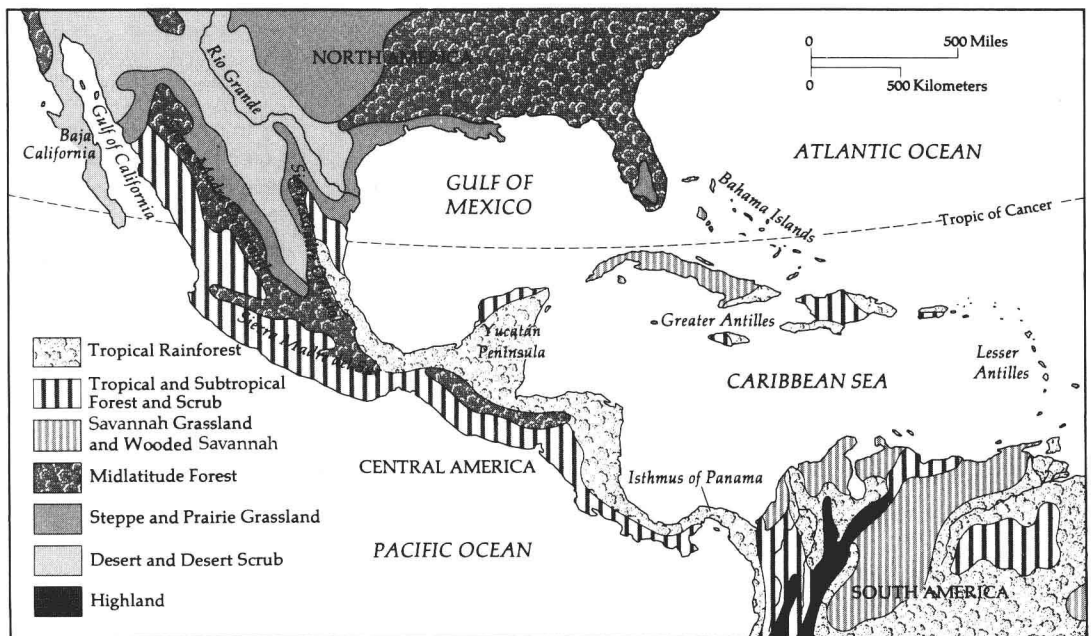


**xviii** sugar. In addition, human ingenuity has converted geographical obstacles into assets. Some extensive river systems have potential for hydroelectric power and provide water for irrigation as well, as has been done in Mexico's arid regions.

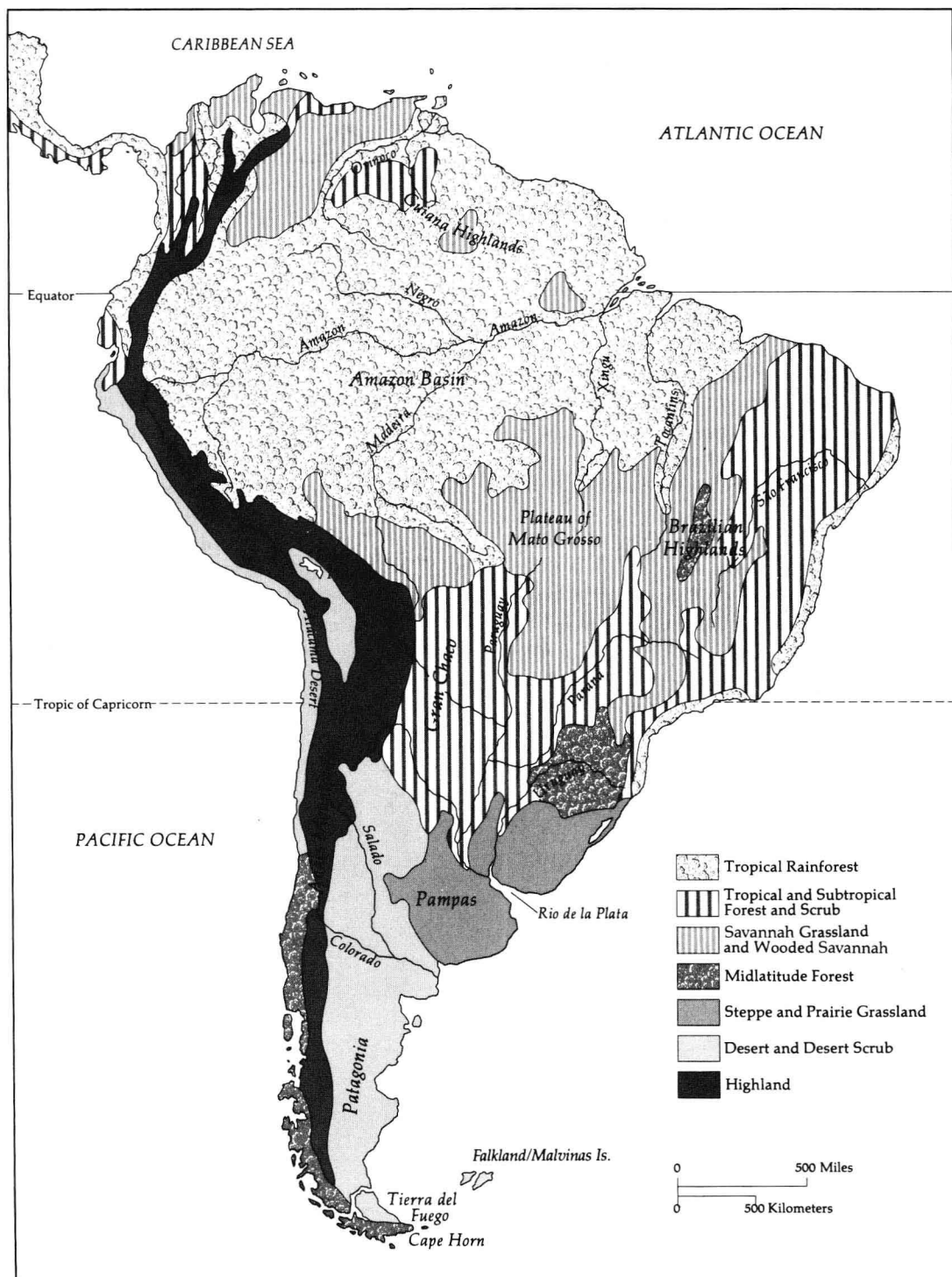
The historical record shows that the richness of Latin America's resources has had a significant impact on the economic and political development of Europe and North America. The gold and silver of its New World Empire fueled Spain's wars and diplomacy in Europe for four hundred years. Many scholars trace the origins of the Industrial Revolution in such nations as Great Britain and the Netherlands to resources extracted from Latin America by its colonial masters, Spain and Portugal.

