"Do you know what you're fighting for?" Problems of Definition and Periodisation in Latin America's Cold War

Journal:	*The Historical Journal*
Manuscript ID	HJ-2019-163.R1
Manuscript Type:	Historiographical Review
Period:	1900-99, 2000-
Thematic:	International Relations, Historiographical
Geographic:	America, South, America, Central & Caribbean, America, North
Abstract:	This historiographical review examines some of the key interventions in the literature on Latin America's Cold War produced since the early 1990s. At its heart are two seemingly simple questions: what was the Cold War in Latin America, and when was it? Unlike some of the authors cited below, this review argues these do not have straightforward answers - if they even have answers at all.

"Do you know what you're fighting for?"[1]

Problems of Definition and Periodisation in Latin America's Cold War[2]

> History is encounter. The past comprises all the encounters – both simple and complex, peaceful and conflictual – that have brought people together. History, as a discipline, is thus the sum of all the *narratives* of those encounters. But the sum of narratives is untidy – replete with omissions, fabrications, and contradictions.[3]

This article has three connected purposes: first, to give a historiographical overview of some of the key interventions in the literature on Latin America's Cold War produced since the early 1990s; second, to offer a new, multilayered model of analysis; and third, to use the example of Mexico to demonstrate both the weaknesses of the current literature and the potential utility of a new approach. At its heart are two seemingly simple questions: what was the Cold War in Latin America, and when was it? Unlike some of the authors cited below, this review argues these do not have straightforward answers - if they even have answers at all.[4] In this, it takes its cue from Tanya Harmer's recent observation that:

[1] Janelle Monae, "Cold War," *The ArchAndroid* (2010)

[2] Many thanks to Tom Long, Geoff Goodwin, Tanya Harmer, Robert Karl, Ben Smith, Thom Rath, Carlos Pérez Ricart, Alessandro Iandolo, Louise Fawcett, Roham Alvani, Christy Thornton and Lisa Kladitis, who either saw earlier versions of my proposed framework or a draft of the text. Your comments and suggestions were extremely helpful, and all remaining inconsistencies and mischaracterisations are my own stubborn fault. I am also profoundly grateful to the editors and to two anonymous reviewers - and especially to Aaron Coy Moulton whose comments were invaluable.

[3] Matthew Restall, *When Montezuma Met Cortés: The True Story of the Meeting that Changed History* (Ecco, 2018), p.19

[4] After reading the introduction to Masuda Hajimu's *Cold War Crucible: The Korean Conflict and the Postwar World* (Harvard University Press, 2015) at Rob Karl's prompting, I wonder whether the questions even make sense.

> [W]hat the Cold War meant in a Latin American context or to Latin Americans is still relatively unclear. Scholarship is largely fragmented between different countries and time periods. There is little agreement about when the Cold War in the region began and ended, whether it was imposed or imported and precisely how it evolved over time. Some argue that the very concept of the Cold War is irrelevant in a Latin American context. Others contend that the region's Cold War set something of a precedent for what happened elsewhere. In short, we still have a lot to learn.[5]

Alan McPherson has summed up the "paradox" which emerges from this line of enquiry thus: "the more historians find out about the Cold War in the hemisphere, the more the Cold War itself fades into the background".[6] Many Latin American scholars have, I think, understood this better and for longer; as such this article concentrates predominantly – though not exclusively – on the Anglophone literature where these debates are most obviously vital and current.[7]

In attempting to map a route *towards* possible answers to some of these quandaries, this review offers a new framework for defining Latin America's Cold War, both in timescale and in nature, taking into account the untidiness of the sum of narratives which we have before us. In doing so, it stresses the need to take into consideration

[5] Tanya Harmer, "The Cold War in Latin America" in *The Routledge Handbook of the Cold War* (2014), p.133
[6] Alan McPherson, "The Paradox of Latin American Cold War Studies" in Garrard-Burnett et al. (eds.), *Beyond the Eagle's Shadow: New Histories of Latin America's Cold War* (UNM Press, 2013), p.307
[7] Among recent publications in Spanish which address some of these questions, see *inter alia*: Vanni Pettiná, *Historia Mínima de la Guerra Fría en América Latina* (El Colegio de México, 2018); Roberto García Ferreira & Arturo Taracena (eds.), *La Guerra Fría y el Anticomunismo en Centroamérica* (FLACSO, 2017); Aldo Marchesi, "Escribiendo la Guerra Fría Latinoamericana: Entre el Sur 'local' y el Norte 'global'" in *Estudios Históricos*, 30:60 (2017); Tanya Harmer & Alfredo Riquelme (eds.), *Chile y la Guerra Fría global* (RIL, 2014).

regional specificities. The relationship between the different layers of context and analysis is vital here: at what point does the specificity of, say, Guerrero's Cold War negate the idea of Mexico's Cold War, which itself undermines the idea of Latin America's Cold War, thus pulling the rug from under the global Cold War framework itself? From these 'hot zones' that are perceived as peripheries, nuclear codes and presidential summits seem so very far away. It is clear, then, that it is not enough to ask when the Cold War took place in Latin America, importing frameworks from elsewhere. We must ask, instead, when, and how, the Cold War was Latin American. Implicitly - and, in places, explicitly - this article rejects the general weighting of the Anglophone literature towards 'late' and 'mostly-peripheral' interpretations; the latter sections use Mexico in particular to justify an 'early' interpretation of the Cold War as well as to test the proposed model.

1.

To begin, we must turn to the question of what Latin America's Cold War *was*, laying the stress on relevant structural considerations. Defining Latin America's Cold War seems alluringly straightforward. Most of us, after all, think we know what the Cold War was *more generally*, so ought we not just look at its manifestations in Latin America and describe their commonalities? The Cuban Revolution and attempts to defeat it, for instance; Salvador Allende's government and Augusto Pinochet's coup; the Sandinistas' victory in Nicaragua; counter-revolution elsewhere in Central America. These all *feel* unequivocally like Cold War events or processes. Yet things get more murky when we think about Guatemala in 1954, because the U.S. role is a

little more 'hands off'. Similarly, how does one characterise the Brazilian military coup of 1964, or the U.S. invasion of the Dominican Republic in 1965? Were the Costa Rican civil war and the Colombian *Bogotazo* of 1948 Cold War conflicts? Whose side was the Mexican government – enmeshed at the highest level with U.S. interests but fraternally supportive of Cuba – really on? And looking beyond the received wisdom of leftist narcosis in 1950s Latin America, we find a panoply of ideas, movements and parties which intersect with the broader global conflict in awkward and surprising ways.[8] With just a little interrogation, all that is interpretatively solid melts into air.

Writing in 2014, Harmer offered four key points by way of definition, in what is to date the most rigorous and meaningful engagement with the term. The first is that the adjective 'cold' is inappropriate in our context: these conflicts "left hundreds of thousands dead, tortured or disappeared, forced millions into exile and yet millions more to change their way of life".[9] As a corollary to this point, 'war' might not be much use to us either, for while "there was violence on all sides, more often than not it was the state that carried out the majority of this violence".[10] Harmer's second definitional point is that, in sharp contrast to Europe and several other regions, "revolution and counter-revolution characterized the Cold War in Latin America". Third, this was a complicated and internationalised conflict: "crises and events in one country had an impact across the region." And finally, "the Cold War in Latin America is understood as having been underpinned by the United States' intervention in the region".[11] This

[8] See William A. Booth, *A Prehistory of Revolution* (Verso, forthcoming)
[9] Harmer, "The Cold War in Latin America", p.135
[10] See also Greg Grandin, "Living in Revolutionary Time: Coming to Terms with the Violence in Latin America's Cold War," in Grandin & Joseph (eds.), *A Century of Revolution: Insurgent and Counterinsurgent Violence During Latin America's Long Cold War,* (Duke University Press, 2011)
[11] Harmer, "The Cold War in Latin America", p.135

builds upon Greg Grandin's assertion that "what most joined Latin America's insurgencies, revolutions, and counterrevolutions into an amalgamated and definable historical event was the shared structural position of subordination each nation in the region had to the United States".[12] I will take it as given that in Latin America these conflicts were both violent and transnational – points now beyond debate. Harmer's other two points are integrated into my model below.

