# CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

# Capitalism and Community, Autonomy and Patriarchy

THIS HISTORY offers a new understanding of the long trajectory of global capitalism by exploring how it was shaped by people working across the basins surrounding the city of Mexico—the Mexican heartland—from the sixteenth through the twentieth centuries. They were historic communities, sustaining themselves and states that rose and fell over centuries. The Mexica (Aztecs) of Tenochtitlán lived by their cultivation and craft production as they asserted power from 1350 to 1520. In the sixteenth century, facing disease and depopulation, the communities became landed republics under Spanish rule, enabling them to sustain themselves, silver mines at Taxco and Pachuca, and the city that linked them to a new empire and to global trade. At the heart of a new kingdom named New Spain, they kept land to provide for their families, gained the right to self-rule, and adapted new cultures focused on devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe. They forged autonomies—landed, political, and cultural—that enabled them to shape a dynamic silver capitalism that marked the world until 1810.

After 1700, renewed population growth limited their ability to live on the land. They kept families and community cultures alive by complementing family production with seasonal wage work, as mining and commercial cultivation boomed all around them. Heartland republics negotiated to sustain their autonomies and limit capitalists' demands while silver capitalism soared to historic heights. Then, after 1810, insurgents focused in the Bajío, a region just to the north (where capitalist predations had not been restrained by landed republics), broke silver capitalism and Spain's empire. From 1821, while political men fought for power,

heartland communities turned to the land to reinforce their autonomies. When a revival of mining and new manufacturing brought commercial pressures in midcentury, communities pushed back to defend their lands and autonomies. Then, after 1870, state power solidified while population growth mixed with land concentrations and mechanizing production, making land and labor scarce. Heartland people pressed on for decades—then joined the local revolutionary leader Emiliano Zapata after 1910 in a decade of revolution. They lost the war but won a reform that brought them more land in the 1920s. They rebuilt their autonomies, enabling them to shape Mexico's experiment in national capitalism.

The experiment seemed poised for success when, after 1950, population explosion combined with accelerating mechanization in industry and agriculture to end autonomies; production rose as chances to work and earn waned. Heartland families held on as they could. Turning to commercial cultivation brought more debt than income or sustenance. Stripped of their autonomies, people fled to scrape by in Mexico City as it spread across the heartland. Facing scarce employment, they built burgeoning urban neighborhoods with their own hands—shaping and subsidizing a new urbanizing capitalism.

After 1980 the national project collapsed, and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) tied Mexicans to the United States and a globalizing world. By 2000, the people of the heartland made little essential to their own lives; less that seemed essential to capitalism. Many still build their own homes and neighborhoods; more depend on globalizing capitalism for the necessities of life, drawn from across the world by Walmart, its Mexican subsidiaries, and other global distributors. From the sixteenth century, people in heartland communities had made the world's money, while depending on almost nothing the wider world made. By 2000, after five centuries of struggle, they made little that contributed to their own sustenance and little deemed essential to the world. They struggle to live on insecure earnings, often in marginal neighborhoods. Globalizing capitalists now profit from the dependent poverty of heartland communities that for centuries shaped and sustained capitalism's rise.

Heartland communities shaped, supplied, and subsidized capitalism—commercial, industrial, and national—until urbanization stripped them of the autonomies that for half a millennium had allowed them to sustain themselves, the city of Mexico, mines and global trade, local and national industries. Now, people in urban barrios struggle to find work and income, dependent on a globalizing economy to survive. Capitalists profit; capitalism flourishes. The people of the heartland carry on, searching for new ways to sustain families, forge communities—and shape a world that increasingly prejudices their lives.

## *Capitalism: An Emerging New Vision*

For 500 years, capitalism has driven expansion of global trade and concentration of wealth and power, while communities across the world have dealt with its pressures and extractions. Studies of capitalism's power, its links to changing states, its passages through war and peace, illuminate the course of modern history.[1] Its powerful, diverse, and changing impacts on lives everywhere cannot be missed. Yet we rarely see how people working the land to sustain their families and communities carried capitalism for centuries.

For a long time, the history of capitalism was seen in terms of a vision shaped by Karl Marx. His critical and influential analysis rose in nineteenth-century Europe and focused on industrial Britain. He recognized the importance of trade and the global ramifications of concentrations of capital. Still, he saw capitalism developing primarily in national units, shaped by class conflicts within. He honored the dynamism and lamented the exploitations at the heart of industrial capitalism. His vision was limited because he did not see that capitalism was not, could not be, national. The British industrial revolution that focused his thinking required commodity inputs (including slave-made cotton) from across the globe and markets for its wares around the world. Not seeing (or deemphasizing) capitalism's global reach led Marx and others to focus on the productivity of industry and the wealth of industrial nations, and to imagine that if others followed the model, they could thrive—if they distributed benefits in socialist ways. Marx probed key economic, political, and social processes shaping industrial regions in the nineteenth century. His relevance has faded as we see capitalism as a global process that began long before industrialization, and is still dominant as industrial concentrations give way to global dispersals.

A more global vision began with Fernand Braudel. His massive *Civilization and Capitalism* explored the origins of capitalism from the fifteenth through the eighteenth centuries. Writing from the 1950s to the 1980s, as industrial capitalism faced off—in wars hot and cold—against industrial socialism, Braudel brought key emphases to the fore: that capitalism began long before the industrial revolution, that its driving force was long-distance trade in search of profit, and that it was global from its origins. He emphasized that when capitalism first stretched across the world in the sixteenth century, most people lived in communities using agriculture to sustain themselves and nearby cities and towns. Cities focused networks of trade that were becoming global—to imaginably fulfill the classic economists' vision of mutually beneficial exchanges. Braudel insisted,

however, that from the start financiers, merchants, and rising large-scale producers ruled ever more complex ways of production and trade—and claimed most of the gains. He saw capitalists as predators in a world that over the centuries concentrated wealth and power, eroded the autonomies of communities and families, and created widening dependencies.[2]

Others followed Braudel's lead. Immanuel Wallerstein also saw trade at the center of an evolving world system. In four volumes dealing with the world since 1450, he could not shake the notion that power and prosperity focused in Europe from capitalism's beginnings.[3] Eric Wolf offered a powerful global vision emphasizing diverse peoples in *Europe and the People without History*—a title that revealed a persistent Eurocentrism, and kept Marx's emphasis that capitalism had awaited Britain's industrial revolution to be born. In the 1980s, Braudel, Wallerstein, and Wolf led conversations in which Europe was the center of a search for a comprehensive global history of capitalism.

The conversation quieted with the collapse of the socialist alternative in the 1980s and the turn to globalization in the 1990s. Then, as the twentieth century ended, Andre Gunder Frank insisted that we *ReOrient* to see the long primacy of Asia and the late rise of Europe.[4] As a new century began, Kenneth Pomeranz punctuated that view, emphasizing a late *Great Divergence* that led Britain and not China to rule the nineteenth-century world.[5] As more scholars added to a global history of capitalism, Ronald Findlay and Kevin O'Rourke offered *Power and Plenty: Trade, War, and the World Economy in the Second Millennium.* Emphasizing the long-term, shifting centers of power, and changing ways of production and global integration, they carried on and complicated Braudel's vision of capitalism as a long-dominant yet constantly evolving global system.

