New Viceroyalty, New Nation, New Empire: A Transnational Approach to South American Independence, 1780-1830

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Abstract

The historiography of the process that witnessed the birth of the Latin American republics from the ashes of Spanish rule has always had a transnational context, especially that of the political vacuum created by the Napoleonic invasion of the peninsula and the subsequent attempts by Americans to assert their own sovereignty. Beyond that concession, however, the emphasis of historical writing on the Independence era has been overwhelmingly national in its focus. This paper will discuss alternative political projects that envisioned, first, the creation of a new viceroyalty in the southern Andes, and second, that of creating an independent South American empire stretching from Lima to Buenos Aires. It will also argue that these projects were integral to the first phase of the Great Rebellion of 1780. Overall, it will attempt to locate these projects in relation to the concept of nationalism.