I suggest that we should take a geological approach to manifestations of Latin America's Cold War. In doing so, several stacked layers of conflict may be exposed: while some very much bring to mind an Atlanticist vision of the mid-to-late twentieth century Cold War (capital C, capital W) – capitalism versus socialism, for instance, and the contraposition of U.S.- and U.S.S.R.-led blocs – others are much older, and have far less (if anything at all) to do with a Washington-Moscow bipolarity. For how can we think about Guatemalan, Cuban, Chilean or Nicaraguan attempts at revolution without factoring in longstanding tensions between landowner and peasant, or between state and citizen, or between the U.S. quest for pseudo-imperial hegemony and local assertions of national sovereignty? Reducing the Cold War to just one or two of these factors leaves too much unsaid. Note that Harmer uses 'the Cold War in Latin America' where Brands and others use 'Latin America's Cold War'. These terms are used in various ways by scholars of the region and are not often interchangeable; in Gilbert Joseph's recent bibliographical essay - of which more below – he notes that "the new watershed of scholarship has begun to produce a history of the *Latin American* Cold War – rather than just a history of the Cold War *in* Latin America" [his italics].[13] It also

[12] Grandin, "Living in Revolutionary Time", p.1
[13] Gilbert Joseph, "Border Crossings and the remaking of Latin American Cold War Studies" in *Cold War History*, 19:1, p.149

foregrounds temporality through discussion of the 'Long Cold War', a periodisation invoked by, *inter* alia, Harmer, Daniela Spenser, and Grandin and Joseph, though this article proposes a timeframe which is considerably expanded in the case of several sub-conflicts.

On the other hand, each subset of struggle can be folded into a greater whole. While conflicts stacked up over time, all of them concern in one way or another the desire to control the modes of economic production. It is thus fair to cast the post-WWII Cold War as a new and distinct phase in a much longer bundle of struggles for control of Latin America's population, land, and natural resources. After the opening of the region to U.S. capital in the later nineteenth century, those seeking to assert such control were *almost* always an alliance of local elites and U.S. interests, though neither of these categories is homogeneous nor were they always (or even usually) evenly-balanced.[14] There is a danger of finding the Cold War everywhere, but while I would not claim that the Cold War *itself* began in 1492, or 1810, or 1898, some of its major constituent parts did; the processes and structures which gave Latin America's Cold War its own set of unique conditions are mostly very old indeed.[15]

Latin America remains substantially overlooked as a site of Cold War conflict prior to 1959 and the Cuban Revolution, though this is changing. In the past two decades much more attention has been paid to conflicts in Asia, Africa and Latin America.[16] While

[14] British capital had played a somewhat analogous – though less direct- role for much of the nineteenth century, particularly in the Southern Cone; however, after the First World War this diminished rapidly (excepting a few enclaves of formal and informal empire).
[15] Harmer, "The Cold War in Latin America", p.135
[16] See, *inter alia,* Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times*, (Cambridge University Press, 2005); Heonik Kwon, *The Other Cold War* (Columbia University Press, 2010); Adom Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-*

there has been a concession in recent years to the importance of Guatemala and the coup of 1954, there remains a broad narrative of 'lateness'.[17] Key volumes such as the three-volume *Cambridge History of the Cold War* relegate pre-1959 Latin America to just a few paragraphs, sometimes, and uncomfortably, as a footnote to narratives of decolonisation, a process which while still incomplete in the region *de facto*, was largely achieved *de jure* more than a century earlier.[18] Similarly, popular histories such as Ian Buruma's *Year Zero: A History of 1945* or Victor Sebestyen's *1946* omit the southern half of the western hemisphere entirely, perpetuating the idea that the Cold War simply wasn't happening there yet. Where attention has been lavished on the region, it has been through a framework – sometimes imposed awkwardly - of US-USSR conflict: what Jürgen Buchenau sees as a "[focus] on the loud repercussions of international conflict".[19]

Given this neglect, those local and regional studies that have emerged have acquired a magnified significance to our understanding of both the importance of the Cold War for Latin America and the importance of Latin America for the Cold War. Tanya Harmer's idea of an 'Inter-American Cold War' - understood as 'a unique and multisided contest between regional proponents of communism and capitalism' rather

Determination (Princeton University Press, 2019); Lorenz Lüthi (ed.), *The Regional Cold Wars in Europe, East Asia, and the Middle East: Crucial Periods and Turning Points* (Stanford University Press, 2015); Vladimir Shubin, *The Hot 'Cold War': The USSR in Southern Africa* (Pluto Press, 2008); Piero Gleijeses, *Visions of Freedom: Havana, Washington, Pretoria, and the Struggle for Southern Africa, 1976-1991* (UNC Press, 2013); Christopher Lee (ed.), *Making a World After Empire: The Bandung Moment and Its Political Afterlives* (Ohio University Press, 2010); Sue Onslow (ed.), *Cold War in Southern Africa* (Routledge, 2009).

[17] Most obviously, consider the dozen or so pages on the pre-1959 period in Hal Brands' *Latin America's Cold War* (2010)

[18] See Mark Bradley, "Decolonization, the Global South, and the Cold War, 1919–1962" in Leffler & Westad (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Cold* War (Cambridge University Press, 2010) pp 464-485

[19] Jürgen Buchenau, "Ambivalent Neighbour: Mexico and Guatemala's 'Ten Years of Spring', 1944-54" in *The Latin Americanist*, 61:4 (2017), pp. 458-73

than 'a bipolar superpower struggle projected from outside' is particularly important.[20] To Harmer's 'regional proponents of communism', we can also add 'perceived regional proponents of communism' and some 'regional proponents of economic nationalism'. For every Chile there is a Dominican Republic; for every Cuba, a Guatemala.

2.

Early this century, Greg Grandin and Max Paul Friedman published influential historiographical essays which crystallised important shifts in our understanding of the Cold War. Grandin, in an excoriation of diplomatic historians, urged scholars to get 'off the beach'.[21] This was a temporal as much as a topographical instruction: for Grandin, the Cuban Revolution should be neither the first nor the main focus. On the temporal point he was unequivocal: Latin America's Cold War precedes not only the Cuban Revolution, but also the 1954 Guatemalan coup, and can instead be traced to the late 1940s. As with many contemporary scholars of the region in this period, Grandin seeks to understand the Cold War as a conflict which both affects and is affected by not only Latin America's longer-term history but also the sub-regional and/or sub-national histories of nations, states, localities and peoples.

This focus, therefore, is not only on timing, but also the significant overlap between domestic and transregional forces: "in nearly every Latin American nation the conflict that emerged in the immediate period after world War II between the promise of reform

[20] Tanya Harmer, *Allende's Chile and the Inter-American Cold War*, pp 1-2
[21] Greg Grandin, "Off the Beach: The United States, Latin America, and the Cold War" in Agnew & Rosenzweig (eds.), *A Companion to Post-1945 America* (Wiley-Blackwell: Oxford, 2002), pp426-45

and efforts taken to contain that promise profoundly influenced the particular shape of Cold War politics in each country".[22] The locations of such conflicts, their stakes, their methods and materiel, and the alliances of combatants are considered in the layered model below. Grandin, however, did not limit his criticism to diplomatic historians' "myopic obsession"; the New Left's interpretations were also found wanting for the opposite reason, a "focus on larger historical frames".[23] Joseph picks up this argument, noting that "a veritable obsession with first causes, with blame, and with the motives and roles of US policy-makers often served to join realist historians and the New Left Revisionist critics at the hip".[24]

Coming from a rather different standpoint, Friedman called for "updating the revisionist synthesis to reflect Latin American agency".[25] His work makes a persuasive case for foregrounding local power structures and elite actions and retreating from the reflexive assignation of both blame and ultimate power upon the United States.[26] For, as noted below, it is the recurring *entanglements* of local repressive elites and the United States which made for such a powerful combination.[27] American support made the former "especially intransigent in defending their privileges while discrediting them further to nationalist reform movements".[28] McPherson agrees, noting "the ability of peripheral actors to distort local conflicts even further than U.S. 'hegemons' wished them to".[29]

[22] *ibid.*, p.426
[23] *ibid.*, p.430
[24] Joseph, p.147
[25] Max Paul Friedman, "Retiring the Puppets, Bringing Latin America Back In: Recent Scholarship on United States-Latin American Relations" in *Diplomatic History*, 27:5 (2003), pp 621-36, this quote p.632
[26] Friedman, p.631
[27] A point made far better by Gilbert Joseph; see "Latin America's Long Cold War" in Grandin & Joseph (eds.), *A Century of Revolution* (Duke, 2010), p.402.
[28] Friedman, p.632
[29] McPherson, p.310

Though the Grandin and Friedman parameters seem fairly unbroachable, it should be noted that the received wisdom persists in certain quarters.[30]

3.

Knowing that we are dealing with a series of interlinked conflicts does not in itself help us find a date upon which we can say the Cold War began for Latin America; quite the reverse, in fact. It does, however, allow us to focus on certain inflection points. Explanations which overlook 1917, 1948 and 1959 as linked points in an escalating pattern of regional conflict are likely too narrow in temporal focus, just as are those that set aside pre-1917 structures of property rights, empire, citizenship, race, gender and labour are also barking if not quite up the wrong tree, then at least at only a part of the wood.