Their history of global capitalism emphasizes war and trade in changing geopolitical economies. They see four major eras: a prehistory in which trade integrated Eurasia and its neighbors while the rest of the world lived mostly apart; a global commercial capitalism from 1500 to 1800, when European empires expanded to tap the wealth of Asia and bring the Americas and more of Africa into the web; an industrial era from 1800 to 1930, when Britain centered a North Atlantic axis that ruled the world and a vast "rest of the world" sent commodities and bought manufactures; and an era of wars and depression that led to the globalization that accelerated from the 1980s, concentrating financial power while dispersing production, prosperity, and inequity across the globe.

Findlay and O'Rourke focus on Europe and Asia until the United States forced itself on the world from the late nineteenth century—the

last hegemon of industrial capitalism, the first engine of globalization. They see the role of Andean silver in opening trade that linked the continents from the sixteenth century; they see how the Atlantic sugar and slave trades promoted European accumulation in the eighteenth century. But the Americas (and Africa) remain peripheral in an analytical vision focused on centers of geopolitical and economic power—which they see in Asia before 1800, then in Europe and North America with the rise of industrialism. The rest of the world lived the changing ways of global capitalism primarily as subject producers and limited consumers.

I began to challenge that emphasis in *Making a New World*.[6] It details an early rise of capitalism in the Bajío, northwest of Mexico City, where in 1500 state-free peoples lived dispersed on rich lands. Under Spanish rule an expansive mix of silver mines, commercial estates, and textile workshops generated rising flows of silver that stimulated world trade from the late sixteenth century. After 1700 the Bajío was the American engine of global commercial capitalism, ruling the world's money supply (still under a Spanish monarchy struggling in Euro-Atlantic power politics). With few landed republics, the Bajío was built to serve capitalist dynamism. Native people drawn by rising incomes and a minority of Africans forced by slavery mixed in lives of laboring dependence. They could rarely shape capitalism—until new predations became unbearable after 1780. They rose in 1810 to take down silver capitalism. In the process, they reshaped New Spain as it became Mexico, undermined China's historic economy, and opened North America to US hegemony.[7]

In *Empire of Cotton*, Sven Beckert extends understanding of the global integrations that shaped capitalism. He emphasizes that slave-grown cotton and thus planters and slaves across the US South were as essential to the industrial revolution of 1800 to 1860 as the entrepreneurs and inventors, machines and workers, of industrializing Britain. He argues that the transformation that shaped the nineteenth century came in a pivotal half-century that tied the "war capitalism" of empire and slavery to the industrial capitalism of machines and wage labor. He shows that industrial capitalism was always global and never simply European—except at the heights of power and profit.

Building on Braudel, adapting the framework synthesized by Findlay and O'Rourke, adding my emphasis on the role of Spanish-American silver in early commercial capitalism, and incorporating Beckert's recognition that slavery was as essential as machinery to the industrial revolution, leads to a new history of capitalism. The commercial capitalism of early modern times linked diverse centers of production across the globe—China

and South Asia leading in manufacturing (in the literal sense of making by hand), European empires fighting to profit, and New World mines and plantations driving trade across oceans. Spanish-American silver capitalism and Atlantic war capitalism mixed to make the Americas essential to a polycentric global commercial capitalism from 1550 to 1800.

After 1750, competing European empires drove Atlantic wars. Amid battles over power and profit, promises of popular rights spread. Empires broke; nations rose across the Americas; imperial Britain fought revolutionary France for dominance. In decades of violence, revolutionary slaves took freedom and destroyed plantations in Saint-Domingue in the 1790s; after 1810, working men facing new predations took arms to destroy New Spain's silver economy. The silver capitalism that made Spain's Americas an engine of trade collapsed. War capitalism ended in Haiti, to revive as sugar and slavery expanded in Cuba, coffee and slavery rose in Brazil, and cotton and slavery drove across the US South to supply British industries. The fall of commercial capitalism and the rise of industrial capitalism came fueled by political wars and social insurgencies across the Americas.[8]

Nineteenth-century industrial capitalism concentrated mechanizing production and geopolitical power along an axis that began in Britain and later extended from northwest Europe to the northeast United States. The Americas adapted in distinct and diverging ways. Where commodity exporters found profit supplying industrial inputs and selling food and stimulants to urban-industrial societies, prosperity re-emerged—kept to the few in slave societies, better shared on Argentine pampas and US plains where free growers raised staples for industrial centers (as indigenous peoples were expelled, or worse). The industrial capitalism that reshaped the world in the nineteenth century not only emerged from the links tying British mills and workers to US plantations and slaves, it grew by tying centers of industrial production to expanding regions of commodity exports across the Americas and the world. Industrial capitalism focused power, profit, and machines in centers tied to widening regions of commodity production in an integrated world of concentrated power and dispersed poverty.

In the emerging world of industrial capitalism, Mexicans faced the collapse of silver while the United States profited from cotton and slavery. It provoked a war in the 1840s to claim Texas for cotton and slavery; California for gold and more. The North American republic divided in the 1860s to fight a deadly war to end slavery and preserve the union; it emerged to rise to continental hegemony. Mexico also found political stability and a rising agro-industrial capitalism after 1870. But locked in

reduced territories, its industry faced limited markets; its exports had little space to grow. Late-century dynamism drove inequities until revolution came after 1910, peaking as Europe's powers faced off in a Great War in 1914. Russians, at the edge of the industrial world, faced a war they could not afford; they turned to revolution in 1917, seeking an industrial socialism. The United States joined the war to preserve Atlantic hegemony and industrial capitalism. A decade of war and revolution rattled an industrial world that sputtered on to collapse in the Depression of the 1930s.

As industrial capitalism dissolved in war, revolutions, and depression, people across the world (including many in European empires across Asia and Africa) looked for greater independence. Visions of national development rose, imagining that the industries that had concentrated to benefit so few could disperse to serve the many: every nation might find an industrial future. Led by Mexico and Brazil, the Americas turned to national projects during the Depression and World War II. With the great powers disabled by depression and then locked in war, dreams of development soared. They faded as the postwar years and Cold-War competition revealed the limits of national capital, markets, and resources—while populations exploded. The promise of national capitalism became a mirage by the 1970s.