Latin America's resources have affected economic development elsewhere, but how these resources have been developed and by whom and in which ways has profoundly changed the history of the nations in this area. Geography has perhaps narrowed historical alternatives

in Latin America, but the decisions of people determined its development. Going back to the colonization by Spain and Portugal, Latin America's history has been marked by exploitation of its peoples and its natural resources. Imperial Spain's policy to drain the lands it conquered of gold, silver, and other resources fixed the pattern for later exploiters. With European dominance came the decisions to subjugate the indigenous peoples and often force them to labor under subhuman conditions in mines and on large estates, where many died. In the more recent era, there has been the decision to grow bananas on the coastal plains of Central America instead of corn or other staples of the local diet; this has made export profitable, usually for North American concerns, but this land use has left many, like the Guatemalans, without sufficient food. Meanwhile the uncontrolled expansion of capitalism in the area has led to an ecological crisis, reflected in massive deforestation, severe soil exhaustion, and growing agricultural



THE MAPS ON THESE TWO PAGES FORM AN OVERALL PICTURE OF THE NATURAL GEOGRAPHIC FEATURES OF LATIN AMERICA: MIDDLE AMERICA (ABOVE) COMPOSED OF MEXICO, CENTRAL AMERICA, AND THE CARIBBEAN REGION; AND SOUTH AMERICA (NEXT PAGE).



xx and industrial pollution. These developments have contributed to rapid depletion of renewable resources, lack of clean water and air, and major epidemics of contagious diseases and other health problems.

The book that follows is a history of the development of Latin America's economy, politics, and society viewed primarily from the perspective of ordinary people, who were exploited and oppressed but who resisted and endured. It is the story of the events and forces that produced the alternatives from which Latin Americans created their world.

Latin America encompasses five climatological regions: high mountains, tropical jungles, deserts, temperate coastal plains, and temperate highlands. The first three are sparsely populated, while the latter two tend to be densely inhabited. With the exception of the Mayan, all the great ancient civilizations arose in the highlands of the Andes and Mexico.

The varied climate and topography of South America, Mexico, and Central America have helped produce this highly uneven distribution of population. Three notable examples, the gargantuan Amazonian region of mostly steamy

tropical forests and savannah, the vast desert of Patagonia in southern Argentina, and the northern wastelands of Mexico, support few inhabitants. In contrast to these inhospitable regions, a thin strip along Brazil's coast, the plain along the Río de la Plata estuary in Argentina, and the central plateau of Mexico contain most of the people in these countries. Thus these nations are overpopulated and underpopulated at the same time.

In western South America the heaviest concentration of people is found on the inland plateaus. None of the major cities—Santiago, Chile; Lima, Peru; Quito, Ecuador; and Bogotá and Medellín, Colombia—are ports; there are few good natural harbors on the west coast. In contrast, in eastern South America the major cities—Buenos Aires, Argentina; Montevideo, Uruguay; and São Paulo–Santos, Rio de Janeiro, Bahia, and Recife, Brazil—are situated on the Atlantic coast. The majority of people in Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay reside on the coastal plains. Mexico City, Guadalajara, and Monterrey, Mexico's largest cities, are inland. Almost all these cities have a population of over 1 million, with Mexico City, the largest, having over 20 million.

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