Bethell and Roxborough effectively provide a start date for Latin America's Cold War: 1948. Rivas concurs, stating that the "Rio Pact [1947] and OAS [1948] were in many respects a product of the Cold War and US efforts to protect the hemisphere from 'Soviet' communism" but with the important qualifier that "their origins were in Latin American attempts to contain the United States and to provide a means for collective… action".[31] The US-USSR conflict is thus overlaid on the tension between national sovereignty and US influence, with anti-communism papering over the cracks. This

[30] See, e.g. Brands' *Latin America's Cold War* and its diminution of both pre-1959 conflicts and – particularly – the intersections of race/indigeneity and political economy. See also Kurt Weyland's flabbergasting "Limits of US Influence: The Promotion of Regime Change in Latin America" in *Journal of Politics in Latin America*, 10:3 (2018), pp.135-64

[31] Rivas, p.240

1947-8 moment seems reasonable, at least in terms of a new phase of conflict, though there are earlier exceptions and a much longer history of U.S.-U.S.S.R. competition, as noted above. The 'benign neglect' of the Good Neighbour Policy gave way to a period of uncertainty leading through a different kind of neglect - Truman's change of heart on working with dictators, for instance - into the interventionism of Operation PBSUCCESS, Playa Girón and the Dominican Republic.

The bulk of the historiography, though, continues to concentrate on the period following the Cuban Revolution. There are two reasons the 1945-1954 period in particular is overlooked. Far from suggesting an absence of Cold War context, both can be seen as *results* or *symptoms* of the Cold War. The first is that the Second World War had weakened Communist Party ties to the Soviet Union, ushering in a phase in which Soviet interest in Latin America was relatively low, and for those who conceive of the Cold War only as a bipolar superpower conflict this renders the region uninteresting.[32] It hardly needs stating that the Soviet Union had a great deal to contend with in the diplomatic, military and economic spheres during the 1945-1954 period. However, interest in Latin America was not completely absent, as Iber demonstrates in *Neither Peace nor Freedom*, but - and this applies *a fortiori* to the crucial 1945-48 conjuncture - there were simply higher priorities for an under-resourced and under-informed Soviet Union. As Figueroa Clark notes, the relationship between the Comintern and Latin American communists had been ambivalent for some time.[33] While Soviet interest in the region eventually (re-)grew, sensitivity to regional specificity did not: Moscow

[32] Mark Philip Bradley, 'Decolonization, the global South, and the Cold War, 1919-1962', in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War, Volume I: Origins* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p.471
[33] Figueroa Clark, p.398

remained markedly nervous of talk of revolution, as did many orthodox communists, particularly in northern Latin America.

Second, as Bethell and Roxborough's foundational volume showed, with few exceptions, Latin America's domestic lefts of various ideological stripes were in retreat from around 1948 onwards. In some cases - Mexico, Brazil, Argentina - we can place the date rather earlier. Many communist parties split, saw precipitous declines in membership, and even went underground. The Mexican Communist Party, for instance, collaborated in its own oppression to a quite remarkable extent, but the difference between its treatment by Cárdenas in the mid-1930s and Alemán in the late-1940s is striking.[34] There were local, ideological and geopolitical reasons behind these shifting leftist fortunes, but post-Rio Treaty convergence towards anti-communist domestic policy in the majority of Latin American republics was vital, and doubly so after the outbreak of the Korean War.

What we are left with, then, is a period of U.S. dominance at the geopolitical level, and anti-communist dominance in most local political contexts. The impression given by the breakdown of negotiations over a hemispheric economic settlement was that the United States was in some way snubbing or ignoring Latin America, but as Niblo puts it, this was an "indifference based on supremacy";[35] by the late 1940s the argument had been won. In many ways, this was the first battlefield of the post-1945 Cold War for

[34] See *inter alia* Barry Carr, *Marxism and Communism in Twentieth Century Mexico* (University of Nebraska Press, 1992), esp. Chapter 4: 'The Frenesi of Developmentalism: Miguel Aleman and the Taming of the Left, 1946-1950'; Javier Mac Gregor Campuzano, "Browderismo, unidad nacional y crisis ideológica: el Partido Comunista Mexicano en la encrucijada (1940-1950)", *Iztapalapa*, 36 (1995), pp 167-84; William A. Booth, "Hegemonic Nationalism, Subordinate Marxism: The Mexican Left, 1945-7", *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 50:1 (2018), pp 31-58

[35] Stephen Niblo, *War, Diplomacy and Development*, p.259

the U.S., and it was one which brought a swift victory. Under the terms of this victory, in Alan Knight's words, "the donkey work of 'containment' has been largely undertaken by Latin American elites, while the principal costs have been borne by Latin American societies more broadly".[36] The lack of ongoing, large-scale 'communist' versus 'anticommunist' conflict should not exclude this period of regional dominance from the Cold War narrative. Rather, the successful outsourcing and parcelisation of anti-communism between the Second World War and the coup against Arbenz should be seen as one chapter *in* that narrative.

Yet as Stephen Rabe suggests, Eisenhower's charge that Truman had no policy for Latin America was an overreach; while their emphases were different, both presidents used various means at their disposal to "wage cold war" in or through the region.[37] Truman's decision to work with dictators and to favour 'security concerns' , whether it 'frustrat[ed], demoraliz[ed], [or] even radicaliz[ed] Latin American progressives', ultimately served Cold War grand strategy.[38] Peter Smith concurs, seeing 1950 as "a turning point in American attitudes toward the region" with the NSC memorandum on 'Inter-American Military Collaboration' bringing significant military aid, regardless of the nature of the recipient government. As such, while Bethell and Roxborough were correct to identify a brief opening of liberal or democratic possibilities in Latin America from c.1944-48, the attitude of the United States toward these tendencies remained relatively consistent throughout. The overriding consideration was how best to deal with global communism by securing regional allies.

[36] Alan Knight, "U.S. Imperialism/Hegemony and Latin American Resistance" in *Empire and Dissent: The United States and Latin America*, p.36
[37] Stephen Rabe, *Eisenhower & Latin America: The Foreign Policy of Anti-Communism*, p.24
[38] Rabe, p.24

Though we may still detect a change of pace with the Castroist challenge, the fundaments of the conflict were already in place. Grandin is surely right that "it was on Kennedy's watch that the United States, building on hemispheric military relations established during World War II, helped lay the material and ideological foundations for subsequent Latin American terror states".[39] Yet the receptiveness of regional political elites to such intensification had its roots in the 1950s (e.g. Guatemala), the 1940s (e.g. Mexico), the 1930s (e.g. Brazil, El Salvador, Nicaragua), or even earlier (Chile and Argentina, for instance).

4.

There is no room here to go too deeply into the voluminous recent literature on aspects of early Cold War Latin America, but one cannot overlook the importance of Aaron Coy Moulton's work in recentering the conversation around the Caribbean basin. In a series of articles he has cemented the idea of the region as its "own backyard", working within the Grandin-Friedman parameters but crafting a careful balance between broader structures and local agency in the region. Luis Trejos Rosero has made a similar case for a rather different set of structures and agents in Colombia – again bringing together a raft of older conflicts under the unifying banner of 'anti-communism' - as has Marcelo Casals for Chile.[40] With a similar historiographical thrust to this piece, Aldo Marchesi

[39] Grandin, p.429

[40] Aaron Coy Moulton, "Building their own Cold War in their own backyard: the transnational, international conflicts in the greater Caribbean basin, 1944–1954", *Cold War History*, 15:2 (2015), pp 135-54; Moulton, "Militant Roots: The Anti-Fascist Left in the Caribbean Basin, 1945-1954", *Estudios Interdisciplinarios De América Latina Y El Caribe*, 28:2 (2017); Moulton, "Counter-revolutionary Friends: Caribbean Basin Dictators and Guatemalan Exiles against the Guatemalan Revolution, 1945-50", *The Americas*, 76:1 (2019); Luis Trejos Rosero, "Comunismo y anticomunismo en Colombia durante los inicios de la guerra fría (1948-1966)", *Tiempo Histórico*, 3 (2011), pp 85-103; Marcelo Casals, "Against a Continental Threat: Transnational Anti-Communist Networks of the Chilean Right

has suggested that a "greater openness of [Latin American] national historiographies might enrich them, while also interpellating certain aspects of the global phenomena [i.e. orthodox North Atlantic views of the Cold War]".[41]

Against this backdrop, two volumes have been published recently which reveal both the need to delve deeper into local studies of Latin America during the early Cold War, and simultaneously the difficulty of inserting such narratives into a broad framework. Robert M. Karl's *Forgotten Peace* is an exemplary piece of scholarship, combining tremendous research with a healthy scepticism for received truths and a keen sensitivity for his subject's ongoing relevance. While this essay has largely concentrated on problematising the Cold War's beginning in the region, Karl's work reminds us that pinpointing its *end* can be just as tricky. But it is also a reminder of the need to account for particularities, both national and sub-national. When we consider the immanence of the peace-violence dyad across Colombia's modern history, attempts to insert the country into a grand supra-national narrative start to seem entirely quixotic. More than this, the specificities of local conflicts and processes (around peace and citizenship in particular) render even a national approach deeply problematic. Here one might draw parallels with Alexander Aviña's *Specters of Revolution* (2014) which does something similar for Mexico (or, rather, for the state of Guerrero). *Forgotten Peace* shows that conflict over land, the contested nature of citizenship, engagement with the law, and relationships with ideas and ideology are all complicated and interwoven. Karl goes further in problematising these categories in an article about the 'myths of Marquetalia' in which he demonstrates that while for combatants, the internationalised conflict was