Among the great powers, postwar reconstruction became a Cold War as a socialist Soviet Union disputed US capitalist hegemony, colonies struggled to become nations in Africa and South Asia, China turned to a distinct socialist revolution—and Latin Americans still dreamed of national development. The United States chose to fund a capitalist revival among its former enemies, beginning the turn to globalization. The global population explosion stressed national projects, deepening debt crises that crashed national capitalisms. The fall of Soviet socialism and the rise of a socialist China ready to join in capitalist ways turned the world to globalization in the 1990s.[9]

## *Communities Carrying Capitalism*

This sketch of the trajectory of global capitalism focuses on half, an important half, of Braudel's understanding: capitalism's dynamism and global reach as it evolved from the sixteenth century, the expansion of empires and global trades, the rise of new ways of production in plantations and factories, the proliferation of slavery and wage labor—ultimately, the global growth of profit-seeking concentrations of capital, production, and trade tied to the expansion of laboring dependencies, free and unfree.

The other half of Braudel's vision is equally important, yet rarely emphasized. Capitalism, he insisted, has been defined, too, by concentrating powers and accelerating trades that over the centuries corroded autonomies—the independent ways of sustenance that long grounded the lives of families and communities around the world. Even when we recognize the porcelain manufactories of China and the cotton workshops in India, the mines of Spanish America and the plantations of Atlantic America, the old concentrations of workers in Mediterranean cities and new ones in the Low Countries and England—through the eighteenth century, most of the world's peoples remained on the land.

Nineteenth-century industrial and urban concentrations focused in northwest Europe and the northeast United States. Industrial capitalism drew in the products and labor of many still strong on the land, while turning against independent peoples across the interiors of the Americas, Africa, and Eurasia. Yet before 1900, the great majority of people whose lives were shaped by the long rise of capitalism still lived on the land. Many participated in capitalism's dynamism. Many resisted when states and capitalists demanded too much: indigenous peoples fought subjugation; communities defended lands and self-rule. People grounded in and defending autonomies were as important to the long rise of capitalism as the power holders who drove commercial and industrial ways and the workers, enslaved and free, who lived in laboring dependence.

Ultimately, the long, contested rise of capitalism is a history of the expanding commercialization—and thus the monetization of production and trade—of life. Spreading commercial ways created opportunities to control, channel, and profit from production, work, and trade—generating capital that consolidated concentrating powers. Those who celebrate capitalism focus on rising production and productivity—analyzed quantitatively. There certainly have been gains, yet they have come at the cost of autonomies.

The sources for the quantitative analysis of capitalism count monetized production, labor, trade, and accumulations. As more of everything became monetized, statistics that count monetized activities rise. That does not mean that more was produced or that more was gained by work. The history of capitalism in the heartland and elsewhere centered on a long process of shifting production and consumption from autonomous, nonmonetized ways focused in communities and households to commercial and monetized ways tied to spreading markets. Counts of monetized production and trade inevitably rose; they show the expansion of capitalism. The analytical challenge is how to weigh the quantifiable gains of capitalism against the benefits of autonomies, which cannot be counted.

The value of autonomies may be gauged by a very different measure: communities' historic efforts to sustain them—the focus of this history. In the process, they did not reject monetary gain. Heartland people showed a persistent readiness to sell in markets and work for wages—when their participation built on foundations of autonomous sustenance. They kept control of basic sustenance while gaining earnings. Household production complemented market integrations; communities negotiated labor relations with capitalists. In the process, communities sustaining themselves shaped and subsidized commercial production and profit. Heartland communities turned to direct resistance only when accelerating commercialization threatened the autonomies that sustained their families and enabled them to shape capitalism as they lived in its expanding web.

Yet when rural communities have found places in "big history," it has usually been as people resisting capitalism: Barrington Moore's *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* and Eric Wolf's *Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century* led a generation of such studies. I contributed in *From Insurrection to Revolution in Mexico*.[10] Focusing on times when rural people rose to challenge prevailing powers, I explored why people in the Bajío took arms in 1810 and why Zapatista villagers turned to revolution in 1910. In those conflicts, rural people did challenge capitalism. Yet, implicit in my analysis, Bajío producers had sustained capitalism for two centuries before they fought it in 1810, and heartland villagers had shaped and carried it for three centuries and contested it for a fourth before uprising in 1910. Communities across New Spain and Mexico spent centuries sustaining, contesting, limiting, and shaping capitalism; they fought it in brief decades of violence.

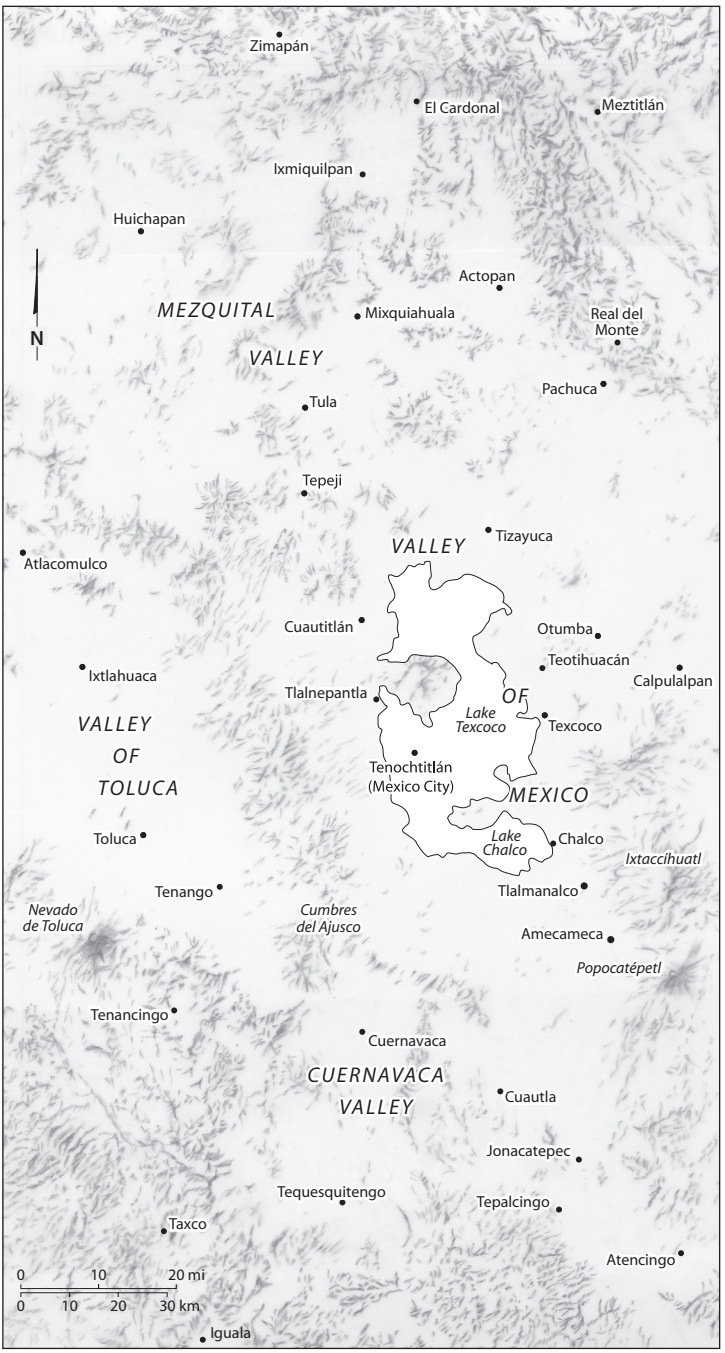
Historic moments of violent opposition matter; centuries of negotiations to sustain and limit, and thus shape, capitalism matter as much or more. All must be analyzed to understand the long rise of capitalism, its changing ways—and key times of conflict. The challenge comes when we see that communities on the land in diverse regions of New Spain, Mexico, the Americas, and across the globe have lived in local autonomies and dealt with capitalism in an infinite variety of ways. Local diversities defined communities' dealings with capitalism. Most had roots on the land and relations with rulers that pre-dated ties to global trade. Diverse geographies, ways of production, social relations, and cultural visions underlay diverging histories of shaping and sustaining, limiting and resisting, the standardizing ways of capitalism. Communities grounded in local autonomies guaranteed that the rise of capitalism would not be steady, direct, uncontested—or homogeneous.