Wing in the 1950s", *Journal of Latin American Studies* (2019), https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022216X1800113X

[41] My translation. Marchesi, "Escribiendo", p.200

crucial, for many Colombians, it was largely irrelevant. "It is likewise difficult in this context to speak of the "Latin American Cold War" or an "inter- American Cold War," he writes. "The older formulation of "the Cold War in Latin America" seems more appropriate, insomuch as it leads us to think about a Latin American imaginary of the Cold War."[42]

Zooming out – *way* out – we find Odd Arne Westad's latest book *The Cold War: A World History*, which aims to drag us out of the George Kennan world in which we have all been living. In many ways, Westad's book marks a welcome departure within the field of global Cold War studies. It notes the deep roots of conflict in the region, dating back to the nineteenth century and the supplanting of British economic dominance by that of the United States. It explicitly makes the case for the 1920s and 1930s as part of the same battle as later struggles with which we are more familiar. Westad also makes clear that the Cold War wove an international conflict (or, rather, an aggregation of U.S. offensives, whether economic, diplomatic or military) with longstanding domestic tensions over class, ethnicity and nationalism. Going further, Westad wonders whether 'the roots of the Latin American Cold War fed on high levels of inequality and social oppression".[43] In describing the violence of the late Cold War, Westad notes that its victims were mostly "labor organizers, journalists, student leaders, or human rights activists", not doctrinaire leftists.[44] This resonates with one of this article's central claims: Cold Warriors of the classic '45-'89 vintage folded in a series of longstanding grievances and conflicts under the totalising banner of anti-communism. And yet a note of criticism can be struck. Like Friedman, Westad

[42] Robert A. Karl, "Los mitos de Marquetalia", *Anuario Colombiano de Historia Social y de la Cultura* (forthcoming), p.14, author's original draft
[43] Westad, p.340
[44] *ibid.*, p.358

concludes that "the United States did not have subservient ideological allies in power in Latin America". This is true – and Westad is certainly correct that "a Betancourt, a Barrientos, or even otherwise despicable creatures such as a Videla or a Pinochet, were not straw men for the United States". But does this really matter, when we consider that both sides shared the same enemies? In the end, the apocryphal "our son of a bitch" foreign policy dominated.

5.

When we consider Latin America's Cold War – whether its 'colder' or 'hotter' phases or locations, and throughout its 'progressive' and 'authoritarian' waves – we might look at six 'layers' of conflict, as follows: *Landowner vs Peasant (inc. Hacienda vs Village); State vs Citizen; U.S. Hegemony vs National Sovereignty; Capital vs Labour; Capitalism vs Socialism;* and *U.S.-led bloc vs U.S.S.R.-led bloc.*

The principle of layered conflicts was applied by Greg Grandin in his groundbreaking 2004 study, *The Last Colonial Massacre: Latin America in the Cold War*, which pointed to three interwoven struggles that defined Latin America's Cold War: a local left-right conflict, into which the U.S. either inserted itself or was invited; a wider battle between social democratic norms and a deeply conservative, often murderously racist authoritarianism; and, broadest of all, the (by then) almost two-hundred-year-old confrontation between enlightenment and counter-enlightenment. Analytical layers are also implied by McPherson; for Latin America, "the Cold War was only one among a host of other important, often revolutionary processes" adding up to "a sprawling

multidimensional saga".[45] Brands too, though in a rather different way, draws attention to Latin America's "overlapping conflicts".[46] This interweaving gave Latin American conflicts a heterodox, patchwork nature that ideological frameworks birthed in the global northwest have continually struggled to integrate. As Corey Robin puts it, "the entire continent was fired by a combination of Karl Marx, the Declaration of Independence and Walt Whitman."[47] Even the term 'left-right conflict' must be used with caution, as a cursory reading of the Costa Rican civil war, for instance, makes abundantly clear. Though borrowing Grandin's principle of layers, I propose going rather further, as the following sections suggest.

Landowner vs Peasant (inc. Latifundia, and Hacienda vs Village)

While imperial rule and slavery were present in the precolonial Americas, European conquest folded multiple political and economic repressions into a fairly unified (albeit uneven) system. As the initial *encomienda* system of tribute gave way to the more procrustean *repartimiento*, the infamous *latifundia* (large rural estates characterised by unfree labour) were constructed; in many areas political economy came to be defined by the hacienda-village dyad, a symbiotic – though asymmetric – mechanism for extracting resources and exercising power. Throughout colonial times and into the national period, most of rural Latin America – which until the later twentieth century contained the majority of the region's population – continued to be defined by this relationship. The hacienda-village structure specifically, and the landowner-peasant relationship more generally, embedded norms around race, gender, land, and labour, some of which persist into the contemporary period and were certainly important local

[45] McPherson, p.308
[46] Brands, p.7
[47] Corey Robin, "Dedicated to Democracy" in *London Review of Books*, 18/11/2004, pp. 3-6

determinants of Cold War-era conflicts. As Knight has shown for late-nineteenth-century Mexico, in areas where the hacienda-village relationship remained important it acted as a potential *brake* on local capitalist development, relying as it did 'on combinations of coercion, corporal punishment, monopoly of land, 'paternalism,' and political backup."[48]

Victor Figueroa Clark reminds us that we must leave Eurocentric assumptions about peasants and their 'betters' at the Atlantic shore. "Although the campesinos lived in conditions that bore a superficial resemblance to feudal structures", he writes, "they were also often indigenous and therefore held a different worldview, particularly toward private property and the land". As for the bourgeoisie, "[o]utside the Southern Cone… rather than being a productive capitalist class, [it] tended to be dependent upon large foreign-owned enterprises and foreign capital".[49]

This lends weight to the contention that, where these socioeconomic structures persisted, the systemic struggle between capitalism and communism central to certain interpretations of the Cold War is inherently limited in relevance. Mid-twentieth century capitalists, like mid-nineteenth century Liberals, often wished to 'unlock' the potential (profit) of these seemingly feudal institutions rather than intervene to preserve unwaged, unfree labour, while many communists overlooked rural and/or indigenous labour regimes as pre-capitalist (and therefore politically irrelevant), a position considerably easier to maintain when fortified with prejudices of racial hierarchy and

[48] Alan Knight, "Land and Society in Postrevolutionary Mexico: The Destruction of the Great Haciendas" in *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (Winter, 1991), pp. 73-104
[49] Victor Figueroa Clark, "Latin American Communism" in Naimark, Pons & Quinn-Judge (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Communism Vol. II* (Cambridge University Press, 2017), p.395

urban superiority: the label of 'progressive' or 'reformer' is not easily applied.[50] By contrast, *hacendados* – on the whole authoritarian, conservative, and white – and their military allies used Cold War conflicts as a means of strengthening or re-establishing paternalistic, repressive, often violently abusive, and even genocidal dominance over rural villagers.[51] This was understood and – naturally - used as propaganda by the left; Che Guevara notably identified "the permanent roots of all social phenomena in America" as "the *latifundia* system, underdevelopment and 'the hunger of the people'".[52] This takes us all the way back to Bartolomé de Las Casas, who sounded positively Kolkoesque even in 1561, writing that "our work was to exasperate, ravage, kill, mangle and destroy; small wonder, then, if they tried to kill one of us now and then".[53]

State vs Citizen

The second longstanding conflict is between the state, an entity which developed and mutated in particular phases – notably under the Bourbon Reforms of the 1760s, the creation of republican constitutions in the independence period, and liberal reforms in the mid to late nineteenth century – and its putative citizens. The developments – perhaps formalisations is a better word – that took place during the nineteenth century are neatly encapsulated by Timo Schaefer in his survey of legal cultures in post-

[50] See e.g. Seth Garfield, "From Ploughshares to Politics: Transformations in Rural Brazil during the Cold War and Its Aftermath" in *Beyond the Eagle's Shadow*
[51] On the "continually evolving and adapting" – and indeed transnational - nature of Latin American rights, see the *Nuevo Mundo, Mundos Nuevos* 2016 colloquium "Las derechas en América latina en el siglo XX: problemas, desafíos y perspectivas", esp. Margaret Power's afterword.
[52] Guevara quoted in Richard Gott, *Guerrilla Movements in Latin America* (Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1970), p.13; though any mention of 'underdevelopment' ought to be accompanied by directions to John Patrick Leary's *A Cultural History of Underdevelopment: Latin America in the U.S. Imagination* (University of Virginia Press, 2016).
[53] Bartolomé de Las Casas, *History of the Indies: Volume II* (Harper & Row, 1971, trans. André Collard), p.78

independence Mexico. It was a period which "began with the Declaration of the Rights of Man and ended with the triumph of new class- and race-based hierarchies."[54] In a similar vein, Elizabeth Dore has demonstrated persuasively that for women, nineteenth-century liberalism represented "one step forward [and] two steps back".[55] This transformation did not happen in a (political) vacuum. To quote Schaefer once more, "any vestige of the liberal ideal collapsed in the second half of the century under the pressure of economic modernization schemes premised on elite control over indigenous land and labor."[56] I touch upon the significance of specific shifts in the economic model in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries below, but the legal-constitutional process by which colonial subjects passed through a contested and unevenly-experienced period of revolutionary semi-autonomy to become frequently-oppressed subjects of modernising republics happened – for most of the region – *before* the shift to domestic capitalism was complete (if, indeed, that shift has been completed).

Some parts of this process, particularly the formalisation of unfree labour regimes in majority-indigenous areas, represented returns to pre-existing conflicts. Others - including the hollowing-out of individual and communal rights in the face of novel, aggressively-enforced conceptions of property - were new, or at least given new vitality by the means available to a late nineteenth century state. And none went away; in all of our 'definitive' Cold War conflicts, personal or communal rights faced off against

[54] Timo Schaefer, *Liberalism as Utopia: The Rise and Fall of Legal Rule in Post-Colonial Mexico, 1820-1900* (Cambridge University Press, 2017), p. 1
[55] Elizabeth Dore, "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back: Gender and the State in the Long Nineteenth Century" in Dore, Molyneux (eds.), *Hidden Histories of Gender and the State in Latin America* (Duke University Press, 2000)
[56] Schaefer, p.3. Schaefer argues that the Mexican case is exemplary in both directions – in "the profundity of its liberal experiment and the oppressiveness – indeed, the pervasive indecency – of the regime that came to power in the final quarter of the nineteenth century." (p.4)

private or blended elite interests, while race and class informed battles over ongoing labour exploitation. Crucial to this model, I think, is Schaefer's "revolutionary liberalism" coinage. The simple idea of equal treatment before the law is fundamental in so many manifestations of Latin America's Cold War; its frequent denial underpinned myriad grievances.

Schaefer concludes that three kinds of legal manipulation – whether the creation of legal exceptions or elite interference with the law – developed in late nineteenth century Mexico. The first comprised attempts to deny townspeople (often, but not always, *mestizo*) - who were not usually well-off but had a good working legal-constitutional knowledge – the "full exercise of their legal rights guaranteed by successive Mexican constitutions."[57] The second was the blurring of lines between private and public roles such that wealth (often, though not only, meaning land ownership) brought with it the assumption of pseudo-legal-constitutional roles in census-taking, policing and the definition or transference of property rights. The net result was "a creeping privatisation of law" which naturally favoured the class holding the gavel. The third was the fact that while, formally, the repressive apparatuses of state were embedded in the legal-constitutional order, both *de facto* "concrete institutional arrangements" and the collective belief of Mexicans in general reveal the existence of armed forces operating outside the law.[58]

[57] Schaefer, p.205
[58] Schaefer, p.206

In each of these three areas, the conflict between state and citizen – which sometimes mapped onto that between 'the elite' and 'the people' - would have ruinous Cold War consequences. Bolstered by modern military training, equipment and materiel, a colonial-era zealotry on matters of race, and the implicit backing of the U.S., it was *states* that ultimately prosecuted the Cold War in Latin America. As Alan McPherson notes: "the overwhelming… burden of the violence should be attributed to conservative military states".[59] Recall Grandin's description of how Guatamala's Panzós massacre began: "between five hundred and seven hundred Q'eqchi'-Mayan women, men, and children… gathered to present a letter to the mayor announcing an impending visit of a union delegation from the capital to discuss long-standing peasant complaints against local planters."[60] This suggests that people were aware of their rights and theoretical means of recourse, but a combination of 'privatised law' and 'armed forces operating outside the law' prevented such recourse, by hook or by crook. Schaefer's ideas thus have application far beyond nineteenth-century Mexico.

U.S. Hegemony vs National Sovereignty

Caitlin Fitz has demonstrated the shift in U.S. political culture from "the idea of a united republican hemisphere" towards one of superiority and of rightful dominance.[61] While for Fitz the intellectual change occurred in the 1820s, its most obvious practical unveiling was in the U.S.-Mexican War two decades later. Having provoked Mexico into military conflict in 1846, President Polk had no qualms about placing the blame on the United States' southern neighbour, saying "we are called upon by every

[59] H-Diplo Roundtable Reviews, Vol. XI, No. 27 (2011), p. 26
[60] Grandin, *The Last Colonial Massacre*, p.1
[61] Caitlin Fitz, *Our Sister Republics: The United States in an Age of American Revolutions* (Liveright, 2016), p.248

consideration of duty and patriotism to vindicate with decision the honor, the rights, and the interests of our country".[62] The framing of a war of conquest as springing from 'duty and patriotism' is important, and the precise nature of that duty and patriotism in the 1840s bears closer examination as it frames many later interventions.[63] This war came shortly after journalist John L. O'Sullivan coined the idea of manifest destiny, asserting that the United States was free "to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions".[64] What followed – filibustering, occupations, imposition of leaders – revealed a conflict within Latin American polities, and at times within Latin American elites, between those urging national sovereignty (whether in a diplomatic or economic sense, though the latter is conceptually slippery) and those urging cooperation (or, for opponents, collaboration) with the United States; in vulgar terms, a struggle between (often nationalist) anti-imperialism and (often comprador) colonialism, the latter finding encouragement and support in a United States which had a very clear sense of its 'own' backyard.

During Latin America's Cold War, the banner of anti-imperialism was wafted rather feebly by the Soviet Union (and to a degree China), but the most notable promotor and corraller of Latin American national liberation movements was Cuba. This purposing of national liberation as the left position necessitated a folding of non-communist figures such as José Martí and Augusto Sandino into doctrinaire revolutionary

[62] Robert W. Merry, *A Country of Vast Designs: James K. Polk, the Mexican War, and the Conquest of the American Continent* (Simon & Schuster, 2009), p.245
[63] See Michael Fellman (ed.), *Around the World with General Grant* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2002), p.376
[64] Thomas R. Hietala, *Manifest Design: American Exceptionalism and Empire* (Cornell University Press, 1985), p.255

narratives, marking the Cold War as a new (albeit relatively distinct) phase in another older conflict. However, this fracture could be subsumed within, or subordinated to, other conjunctural priorities; hence, Mexico's economic nationalism (particularly in the petroleum sector) was tolerated for many decades, outweighed by the solidity of the government's anti-communism and the lack of serious challenge to either capitalism as an economic mode or to U.S. dominance in the region more broadly.[65] That said, it is worth at least considering whether the additional pressure of the final layer – the formalised U.S. vs U.S.S.R. conflict and its muscular and ill-informed anti-communism – would have prevented a *cardenista* politics being tolerated by the United States after 1945. The panic induced in diplomatic correspondence over the National Liberation Movement in 1961 suggests so.[66]

In a recent essay, Stuart Schrader makes a compelling case for U.S.-Latin American relations since 1898 constituting a "Long Counterrevolution".[67] Schrader suggests "the persistence of a strong relationship between security objectives and political economy". Thus while I have formally separated out conflicts over sovereignty and between capital and labour, Schrader provides an important reminder that such a division will always be somewhat artificial. As Schrader writes, "U.S. security assistance in the region…

[65] The Bolivian case has some consonance. See Thomas Field, *From Development to Dictatorship: Bolivia and the Alliance for Progress in the Kennedy Era* (Cornell University Press, 2014)
[66] See various documents of 'After the Revolution: Lázaro Cárdenas and the Movimiento de Liberación Nacional', National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 124, 2004, http://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB124/index.htm; for a more localized demonstration of the conjunctural shift, see Elisa Servín on the Mexican state's reaction to revived Zapatismo and Villismo during the Cold War – "Reclaiming Revolution in Light of the 'Mexican Miracle'" in *The Americas*, 66:4 (2010), pp 540-1.
[67] Stuart Schrader, "The Long Counterrevolution: United States-Latin America Security Cooperation", *Items: Insights from the Social Sciences,* 18th September 2018, https://items.ssrc.org/the-long-counterrevolution-united-states-latin-america-security-cooperation/ - also see Schrader's subsequent book covering the topic more broadly, *Badges without Borders: How Global Counterinsurgency Transformed American Policing* (University of California Press, 2019)

was marked by sovereignty's abrogation," and its economic policy by a twin commitment to fostering "the most basic forms of economic development while also repressing revolutionary movements that might rebel against the prevailing socioeconomic order".[68] This interweaving of security assistance with economic considerations was evident - if unevenly so - during the early Cold War. Again, it was not an entirely new impulse. Daniel Immerwahr's recent *How to Hide an Empire*, whose impact will doubtless long be felt in our field, reminds us that "empire might be hard to make out from the mainland, but from the sites of colonial rule themselves, it's impossible to miss". Even absent formal colonisation, "clearly this is not a country that keeps its hands to itself".[69] A final note of caution here: national sovereignty is just as slippery a concept as hegemony or imperialism. While diplomats could agree on a common principle of 'non-intervention' *in theory*, there are enough instances of elite factions inviting or facilitating intervention (or other less dramatic breaches of 'sovereignty') as to render the principle problematic at best, and meaningless at worst. To return to an earlier point, Latin America has never lacked local elite actors ready to amplify or leverage their strength by calling upon U.S. resources.