To engage the histories of landed communities within capitalism, we must grapple with shared challenges and diverse responses. In *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, James Scott emphasized the many ways people in landed communities, at slave plantations, and in factories forged diverse understandings of lives facing power. In *The Art of Not Being Governed* he details how Southeast Asian upland peoples fended off outside powers for centuries in locally particular ways. The largest processes of capitalism must be seen in their global dimensions; its social and cultural realities must be studied in local detail.

## *A Mexican Heartland*

I focus on the communities of the Mexican heartland, not because they were typical but because they lived five centuries of intense interactions with powerful promoters of capitalism—first commercial, then industrial, briefly national, now globalizing. Deep commitments to families grounded


MAP 1. New Spain, the heartland, and the Bajío.




MAP 2. The Mexican heartland.

in autonomies on the land shaped their participations, negotiations, and oppositions. The history of heartland communities may be a limiting case. From their founding roles in silver capitalism in the 1530s to their revolutionary challenge to industrial capitalism after 1910, they were pivotally important to making a world that first included them, then marginalized them, and finally left them all but powerless, drowning in the expansion of a Mexico City they had fed for centuries.

The states, communities, and cultures that define the region rose in inland basins from 1,500 to over 2,500 meters above sea level. The city of Mexico-Tenochtitlán was founded in the 1300s on an island near the center of shallow lakes surrounded by rich cultivated lands. In 1500, it was the political capital, commercial hub, and craft center of a regime too often called the Aztec empire, better labeled the Mexica state. Devastated by smallpox in 1520, then defeated by an alliance of Spanish invaders and indigenous foes in 1521, the city revived to become the administrative, financial, and commercial pivot of New Spain's silver economies, tying the heartland, the Bajío, and regions north to Spain's empire and global trade. In 1821, the city became the capital of a nation it named. Amid struggles to build a new state and adapt to industrial capitalism in the nineteenth century, to survive a revolution and promote national capitalism in the twentieth, and now to adapt to globalization, Mexico City has endured to reign again as the largest metropolis in the Americas, the pivot still tying Mexico's peoples to the world.

The city of Mexico centers the heartland. My focus, however, is not on the city—until its explosive growth after 1950. This history looks first to communities on the land across basins bounded by towering volcanoes: the Nevado de Toluca to the west, Ixtaccíhuatl and Popocatépetl in the east. At the core is the Valley of Mexico: its highland rim blocks natural drainage; lakes, rich *chinampas* (lake-bed platforms of great productivity), and fertile plains shaped its center—until the city drowned everything. Just to the west, the Valley of Toluca is higher and drier, drained by the Lerma River that runs north to water the Bajío, then empties into the Pacific. To the north the Mezquital is drier still, while close by lie the mines of Pachuca and Real del Monte, so pivotal to the world after 1550. To the south, the Cuernavaca basin offers a tropical contrast: 1,500 meters high, its rivers run south to the Pacific; rich in sugar from the 1530s, silver mining began in the same decade at Taxco, just to the west.

The city and its hinterland together formed the Anáhuac that became the Mexican heartland. They were the center of the Mexica regime and the economy that sustained it; they remained the core of New Spain

during centuries of Spanish rule and silver dynamism. When Mexico became a nation in 1821, the city became its capital; a surrounding state of Mexico included the populous and productive heartland basins. In the mid-nineteenth century, the Mezquital broke away to join a new state of Hidalgo; later the Cuernavaca basin became the state of Morelos. New regional polities did not lessen ties to Mexico City.

After 1950, the heartland reintegrated in new ways. The growth of the metropolis to twenty million people left the city more dependent on the world and ever less sustained by nearby communities, which were being buried by working suburbs and burgeoning shantytowns. In the transition, remaining rural communities sent women to serve in urban households, and men to labor in construction and public works. The metropolis has absorbed nearly all the Valley of Mexico while merging with the cities of Toluca, Cuernavaca, and Pachuca that rule the rest of the heartland. The heartland remains Mexico's core, as people struggle to remake communities, now urban, in a globalizing world of spreading dependence, marginality, and insecurity.

## *Capitalism, Autonomies, and Communities*

As Braudel saw, communities across the world were living grounded in autonomies when expanding networks of trade drew them into more complex connections in the sixteenth century. Across much of Asia, rice farmers fed themselves and nearby towns, sustaining trades and empires; in Europe wheat growers did the same, as did maize cultivators across much of the Americas. And while population growth and land concentrations might weaken autonomies, they persisted to give communities bases of independence that enabled them to negotiate with those who ruled—and often depended on them for sustenance. This history focuses on such negotiations. Its details make it clear that autonomy is in large part about land and sustenance—while also about power and culture.[11]

I see autonomy in three dimensions: ecological, political, and cultural. Ecological autonomy exists when a family or community produces most of the essentials of survival on land or other resources it controls—or uses in open access.[12] For cultivators, cropland is pivotal, whether held by community right, owned as property, or used in tenancies. Rich fishing waters provide autonomy, as do uplands and forests. Keeping animals for transport and for meat, leather, and wool reinforces autonomy, as does building shelter with family and community resources and labor. Homemade cloth and clothing matter, too. Ecological autonomy is more than economic and about more than land. It is never complete: there are always dependencies

within families and communities. But if they remain limited and local, the family or community can present a face of autonomy to nearby powers—and the world.

Ecological autonomies vary: a family or community may enjoy near complete independence of sustenance, partial means of support, or a garden and a few animals to limit dependence. And ecological autonomies change over time—as this history shows. They may change with shifts in crops and ways of production, new or lost resources, land reclamations or erosions. Most important in the heartland, they have changed in the face of demographic shifts. Families and communities consolidated the resources that sustained autonomies in the wake of the sixteenth-century depopulation; autonomies collapsed when population soared after 1950; the intervening centuries brought slow population growth that strained autonomies and stimulated efforts to defend them.