Capital vs Labour

With the onset of capitalism in the region comes another layer of conflict. Here, though, is one of the thorniest sites of contention in both political economy and historiography; the question of when Latin America was capitalist is even more vexed than that of the timing and nature of its Cold War. The problem lies not so much in the realm of capital

[68] Schrader, "The Long Counterrevolution"
[69] Immerwahr, *How to Hide an Empire: A History of the Greater United States* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2019), p.14

as it does in that of labour. For various reasons, not least the institutions and mechanisms (*encomienda*, *repartimiento*, *hacienda*, *latifundia*) introduced by the European occupiers after 1492, there were severe distortions in the labour market, which is a way of saying that many (usually indigenous) Latin Americans were set to work in conditions which observers – both at the time and in hindsight – approximated to slavery.[70] While the 'black legend' of indebted peonage may have been exaggerated (or, rather, over-generalized) by critics, as Knight has suggested, its existence and - *a fortiori* - that of 'voluntary peonage' throws a significant spanner in any Marxian works regarding the incipient market.[71]

One can point to a panoply of local or national cases: fictional, such as Traven's 'Jungle Cycle', and scholarly, most recently Casey Lurtz's *From the Grounds Up*, which tracks the process of the integration of Chiapas (and its coffee-growing economy) into the capitalist circuit by 1920, or Andrew Torget's study of capitalist insertion via a territorialist lens.[72] For the regional picture, *From Silver to Cocaine* edited by Topik, Marichal & Frank demonstrates the complex and uneven nature of the insertion of regions associated with particular commodities into the global market; while Tutino *et al* tie the spread of capitalism to revolutionary nationalism.[73]

[70] The use of the word 'slavery' as applied to the coercive and unremunerated systems of indigenous labour (particularly following the outlawing of slavery *de jure* in 1542) is controversial in and of itself.
[71] See esp. Alan Knight, "Mexican Peonage: What Was It and Why Was It?" in *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 18:1 (1986), pp 41-74
[72] See Traven, various, and Casey Lurtz, *From the Grounds Up: Building an Export Economy in Southern Mexico* (Stanford University Press, 2019); also Sarah Washbrook, *Producing Modernity in Mexico: Labour, Race, and the State in Chiapas, 1876-1914* (OUP, 2012); Torget, *Seeds of Empire: Cotton, Slavery, and the Transformation of the Texas Borderlands, 1800-1850* (UNC Press, 2015).
[73] See Steven Topik, Carlos Marichal & Zephyr Frank (eds.), *From Silver to Cocaine: Latin American Commodity Chains and the Building of the World Economy, 1500–2000* (Duke University Press, 2006); John Tutino (ed.), *New Countries: Capitalism, Revolutions, and Nations in the Americas, 1750-1870* (Duke University Press, 2016).

There are studies of Latin American labour which feel familiar to a (globally) northwestern audience: while they remain attentive to local specificities, the works of Ernesto Semán and Paulo Drinot offer fruitful comparisons with those on, say, Italian or US labour.[74] Yet it is important to recognise that the onset of Latin America's capital-labour conflicts took place – broadly – many decades, and in some places, a century, before it was defined by the dichotomy of capitalism and socialism. This dislocation was far more dramatic than the lag between, say, continental European industrialisation and the growth of socialist ideology and organisations.[75]

Capitalism vs Socialism

While versions of the capital-labour conflict had been playing out across the region throughout the later nineteenth century, the framing of a distinct, though closely associated, conflict – of capital*ism* against socialism (and/or, in many areas, anarchism) emerged more fitfully as leftist ideas arrived via oral, textual and organisational transmission. Both Marxism and anarchism arrived and spread in Latin America in the second half of the nineteenth century (though there were some Fourierist interlopers as early as the 1840s); they put down roots, syncretising in places and dogmatising in others, and provoked the ire of both elites and populist or nationalist alternatives.[76]

[74] Semán, *Ambassadors of the Working Class: Argentina's International Labor Activists & Cold War Democracy in the Americas* (Duke University Press, 2017); Drinot, *The Allure of Labor: Workers, Race and the Making of the Peruvian State* (Duke University Press, 2011). See also Field, *From Development to Dictatorship*.

[75] Richard Saull has argued that the conventional Cold War period can usefully be seen as a phase of capitalist expansion into the global periphery. See Saull, "El lugar del sur global en la conceptualización de la guerra fría: desarrollo capitalista, revolución social y conflicto geopolítico" in Spenser (ed.), *Espejos de la Guerra Fría* (CIESAS, 2004)

[76] See Angel Cappelletti, *Anarchism in Latin America* (AK Press, 2018); Luis E. Aguilar, *Marxism in Latin America* (Temple University Press, 1978); and Carlos Illades, *El marxismo en México: Una historia intelectual* (Taurus, 2018)

Without this endogenous lineage, the anti-communism of the 1940s and 1950s could not have (been) expanded with such facility. That said, the rapid growth of support for socialist ideas in general – and membership of communist organisations in particular – no doubt stiffened the resolve of their opponents. Between 1935 and 1947, aggregate Communist Party membership in Latin America is estimated to have grown from 25,000 to 500,000.[77]

Counter-mobilisation was swift. Paulo Drinot has shown that a 'creole anti-communism' was securely in place in Peru by the mid-1930s; Mexico made a similar institutional turn a few years later.[78] What was clear in the end of the thaw around 1945-48 was that the US began again, in Harmer's words, to overtly "encourage and reward anti-communism".[79] That anti-communism had a devastating effect. As Victor Figueroa Clark puts it, "[w]hile the repression of subaltern challenges by Latin American elites was not new, and while communists were not the only targets, their presence in all of the key points and moments of conflict combined with elite fear of communism to ensure that communists were particularly hard hit by repression".[80]

The broad capitalism vs socialism (and/or communism) conflict is borne out in the historiography. While plenty of (often radical, often nationalist) anti-communist Latin Americans have insisted upon an anti-Marxist socialism - e.g. Montoneros and their

[77] See Bethell & Roxborough (1988), p.173
[78] Drinot, Paulo, "Creole Anti-Communism: Labor, the Peruvian Communist Party, and APRA, 1930–1934", *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 92:4 (2012), pp 703–36. For Mexico, the state's method of dealing with various leftist challenges was fairly consistent: co-option where possible, otherwise repression. See e.g. Tanalís Padilla, *Rural Resistance in the Land of Zapata* (Duke University Press, 2008); Elisa Servín, *Ruptura y Oposición: El Movimiento Henriquista, 1945-54* (Cal y Arena, 2001).
[79] Harmer, 'The Cold War in Latin America', p.139
[80] Figueroa Clark, "Latin American Communism", p.389

rallying cry of "a socialist country without Yankees or Marxists" – both historical actors and their chroniclers embraced the simple dichotomy presented by 'The' Cold War. As Patrick Iber has noted recently: "to simplify enormous and complex bodies of scholarship to their barest essences, orthodoxy held communism primarily responsible, while revisionism blamed capitalism".[81] Recalling my earlier citation of Schraeder's hypothesis and the blurring of diplomatic/security concerns with political economy, though, the interaction of my several 'sub-conflicts' is more general: as Grandin puts it, "the politics and culture of anti-communism cannot be divorced in any meaningful way from the political economy of the Cold War".[82] More broadly, as Grandin and Joseph have suggested, the temporal consonance of "both Latin America's efforts to overcome its inequitable and stunted development *and* the United States' rise, first to hemispheric and then to global hegemony" constitute a 'century of revolution' which is *also* a long cold war; the conflict between 'reds' and 'whites' was strikingly consistent.[83]

U.S.-led bloc vs U.S.S.R.-led bloc

Finally we arrive at the conflict many generalists would consider the *bona fide* Cold War – the United States and its allies engaging in geopolitical conflict against a bloc of nations led by the Soviet Union. Immediately we are forced to problematise this binary, as no Latin American nations were formally associated with either NATO or the Warsaw Pact. The Soviet Union, in particular, was "more of an active bystander than a

[81] Patrick Iber, "Cold War World" in *New Republic* (30/10/2017), https://newrepublic.com/article/144998/cold-war-world-new-history-redefines-conflict-true-extent-enduring-costs [accessed 10/05/2019]
[82] Grandin, "Off the Beach", p.436
[83] Gilbert Joseph, "Latin America's Long Cold War", p.400. This also raises an important directional reappraisal, with the conflict "as least as much North-South as East-West" (p.401). For the Brazilian case see Rodrigo Patto sa Motta, *Em Guarda Contra O Perigo Vermelho* (Perspectiva, 2002).

main participant".[84] In Latin America - with the exception of Cuba - *this* conflict was contingent, illusory even. Affiliations to or affinities with the Soviet bloc in particular were often tenuous for subnational manifestations of the armed left, various incarnations of which drew upon pre-1945 traditions and organisations.