Ecological autonomy is ultimately biological: the ability to sustain human life. Yet in complex societies—and Anáhuac was complex long before Europeans tied the region to capitalism—states or similar institutions define rights to resources and adjudicate disputes over use. So ecological autonomy is also political, linked to regimes and their powers of legislation, adjudication, and more. It is important to understand when ruling powers create, protect, or threaten landed autonomies. The political autonomy of local self-rule is, simply said, even more political. Such rights are usually delegated by a state and may be limited or denied: the Spanish monarchy sanctioned community lands and self-rule in indigenous republics; Mexican liberals challenged both after independence. Political autonomy matters, yet remains a limit to dependence available only as long as negotiations with higher powers allow.

Cultural autonomy, in contrast, appears absolute and universal. People everywhere engage with neighbors, power holders, and the world as they see them—and forge their own understandings. They create and adapt visions of truth and justice, ideas of the wrong, and guides to daily life.[13] Yet cultures never evolve independently of economic powers and ecological autonomies, regime powers and political autonomies. The powerful rarely if ever force understandings on subordinate peoples. Still, power holders do constrain peoples' lives—and communities and families adapt beliefs and understandings in contexts of changing constraints. Culture is an autonomous domain enabling people to adapt to, negotiate with, and push back against economic-ecological and state-coercive powers.[14]

Thus I emphasize *autonomies*: a mix of ecological bases, political relations, and cultural constructions. Ecological autonomy proved most

important to heartland villagers. They defended it for centuries. Political autonomy mattered too, but when it receded in the nineteenth century they focused on defending the land, demanding it in revolution after 1910. Throughout, they kept cultural autonomies: as power and production changed they made and remade religious and political visions focused on the justice of land rights, local autonomies, and (among men) patriarchy too—and the injustice of attempts to deny them.

## *Power in Communities*

Long committed to autonomies, heartland communities were always structured by power within—and linked to higher powers close by and in the world beyond. Before the coming of Iberians and Eurasian diseases, Anáhuac communities were organized as *altepetl*, head towns with dependent villages. Local lords ruled backed by noble *pipiltín*, all sustained by cultivating commoners—*macehualtín*. With the consolidation of Spanish rule and the silver economy, indigenous lords lost power. *Pipiltín* became *principales* who ruled native republics through councils and governors they elected among themselves—while holding ample shares of community lands. *Macehualtín* became *macehuales*, with lands just enough to sustain their households, while they also labored to benefit local leaders and a new commercial economy.[15] Over the centuries, inequities persisted and changed—but there were always community elites engaging powers without while working to rule within. At times they served the powerful; at times they defended communities and their autonomies; mostly they worked to remain pivotal by dealing between them as circumstances changed.

Patriarchal gender relations also orchestrated power within heartland families and communities. Men ruled local politics and controlled most lands. Manhood as defined by pre-Hispanic patriarchal cultures required male control of politics, war, cultivation, and many crafts; women raised children, prepared food, made cloth and clothing, and ruled local markets.[16] Under Spanish rule, men still ruled politics and production, but military roles were denied to indigenous men; women mostly lived as before—yet with depopulation, more land came to them. After 1810, political wars and popular risings reopened military roles to diverse men as silver capitalism collapsed and national rulers threatened autonomies. Patriarchal violence culminated in revolution after 1910.

Patriarchy sustained more than dominance within households. Men ruled from the heights of power, through community notables, to

cultivating families. At every level, men (and a few powerful women) privileged men below, enabling roles as intermediaries, producers, and laborers. Men above drew men below to accept subordination as the price of sustaining household rule. Hierarchies of patriarchy integrated and stabilized the unequal powers that organized heartland communities and their links to capitalism. Yet patriarchal claims never lacked challenges. As Steve Stern shows in *The Secret History of Gender*, an enduring conversation shaped patriarchal relations in heartland communities: Men asserted rights to rule wives and children—*because* they provided, *because* they delivered sustenance. Women answered that men earned the respect to rule as patriarchs *if* they provided—and that *women* would decide whether provision was sufficient or not.

Patriarchal aspirations and contested conversations shaped power within heartland communities, and the negotiations that tied them to capitalists and managers, magistrates and merchants. Heartland capitalism thrived when it sustained patriarchal families and the communities that grounded their autonomies; it faced challenges when predatory drives for profit threatened the stabilizing mix of patriarchy, family, and community autonomies. The complex links tying the profit seeking that drives capitalism to the patriarchy and autonomies that historically stabilized it in the Mexican heartland center this history.

Communities that rebuilt autonomies under Spanish rule pressed long negotiations with the regime and entrepreneurs, tying power and profit to patriarchs' ability to provide, thus to families' ability to survive—thus to men's ability to assert manhood in households and communities. When population growth and land concentrations, liberal reforms, and agroindustrial capitalism eroded autonomies, they threatened patriarchy and family survival, provoking conflicts that turned to revolution after 1910. When land reform revived autonomies set in patriarchy (only men received grants), villagers sustained themselves and the experiment in national capitalism. When population explosion and mechanized production ended autonomies, patriarchal provision became all but impossible for many after 1980. Without revolution, endemic corrosive violence persists.

## *Capitalist Exploitations: Symbiotic and Predatory*

Capitalism exploits. It concentrates controls of production and trade, profits and property, wealth and power, in small groups of pivotally placed people and the regimes and corporations they rule.[17] Within capitalism, majorities have faced lives ranging from modest prosperity to laboring

poverty to marginal exclusion. Inequities rule; yet exploitation is a blunt concept. It focuses on inequity and deprivation, with little emphasis on their complex evolutions and diverse impacts in changing societies. Patriarchy exploits women and children; yet at times it has been socially sustaining and stabilizing, while at others it operates as an exclusion that threatens families and provokes conflict.

The social exploitations of capitalism have evolved with a parallel range: at times they sustain people and stabilize capitalism's dynamism; at other times they provoke deprivations and exclusions that generate conflicts that may become destabilizing, destructive, or transforming. Capitalist (and patriarchal) exploitations may be symbiotic, sustaining power and production, producers and families, thus stabilizing their interactions. They may become predatory, driving to maximize profit while threatening the lives of producers and families, provoking destabilizing conflicts. When patriarchy profits powerful men, privileges producing men, and enables the latter to sustain families and households, it may work as a stabilizing symbiotic exploitation. When it becomes predatory, threatening working men's ability to provide and leaving families desperate for sustenance, it turns destabilizing and even violent—often first within households, later in societal conflicts.

This history of Mexico's heartland emphasizes how patriarchy came locked within larger societal exploitations that together became symbiotic to sustain silver capitalism, turned conflictive in the face of industrial capitalism, and became predatory in provoking Zapata's revolution, then destructive in times of globalization and urbanization. Symbiotic exploitations sustain capitalism when their inequities are *essential* to the sustenance and survival of producing families and communities. Predatory exploitations press producers, families, and communities toward unsustainable lives, making capitalism unstable, even unsustainable—as happened in the Bajío after 1810, and across the heartland after 1910.

In the heartland, communities grounded in autonomies negotiated land rights and labor relations to sustain symbiotic exploitations that shaped and sustained silver capitalism. Assaults on community political rights after 1821 and landed autonomies after 1870 unleashed predatory exploitations that first provoked corrosive conflicts within families and communities—and then led to revolution after 1910. In communities on the land, autonomies sustained negotiations that preserved symbiotic exploitations, sustaining and shaping families and capitalism for centuries. When predations broke autonomies, predatory exploitations led to family violence and societal conflagration.

In industrial regions where autonomies on the land are limited, labor organizations historically enabled parallel negotiations that made exploitations symbiotic, at times—also shaping capitalism while sustaining its dynamism. The end of landed autonomies and new assaults on labor organizations—both accelerating in Mexico, North America, and across much of the world after 1970—have made a globalizing capitalism ever less symbiotic. Growing numbers see it as predatory, while too many face lives of insecurity marked by endemic violence. The way forward is uncertain.

## *Between Capitalism and Communities: Regimes of Mediation and Coercion*

The rise of silver capitalism, its collapse in the turn to industrial capitalism, the search for national capitalism, and the spread of globalization all shaped the history of the heartland in powerful ways. Communities committed to autonomies on the land negotiated and contested that history, shaping its course, limiting the subordinations that marked families' lives. Patriarchal possibilities grounded symbiotic exploitations that rose and fell at the intersection of capitalism and communities. Along the way, changing regimes worked to sustain capitalist dynamism while keeping families and communities in productive subordination. As capitalism and communities changed together, so did regimes—emphasizing judicial mediation when autonomies, patriarchy, and symbiotic exploitations held strong; turning to coercion when stabilizing ways of production gave way to predations that provoked conflict.

After armed conflicts and disease-driven depopulation took down the military states that had ruled Mesoamerica before 1520, the rise of silver capitalism and the foundation of indigenous republics grounded in autonomies on the land enabled the Spanish regime to rule primarily through judicial mediation, keeping limited military power in reserve.[18] From the seventeenth century, courts negotiated conflicts among entrepreneurs and the communities they relied on for produce and workers. A mix of economic dynamism, solid autonomies, limited inequities, entrenched patriarchy, and judicial mediation sustained communities and silver capitalism past 1800.[19]

The Bourbon regime began to strengthen militias in New Spain in the 1760s, provoking resistance that limited their effect. Judicial mediation continued to center regime rule until Napoleon's invasion of Spain led to the 1808 Mexico City coup that mobilized military units to topple a viceroy and insist that New Spain's silver flow to Seville and the fight against

Napoleon.[20] The coup closed mediations at the top of the regime, contributing to the discontent that set off insurgencies in the Bajío in 1810. Provincial elites angered by political exclusions and communities facing capitalist predations joined in armed conflicts that took down silver capitalism and Spanish rule. Politics, state power, and resistance became militarized as Mexico struggled to become a nation after 1821.

For decades into the nineteenth century, military powers ruled contests to find a national polity and a new economy—always proclaiming visions of popular sovereignty. When liberals legislated privatizations of community lands, challenging autonomies and provoking resistance, they tried to fortify state power with new police—with little success until economic expansion and political stabilization came after 1870. For a time, police and community patrols sustained power and production while autonomies corroded, inequities deepened, and patriarchal provision became difficult—and men were armed to keep the peace. They became violent at home, and then turned to revolution after 1910.

The 1910s and 1920s saw armed conflicts to claim and remake the national state in the face of armed insurgencies from below. Militarization seemed everywhere. Yet, as land reform rebuilt patriarchal autonomies, military power receded from the heights of politics. When President Lázaro Cárdenas extended patriarchal land and labor rights in the 1930s he removed the military from the heights of the regime, turning to political mediation that included rural communities and unions as it stabilized their subordination. Armed force remained, used when mediation failed to serve state interests. Still, limited coercive powers marked Mexico's midcentury regime of national development.[21]

Demilitarization proved brief. As land awarded in the 1920s no longer sustained growing populations, autonomies disappeared and patriarchy corroded. People demanded better—and faced repression.[22] As exclusions widened, labor and student protests in the 1960s faced violent repressions, shocking many who knew Mexico's recent history. When rural autonomies and national capitalism collapsed after 1980, the once-mediating regime turned hard to powers of coercion. Police proliferated and the military claimed new resources, weapons, and power—masked by a celebrated turn to democratization.

In a complex history within capitalism, community autonomies and regime coercions drove on opposite tracks. When autonomies were strong, the Spanish regime ruled through judicial mediation. When autonomies waned as Mexicans imagined a nation, regime militarization rose. When communities approached collapse around 1900, they took arms in

revolution and forced a rebuilding of autonomies, enabling a brief return to state mediation. When autonomies vanished in urbanization and globalization, military and police powers came to define a state proclaiming democratization.[23]

## *The Rise and Fall of Revolutionary Challenges*

Mexico's history in capitalism is marked by two decades of revolutionary violence, beginning in 1810 and 1910. Why a history shaped by community autonomies and struggles to keep them was punctuated by revolutions is a key to understanding Mexico as well as heartland communities' ability to shape world history. Recognizing that the recent end of autonomies ended effective revolutionary risings is equally important—if history is to inform the present. The autonomies that enabled communities to sustain themselves and carry capitalism for centuries were also pivotal to sustaining the uprisings that disciplined capitalism and the regimes that sustained it when predatory exploitations threatened communities, families, and patriarchy. The end of autonomies has closed the possibility of revolutions built upon and pressing the interests of landed communities.

To mount enduring resistance after 1810, Bajío estate dependents and heartland villagers in the Mezquital took lands, crops, and livestock, remaking autonomies to sustain families and guerrilla fighters for most of a decade. The heartland villagers who backed Zapata after 1910 did the same. Effective insurgencies require an ability to sustain families, communities, and armed resistance long enough to force change. Decades ago, Eric Wolf called the major revolutions of the twentieth century, from Mexico and Russia to China and Vietnam, *Peasant Wars*. He emphasized that their triumphs depended on communities still grounded on the land and fighting to gain more—even if the regimes they helped to power soon turned to industrial programs that assaulted those ideals.[24]

Both decades of revolution in Mexico saw communities still grounded in limited autonomies take arms to rebuild them, sustaining insurgencies that took down established regimes and ways of production. Both led to reassertions of autonomies—informally but powerfully after 1820, state sanctioned and limited after 1920. Both marked key turns in capitalism: the global shift from commercial to industrial capitalism after 1810; the fall of industrial capitalism and the rise of Mexico's national experiment after 1910.