I am not sure I would go quite as far as García Marquez, who stated in 1982 that "superpowers and other outsiders have fought over us for centuries in ways that have nothing to do with our problems."[85] The Cold War powers *did* try to fold Latin America's problems into their conflict; however, the only coherent consonances that did exist were between (some) Latin American elites and (some) parts of the U.S. state apparatus - consonances which, as I have suggested, pre-dated the Cold War, but were re-badged, beefed up, and made more Manichean from the late 1940s. As Grandin suggests, local ideological concerns came together in this period with global geopolitical considerations, with baleful effects: "in many countries the promise of a postwar social democratic nation was countered by the creation of a Cold War counterinsurgent terror state".[86] Socio-economic demands born out of local structural conditions but encouraged by a wider democratic moment were opposed by existing elites augmenting their pre-Cold War strength with new methods and technologies, new allies and a more coherent ideology.

Further factors for consideration

This 'layered stack' model is designed to provoke discussion, and will necessarily need modification and augmentation. Already four areas seem to demand further

[84] Odd Arne Westad, *The Cold War: A World History* (2017), p.359
[85] Marlise Simons, "A Talk with Gabriel García Marquez" in *The New York Times*, 5th December 1982
[86] Grandin, "Off the Beach", p.426

interrogation, though perhaps as contextualisation rather than as separate axes of conflict. Race, its conceptions, and its hierarchies, are woven inextricably into Latin America's political economy. The *Landowner vs Peasant* conflict outlined above is – almost everywhere throughout the region's history – profoundly racialised, though with significant variance between e.g. Mexico, Central America, the Andes, Brazil, the Caribbean, and southern South America.[87] And as noted in the *Capital vs Labour* section, access to labour markets, geographical mobility and remuneration have been shaped by (usually top-down) conceptions of race. This was not limited to the right: longstanding leftist befuddlement with indigeneity and autonomy had profound effects in our period.[88] Furthermore, while racialised slavery as such was essentially outlawed across the region by the end of the nineteenth century, its legacy lived on throughout the Cold War, not least in the persistent repression and marginalisation of Afro-Latino communities.

Latin America's Cold War had distinctly gendered facets, many of which existed prior to the Second World War. Consider, *inter alia*, Elizabeth Quay Hutchison's account of shifts in the political solidarities of domestic workers in Cold War Chile; Margaret Power's analysis of the 1964 Chilean election, in which longstanding social attitudes rooted in religion and class were repurposed, the anticommunism being old, but nimble; Benjamin Cowan's tracing the roots of Brazil's Cold War gender politics to the Vargas era; Isabella Cosse's foregrounding of the nineteenth century roots of "a family type

[87] See, *inter alia*, Claudia Leal & Carl Henrik Langebaek (eds.), *Historias de raza y nación en América Latina* (Universidad de los Andes, 2010); Micol Seigel, *Uneven Encounters: Making Race and Nation in Brazil and the United States* (Duke University Press, 2009); Florencia Mallon, *Peasant and Nation The Making of Postcolonial Mexico and Peru* (University of California Press, 2009); Peter Wade, *Race and Ethnicity in Latin America* (Pluto, 2010).
[88] See e.g. James Jenkins, "The Indian Wing: Nicaraguan Indians, Native American Activists, and U.S. Foreign Policy, 1979-1990" in *Beyond the Eagle's Shadow*, pp 175-99

based on the indissolubility of marriage, gender inequality, and patriarchal power" for Cold War *guerrilleras* in Argentina; and Michelle Chase's study of women's revolutionary agency in Cuba both before and after 1959.[89]

While the literature on religious change and conflict in Latin America remains somewhat fissiparous, possibly reflecting its subject matter, divisions between (very broadly) conservative Catholic hierarchies and grassroots Catholic radicalism and, latterly, the rise of evangelical Protestantism are now fairly well covered in the historiography; whether they quite fall into the Chomskyian framing of a continental (Cold War) battle between liberation theology and CIA-funded Pentecostalism remains rather more contentious.[90] Nevertheless, the role of the Catholic right in underpinning vernacular pre-Cold War anti-communism is clear; Romain Robinet demonstrates the Mexican case in examining organisations such as the Federal District Student Confederation (founded 1916) and National Union of Catholic Students (1931).[91]

[89] See Elizabeth Quay Hutchison, "Shifting Solidarities: The Politics of Household Workers in Cold War Chile", *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 91:1 (2011), pp 129-162; Power, "The Engendering of Anticommunism and Fear in Chile's 1964 Presidential Election", *Diplomatic History*, 32:5 (2008), pp 931-53; Cowan, *Securing Sex: Morality and Repression in the Making of Cold War Brazil* (UNC Press, 2016); Cosse, "Infidelities: morality, revolution, and sexuality in left wing guerrilla organizations in 1960s and 1970s Argentina", *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 23:3 (2014), pp 415-450; Michelle Chase, *Revolution within the Revolution: Women and Gender Politics in Cuba, 1952-1962* (UNC Press, 2015).

[90] See, *inter alia*, Gerard Colby & Charlotte Dennett, *Thy Will Be Done - The Conquest of the Amazon: Nelson Rockefeller and Evangelism in the Age of Oil* (HarperCollins, 1995); Frances Hagopian (ed.), *Religious Pluralism, Democracy, and the Catholic Church in Latin America* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2009); Edgardo Colón-Emeric, *Óscar Romero's Theological Vision* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2018). Kyle Burke's *Revolutionaries for the Right* (UNC Press, 2018) is an example of the (mostly later) phenomenon of the semi-autonomy of right-wing paramilitaries.

[91] Robinet, "Christianiser la Révolution mexicaine : l'idéologie de l'Union Nationale des Étudiants Catholiques (années 1930)" in *Nuevo Mundo, Mundos Nuevos* (2016). For the persistence of such links see Luis Herrán Ávila, "The Other 'New Man'": Conservative Nationalism and Right Wing Youth in 1970s Monterrey" in Jaime Pensado & Enrique C. Ochoa (eds.), *México Beyond 1968: Revolutionaries, Radicals, and Repression During the Global Sixties and Subversive Seventies* (University of Arizona Press, 2018), 195-214.

Finally, the increasingly-important framing of violence. The emergence of radical left-wing guerrilla groups and the development of better-educated, better-equipped militaries certainly pre-dates the orthodox periodisation of the Cold War in many parts of Latin America; as McPherson puts it, "much of the violence perpetrated *in* the Cold War was not necessarily *of* the Cold War".[92] The 1930s, for instance, saw a plethora of such developments, with on the one hand the growth of the Sandino- and Martí-led movements faced (asymmetrically) by militaries able to exert power as increasingly autonomous actors (not only semi-autonomous vis-a-vis national elites, but at times getting beyond the influence of the US particularly after 1970). Stephen Neufield and Thom Rath have demonstrated that military modernisation stretches back into the pre-revolutionary and revolutionary periods respectively in the Mexican case, playing a crucial role in state formation; Erik Ching has traced similar developments for the case of El Salvador.[93] Finally, relating to violence, the democracy-dictatorship dyad may deserve special consideration, though I remain uncomfortable with these as primary categories of organization. Nevertheless, Bethell and Roxborough, McPherson, and many others make a strong case for thinking around this axis of confict.

[92] McPherson, p.314
[93] See Neufield, *Blood Contingent: The Military and the Making of Modern Mexico, 1876-1911* (UNM Press, 2017); Rath, *Myths of Demilitarization in Postrevolutionary Mexico, 1920-1960* (UNC Press, 2013); Ching, *Authoritarian El Salvador: Politics and the Origins of its Military Regimes, 1880-1940* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2014)

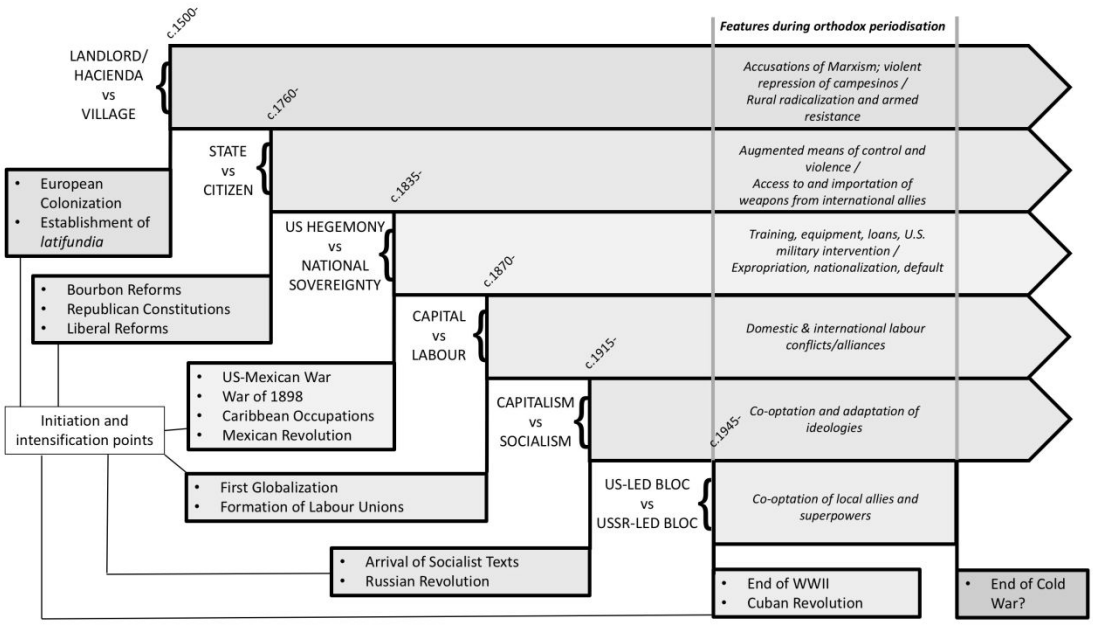

Figure 1. The Cold War as a 'Layered Stack' of Latin American Conflicts

6.