When population explosion mixed with urbanization and a mechanizing, chemically dependent agro-industrial capitalism to end autonomies

across the heartland and Mexico in the late twentieth century, no enduring popular uprising challenged the powers that drove the insecurities, marginalities, and limits to patriarchy that marked the turn to globalization. With autonomies gone and no way to rebuild them, the capacity to mobilize more than brief resistance has gone too. Mexico and its place in the world are being reconstructed again, now without the assertive participation of communities grounded in autonomies on the land. A historic era closed around 2000.

## *Heartland Communities Shaping a Capitalist World*

Communities across the Mexican heartland built, sustained, subsidized, resisted, and changed capitalism in ways too complex to capture in an introduction. The history that follows explores three eras: first, the rise and fall of silver capitalism from 1500 to 1820; second, heartland communities in the world of industrial capitalism from 1820 to 1920; third, the revival of autonomies under national capitalism after 1920 and their collapse in urbanization and the turn to globalization before 2000.

I invert the common practice of detailing political economies of power and the ideologies that support them, while offering general—too often overgeneralized and prejudiced—summaries of work, life, and culture among the people who sustain everything. Here, chapters of synthesis offer new visions of power and production, of those who ruled, and the conflicts that rattled their powers. Detailed chapters look at production, power, family relations, community cultures, and popular insurgencies. Vignettes of everyday life aim to illuminate personal participations in contested histories.

The focus on subordinate yet never powerless people shows that the powerful mattered, yet they made history in constant negotiation with people they presumed to rule. The powerful rarely make history as they please; for five centuries, people in heartland communities did all they could to ensure that they did not.

In a history that aims to look at life within communities as they engaged changing ways of capitalism and the regimes that aimed to sustain it over five centuries, changing questions and different sources led to explorations of diverse communities and regions in a never homogeneous heartland.[25] Funded by the revenues of silver capitalism, the Spanish regime produced an array of detailed sources on population and production, estates and communities, and the conflicts they brought to court for mediation. The collapse of silver capitalism, the struggles of nation making,

and the limits of state resources after 1820 mandated a shift to the private records of estate operators, clergy, and outside observers. State consolidation after 1870 brought revealing quantitative materials on population and production, crime and violence, after 1870, complemented from the 1890s by the voices of participants, often recorded by anthropologists. Parallel sources and strong historical and anthropological studies illuminate the twentieth century. Tapping varied sources, close explorations of communities facing and shaping a changing world proved most revealing.

A study of communities shaping capitalism in one pivotal region over five centuries raises comparative questions. From pre-Hispanic times, through centuries of Spanish rule and silver capitalism, to the long struggles to forge a nation as the world faced industrialization and then globalization, the heartland was unique for the enduring strength of its landed communities as they faced intense concentrations of power focused in the city named Mexico. In contrast, across the Bajío just to the north capitalism ruled a region with few landed communities, accelerating commercialization from 1600 to 1810, then provoking the early turn to insurgency that destroyed silver capitalism while most heartland communities carried on to shape counterinsurgency and the Mexican nation that followed.

In a very different contrast, communities south of the heartland negotiated centuries on the land without the nearby stimulus of silver or the adjacent presence of a city of concentrated power. The Bajío and regions north shared institutions of Spanish rule and commercial impetus with the heartland, but the dearth of landed communities there limited popular abilities to negotiate power—until insurgency exploded in 1810.[26] Regions south and east in Oaxaca, Chiapas, and Yucatán shared with the heartland institutions of Spanish rule and the enduring presence of landed communities—but faced the challenges of global capitalism in late and limited encounters. They lived distinct regional histories, with a major insurgency in Yucatán in the 1840s and a limited uprising in Chiapas in 1994.[27] Other regions of Mexico have their own variants of history built around particular encounters among regime powers, global capitalism's diverse embodiments, and locally distinct communities and cultures.[28]

Beyond comparisons with the Bajío and limited reflections on other regions of New Spain and Mexico, comparative questions gain little direct attention here. The challenge of understanding heartland communities through five centuries of capitalism proved daunting enough; a turn to wider comparative analysis would have been selective, limited, and likely misguided. My hope is that others will respond to this history with parallel studies of other regions of Mexico, the Americas, and the world, exploring

how diverse communities have shaped and/or been shaped by capitalism in distinct regions. Revealing comparisons will come. In the process, we must remember and emphasize that common entanglements in shared historical processes by communities in distinct envionments, with diverse prior histories and particular economic possibilities, have repeatedly led to locally varied, often diverging political, social, and cultural trajectories—within the heartland, across Mexico, and far beyond.[29]

Still, the particular histories shaped by the varied intersections of communities and capitalism share a common trajectory: as long as communities retained even limited autonomies on the land they could and did sustain, resist, and challenge capitalism—shaping its long rise to global dominance. When autonomies collapsed almost everywhere in the late twentieth century, families and communities continued to sustain capitalists and capitalism as workers and consumers—but their ability to resist and challenge, thus to shape capitalism became sharply curtailed in a world of ever more complex dependencies. The regionally unique history of the Mexican heartland illuminates both faces of a general history essential to understanding pivotal global processes: the long era of communities negotiating to sustain, resist, and thus shape capitalism—and the new history of communities stripped of autonomies, still carrying capitalism, yet with little power to shapes its course and their own lives.

Part I explores the centuries of silver capitalism. Chapter 1 outlines the origins and trajectory of the Spanish empire in the Americas and the emergence of three distinct silver societies: Andean South America, built on remains of the Inca empire, focused on Potosí's mountain of silver, long sustained and shaped by enduring native lords and communities; Spanish Mesoamerica, set in the heartland, driven by silver at Taxco and Pachuca, sustained and shaped by indigenous republics; and Spanish North America, forged in the Bajío, driven by mines at Guanajuato and Zacatecas, and with few indigenous republics, a region thoroughly commercial from its origins, capitalist without restraint in the eighteenth century. All shared the stimulus of silver. Distinct indigenous pasts and adaptations led to differing negotiations with Spanish powers; while silver drove global trade, three different social orders rose to sustain silver capitalism.

Chapter 2 focuses on the origins of silver capitalism in the Mesoamerican heartland as communities faced depopulation, the rise of silver, and the consolidation of native republics. They adapted to shape and sustain New Spain's silver economy from 1500 to 1700, while they forged new religious cultures. Chapter 3 examines the region after 1700 as silver production soared, population rose, and autonomies waned. Communities

facing land shortages sent men to work in estate fields; they gained wages that complemented family crops, creating symbiotic exploitations that sustained families, communities, and silver capitalism for another century. Chapter 4 explores a key exception: Otomí communities in the Mezquital faced population growth and land shortages in a dry basin; autonomies waned while estates offered little labor. Symbiotic exploitations that might have sustained communities and capitalism became impossible. Conflict escalated after 1800, insurgency began in 1810. Villagers assaulted local estates for five years.