With the layers outlined above in mind, I now turn to the Mexican case in earnest, and in particular the idea that Mexico's Cold War was delayed, or even absent. Hal Brands in *Latin America's Cold War* (2010) implies a late Cold War for Mexico, which doesn't appear until 1959 and the Cuban Revolution, a position that has been echoed (considerably more convincingly) by Renata Keller's *Mexico's Cold War* (2014). Keller claims that "in Mexico, the Cold War began when the Cuban Revolution intensified the preexisting struggle over the legacy of the Mexican Revolution".[94] While Keller notes that "various political, social, and economic movements emerged

[94] Renata Keller, *Mexico's Cold War,* p.5

in the early years of the global Cold War, they were not yet connected to that geopolitical confrontation".[95] Instead, she characterises them as "independent responses to specific conditions in Mexico, to the stifling political system, to the corrupt institutions".[96]

In arguing that the Cold War came to Latin America relatively late, Brands and Keller concur with Bethell and Roxborough that "to the extent that U.S. policy figured in the conservative restoration, it was as a matter of neglect and indifference, rather than pro-authoritarian intervention".[97] Yet in Mexico, the U.S. neither neglected nor was indifferent to the campaign, election and presidency of Alemán in 1945-46; on the contrary, it began by seeking reassurances that he was genuinely anti-communist and rapidly moved to cement good relations by arranging the first presidential visit since the Mexican-American War of 1846-48. In its wake, Alemán agreed to a substantial opening up of Mexico to U.S. capital. The evisceration of the political left in 1945-47 was followed by the *charrazo*, the defeat of radical labour between 1948 and 1951.[98] In 1950, fearing that leftist opposition to his government might use primaries to infiltrate the PRI, Alemán declared a "systematic anti-Communist campaign" and outlawed primaries.[99] These processes - an ever closer relationship between the U.S. and Mexican governments defined in opposition to the Soviet Union and under the rubric of the Rio Treaty, a populist anti-communism with charges of fifth column

[95] Keller, p.33
[96] Keller, p.34
[97] A contention supported by the fact that Mexico is not referred to in Brands' study until 1959 (in reaction to the Cuban Revolution). See Brands (2010), p.25
[98] See Roxborough, "The Mexican Charrazo of 1948: Latin American Labor from World War to Cold War", (Kellogg Institute Working Paper #77, 1986)
[99] Paul Gillingham, "Fraud, Violence and Popular Agency in Elections" in Smith & Gillingham (eds.), *Dictablanda*, p.163

membership, an agreement to open the Mexican market to U.S. capital and imports, and the repression of radical left opponents of such changes - cannot, I think, be conceived of separately from the Cold War. Alan McPherson concurs, noting that "Latin America was fully engaged in Cold War-related ideology and violence for a full decade before the Cuban Revolution, if not earlier in places such as Mexico".[100] While there were rumblings of discontent about Guatemala in 1954 and much more serious concerns voiced (however insincerely) about U.S. policy towards revolutionary Cuba, Mexico was tied its northern neighbour in such close geopolitical terms that critical rhetoric was possible but could never escalate into the sort of direct opposition seen in the pre-war period.[101]

Iber is unequivocal about the dangers of a late placement of Latin America's *cultural* Cold War: "many studies," he suggests, "begin with the Cuban Revolution of 1959, at least ten if not forty years too late".[102] This is supported by his work on the World Peace Council and the Rockefeller- (and later CIA-) funded *Centro Mexicano de Escritores,* established in 1951 for Cold War "political purposes" - though it "did not fulfil the expectations of any of its institutional funders".[103] We can push this claim beyond culture: the Cold War diplomatic and economic dances took place early, were settled quickly, and placed Mexico firmly at the side of the United States. As Niblo suggests, the alliance was clear by the time of the Bretton Woods conference of 1944.[104] While Mexico's structural position was overdetermined, Christy Thornton's forthcoming

[100] H-Diplo Roundtable Reviews, Vol. XI, No. 27 (2011), p.26
[101] See Buchenau, "Ambivalent Neighbor"; and Héctor Aguilar Camín & Lorenzo Meyer, *In the Shadow of the Mexican Revolution*, p.165
[102] Patrick Iber, *Neither Peace nor Freedom: The Cultural Cold War in Latin America*, p.15
[103] Patrick Iber, "The Cold War Politics of Literature and the Centro Mexicano de Escritores" in *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 48:2 (2016), p.272
[104] Niblo, p.252

Revolution in Development shows that Mexican officials used what means they had – primarily the promotion of multilateralism – to contain the looming power of their northern neighbour.[105]

By the mid-1950s, the Cold War was normalised. The *charrazo* had absterged supposedly communist elements from Mexican labour and the covert *oficialista* anti-communism of the mid-1940s was now more explicit. Jaime Pensado has noted the anti-communist nature of attacks on student leaders during the 1956 strikes; they were not merely anti-communist in an abstract sense, but made explicit links to the "International Communist Party" (sic) of which the students were described as "dangerous puppets".[106] Similarly, Renata Keller shows very clearly that the re-radicalised railway workers' movement of 1958-9 was deliberately framed as being under Soviet control.[107] Of course, we can go back further, and as the model above suggests, it makes a great deal of sense to examine the degree to which regional anti-communism appeared in the wake of the Russian Revolution (and in some cases, even before); here the works of Daniela Spenser are invaluable in explaining the genesis and course of the 'Long Cold War' in the region.[108]

7.

[105] Christy Thornton, *Revolution in Development: Mexico and the Governance of the Global Economy* (University of California Press, forthcoming)
[106] Jaime Pensado, *Rebel Mexico: Student Unrest and Authoritarian Political Culture During the Long Sixties* (Stanford University Press, 2013), p.83
[107] Keller, pp 39-41
[108] See Spenser, *The Impossible Triangle* (1999), *In from the Cold* (2008, ed. with Gilbert Joseph) and *Stumbling Its Way through Mexico* (2009), a kind of trilogy telling the story of the Long Cold War at various structural layers covering the agents of Bolshevism, the intergovernmental machinations of the 1930s, and the interventions and influences of the United States.

There is no doubt that for Latin America, the 1945-1954 period falls under the contextual shade of the *geopolitical* Cold War. However, historians must go further and examine the *local* and *ideological* contexts. In the case of Mexico, a North American, anti-communist, anti-worker, pro-business alliance blossomed between Presidents Alemán and Truman. In the Caribbean basin, Moulton's argument that anti-dictatorial and pro-dictatorial transnational networks made "their own Cold War" seems incontestable, and fits neatly as an earlier chapter of Harmer's Inter-American Cold War.[109] For the region as a whole, the Rio Treaty of 1947 had tied Latin American foreign policy to that of the United States and (implicitly) against the Soviet Union. My hope is that when the next edition of the *Cambridge History of the Cold War* comes out, or another big authoritative book on the Cold War as a whole, it contains a chapter, unpalatable as it may be, on the *successful* prosecution of the early Cold War by anti-communist forces (whether local or international) in much of Latin America. The fewness of left-wing governments and the weakness of labour movements and guerrillas in this period has seemed to stem scholarly curiousity, but just because the 'right' side was winning doesn't mean the Cold War wasn't happening. In 2013, Alan McPherson set out a challenge to scholars of the period to "question our most basic findings, even the finding that the Cold War pervaded Latin America".[110] For my part, I still believe it did. As the 'layered stack' model suggests, the Cold War streamlined, bludgeoned, and bundled a panoply of other, older conflicts, but in the broadest sense we can detect a headline-level clarity even when the most cursory local digging throws up all manner of uncomfortable oddities.

[109] Moulton (2015)
[110] McPherson, p.318