Chapter 5 broadens the analysis to show how Atlantic wars rattled and militarized Spanish rule, opening the way for men facing predatory exploitations in the Bajío to rise and assault silver capitalism, joined by others in the Mezquital facing the collapse of symbiotic exploitations. Together they reclaimed autonomies, assaulted mining and estate cultivation—while most heartland communities carried on in peace and production, sustaining Mexico City and Spain's fragile regime in the fight against insurgents. Amid imperial wars, communities on differing courses sustained a violent stalemate that undermined silver capitalism and ended Spanish rule. When the military defenders of Spain's power joined entrepreneurs hoping to revive silver capitalism to proclaim a Mexican empire in 1821, a new era began.

Part II turns to Mexico's passage through the nineteenth-century world of industrial capitalism. Chapter 6 explores the fall of silver, the demise of commercial cultivation, and early experiments with industry. Men seeking power dreamed of reviving silver, some called for industry, and others argued for a turn to exports. When silver began to revive and new industries took hold in the 1840s, the United States invaded to take Mexico's northern territories. In the 1850s and 1860s, the nation faced liberal reforms, political war, French invasion, and Maximilian's empire. Only after 1870 did a regime stabilize while mining, industry, and exports expanded—fueling an economic dynamism that drove land concentrations, mechanizations, widening inequities, and corrosions of autonomy.

To detail heartland communities' route through that century, chapter 7 looks at Chalco, Mexico City's historic granary, and Iztacalco, a place of rich chinampas, as villagers asserted new autonomies from 1820 to 1845. Chalco landlords complained they could not profit and paid too much for labor; Iztacalco's priest lamented he could not rule religious life as villagers used economic independence to enforce cultural independence. Chapter 8 follows life at Chalco after the war with the United States: estates expanded irrigation and tried new crops; villagers resisted to hold

autonomies. They negotiated, rioted, and finally rebelled in 1868 as liberals led by Benito Juárez retook national power. Defeated, the uprising made villagers' commitments to autonomies clear.

Chapter 9 explores life after 1870 across the southern heartland as capitalist dynamism renewed. Land privatization led to concentrations within communities as populations grew; estates mechanized wheat harvesting and sugar refining; railroads took over transport to city markets. Men became land-poor while a new economy flourished yet offered little work. Autonomies corroded; men could not provide. Violence rose within families and communities, until men joined Zapata in revolution after 1910.

Chapter 10 explores the revolution that divided Mexicans while the industrial powers faced off in a Great War from 1914 to 1918. Zapatistas and others took land by force, rebuilt autonomies, and sustained a guerrilla war in search of renewed autonomies; their Constitutionalist foes won the state with armies sustained by oil and other exports, drawing wealth from a world at war. Regime builders fought to renew capitalism and build a national culture; villagers fought to remake autonomies. Capitalists won; still, Zapata's communities forced a land reform that brought renewed autonomies—for a time.

Part III explores Mexico's attempt at national capitalism after 1920, leading to its collapse into globalization after 1980. Chapter 11 outlines the rise of a national project that first revived exports, then built industries, and along the way was forced to distribute land to calm popular pressures. After the 1929 crash closed export markets, populist politics led a turn to industry, sustained while Mexico supported the United States in World War II. After the war, population explosion mixed with laborsaving production to fuel an urbanization marked by recurring crises and rising emigration until the national project crashed in the 1980s.

Chapter 12 looks inside southern heartland communities after they fought Zapata's revolution. They gained lands in the 1920s to renew autonomies; by the 1930s population growth had begun to corrode them as the state promoted commercial ways. For once-revolutionary villagers, national capitalism brought a brief renewal of autonomies followed by decades of corrosion and conflict, social fragmentation—and the end of autonomies by the 1970s. Chapter 13 explores the lives of the people who built Mexico City after 1940. As population soared and rural lives collapsed, people streamed to the city. The regime provided little infrastructure and few services; capitalists built laborsaving industries. Soaring numbers faced enduring insecurities that fed everyday violence; to survive, struggling families built homes and barrios with their own hands.

They used work and local organization to build a city that provided jobs and infrastructure, education, health care, and other essentials in ways always late and never sufficient to the needs of a soaring population.

An Epilogue explores the triumph of globalization and the turn to democratization after 1980, focusing on the prevalence of insecurities and corrosions of patriarchy—without opening more than scarce and insecure work to most women. Waves of violence persist; state coercions rise, seeking a security that has not come; political crises continue. Yet amid those crises no popular uprising has rattled the powers that rule: Mexico has not seen a third revolution; people carry on without recourse. The end of autonomies across the heartland, Mexico, and the world, marks the end of an era. Ecological autonomies are gone; capitalist dependencies rule. Urbanizing globalization has completed the process that Braudel saw as the essence of capitalism. How people will make communities and press their needs in our new world of fully monetized dependencies remains to be seen.

There is much to learn from the historic persistence of Mexico's heartland communities. The autonomies that shaped and sustained production and adaptation, negotiation and resistance, for centuries are gone. Still, their efforts help us understand the present and enable new thinking about the future—knowing that the history of landed communities making, shaping, and contesting capitalism will *not* repeat itself.

## *A Note on Terminology*

To write a history of the Mexica(n) heartland through five centuries and accurately portray key participants requires language that will surprise many readers of English. Mexico did not exist before 1821; the only place named Mexico before that date was the city. The North American kingdom ruled from Mexico City and reaching to New Mexico (named after the city) was called New Spain. I refer to it as such.

People of Iberian ancestry born in New Spain called themselves *Españoles*—Spaniards. Newcomers from Spain were labeled *Españoles peninsulares* or immigrants. I refer to them as such. Too often, historians impose the label "Creole" on people who knew themselves as *Españoles*. That term only came into wide use during the wars of independence. To imagine Creoles and Creole interests before 1810 is an anachronism asserting a search for independence before it was imagined.

People of power and wealth, European and American Spaniards and indigenous nobles too, used the prefixes *don* and *doña* to display their superior status during the centuries of Spanish rule—and at times after.

These were an inherent part of names, offered to announce nobility among men and women exercising power and pursuing profit—often a masking of capitalist goals (too often accepted by anglophone scholars). They are retained to illuminate those complex social and cultural usages.

I resist the label "Indian" for the native peoples of New Spain and Mexico. *Indio* was a status assigned to diverse Mesoamerican peoples; it marked subjection to tributes, rights to republics, and access to courts. *Indios*' lives were so different from the peoples called Indian in the lands that became the United States that I refuse a translation that misleads. I use ethnic identifiers when possible, "indigenous" as a general category, *indio* and *india* when useful.

Finally, Mexicans fought each other in a violent revolutionary conflict after 1910. Through two decades, popular groups fought to reclaim autonomies: Zapatistas in the heartland, Villistas in the north, Cristeros in the west. A Constitutionalist movement promoting capitalism crushed them all—forging a new state and a national capitalist project while claiming to be The Revolution. That label was a political mask, adopted uncritically by too many historians. I avoid the label to focus on the regime as it worked to defeat and then contain communities that fought for revolutionary changes.

All translations from sources cited to Spanish originals are mine.

# INDEX

Page numbers in italics refer to illustrations