False Fathers and Rural Realities: To What Extent Were the Mexican Wars of Independence a Genuine Pursuit for Independence?

Introduction

> "Se acabó la opresión… ¡Viva nuestra madre santísima de Guadalupe!, ¡Viva Fernando VII y muera el mal gobierno! ¡Viva México!"
>
> *"Put an end to oppression… Long live our most dear Mother of Guadalupe! Long live Fernando VII and death to the bad government! Long Live Mexico!"*
>
> Father Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, September 16th 1810[1]

In May 1811, insurgents stormed the Hacienda Puerto de Nieto.[2] They ransacked stores of goods and cash, seized livestock, captured the overseer, and redistributed stolen maize in an act of vengeance and survival. Yet notably absent were the cries of "¡Viva Mexico!", invocations of Hidalgo, the priest who has been hailed as the 'Father of the Nation' [3] for igniting the rebellion, or even any reference to independence at all. Whilst Hidalgo's campaign had marched under the Virgin's image towards a promise of political rebellion, this raid bore no trace of similarity. Nor was it uncommon: across Mexico, similar outbursts unfolded, driven by local grievances rather than nationalist ideology. Therefore, within just eight months, the original vision of the independence movement appeared to have taken a different path. Or was this not truly divergence, but the fiction of 'unity' exposed?

The independence narrative has traditionally championed an undivided national revolution, but in reality, the movement was factionalised, with many pursuing aims entirely unrelated to nationhood. Previously, the history of Mexican independence has been written as the history of a political struggle led by creoles against the imperial order. Namely, Timothy E. Anna and Virginia Guedea have focussed narrowly on the political actions of the proto-nationalist creole bourgeoisie, emphasising their pursuit of liberal constitutionalism. This outlook, whilst certainly an instrumental part of the movement, overstates elite voices and overlooks the simmering rural discontent. Jaime E. Rodriguez offers a slightly more nuanced interpretation, affirming that "two broad movements emerged: an urban-upper class demand for home rule and a rural revolt against exploitation."[4] Yet even this

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[1] From Hidalgo's *Grito de Dolores,* September 16 1810, translated by me. Although the speech was not recorded verbatim, it is widely believed that similar words were spoken, as this rallying cry endures in the annual Independence Day commemorations.

[2] John Tutino, *The Revolution in Mexican Independence: Insurgency and the Renegotiation of Property, Production, and Patriarchy in the Bajío, 1800-1855,* The Hispanic American Historical Review Vol. 78, No. 3 (Aug., 1998), p379. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2518330

[3] Elisabeth Guerrero, *THE PLOTTING PRIEST: JORGE IBARGÜENGOITIA "LOS PASOS DE LÓPEZ"*, Hispanófila , No. 133 (SEPTIEMBRE 2001), p103. https://www.jstor.org/stable/43807168

[4] Jaime E. Rodríguez O, *Royal Subject to Republican Citizen: The Role of the Autonomists in the Independence of Mexico*, Los Angeles: UCLA Latin American Center Publications, 1989

framing still simplifies the reality: creole impulses were not always rooted in principles of Mexican sovereignty, nor were rural uprisings exclusively tied to hierarchical oppression.

This essay will veer away from any preconceived notion of a cohesive independence movement. Instead, it will contend that the insurgency was fragmented and localised: hence 'wars', not war; characterised by a dichotomy between creole-led political insurrection and rural social rebellion. Here, 'creole' refers to the Spanish-descended elites of New Spain, whilst 'rural' denotes the largely indigenous populations who engaged in uprisings on a more localised scale. Whilst creole and rural actors sometimes fought under a common nominal banner, this analysis will examine both factions separately. It will demonstrate that their motivations were distinct and extensive, and that the ideology of independence was far from universal, not only amongst the rural masses, but also amongst the creoles.

The Creole Elite and the Illusion of Independence:

The title Father of the Nation, *El Padre de la Patria,* is conventionally bestowed upon the central figure who shaped a country's independence movement and its national identity. In Mexico's case, its founding father, Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, has often been cast as the people's hero in the creole-led fight for independence. However, despite this retrospective glorification, his true vision was far from full national sovereignty. His aforementioned *Grito de Dolores,* in September 1810, which demonstrated loyalty to King Ferdinand VII whilst denouncing the "bad government," reveals a more reformist agenda than a revolutionary one. As Guedeas has contended, many creoles sought to "combat *mal gobierno* and to defend the realm, the king and Catholicism from the French."[5] Hidalgo is not an exception; his primary targets were corrupt colonial officials, not the wider Spanish imperial system. Given that he was a parish priest, his allegiances were inherently tied to the monarchical structures of New Spain. Moreover, Hidalgo's defence of the crown within the wider political context of King Ferdinand's deposition by Napoleon aligns perfectly with his clerical history.[6] Therefore, in this regard, his cry for rebellion should not be seen as a genuine call for independence, but rather an attempt to restore local justice amid imperial disarray. This reveals a fundamental fallacy in creole-led insurrection in its early stages: whilst presented as fighting for Mexican sovereignty, it was, in fact, a reactionary defence of familiar institutions, separate from independence.

Furthermore, nationalist historiography has often overstated the extent to which Hidalgo and his creole contemporaries were inspired by other independence movements, notably the American Revolution. Contrarily, in 1810, the ideological influence of the United States on Mexico was minimal, at best.[7] Rather than serving as a model for independence, America harboured an expansionist standpoint towards her new neighbour. Following the acquisition of the Louisiana Territory in 1804, her ambitions turned southward; a Puerto Rican intendant even argued that the U.S. "should not limit itself to the acquisition of two provinces only, but should obtain control of…the whole Mexican

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[5] Virginia Guedea, *The Process of Mexican Independence,* The American Historical Review, Vol. 105, No. 1 (Feb., 2000), p119. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2652439
[6] Ibid., 116.
[7] Josefina Zoraida Vázquez, *The Mexican Declaration of Independence*, The Journal of American History , Vol. 85, No. 4 (Mar., 1999), p1362. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2568257

Gulf, and that would mean possession of Cuba."[8] This demonstrates that Mexico was viewed merely as a target of strategic interest, and not as a fellow revolutionary republic. Additionally, subvertive texts were prohibited in New Spain by the Inquisition, such as Paine's *Rights of Man*,[9] considered seditious and threatening. In fact, the 1776 Declaration of Independence first appeared in Mexico in 1821,[10] only becoming relevant in later congressional discussions over their new constitution. Therefore, Hidalgo's revolt lacked both the ideological basis and international context to draw on American revolutionary thought. His campaign should instead be understood as a response to local grievances and as a defence of established hierarchies, rather than a principled pursuit of independence, akin to that of the United States. Thus, whilst later nationalist narratives have venerated Hidalgo as the paternal founder of Mexican independence, his insurrection was, in reality, ideologically disconnected from this objective.

After Hidalgo's execution in June 1811, leadership of the creole insurgency was transferred to José María Morelos, a figure typically portrayed as more radical and ideologically driven. Mexican historian Lucas Alamán has defined Morelos' political vision "as a struggle between the proprietors and the proletariat…attempting nothing less than complete destruction of all property and the distribution of it,"[11] suggesting an independence campaign rooted in total socioeconomic restructuring. This interpretation, however, relies almost entirely on the *Medidas políticas.* A document claiming to contain Morelos' signature, it called for widespread land redistribution and the destruction of societal hierarchies. Nonetheless, the text's validity is highly disputed. Only one version of the document circulated contemporaneously, reported by Martiñena, who notably never verified the signature himself.[12] Certain passages in the original copy also suggest that the document resembled a military strategy, designed to cripple royalist forces, more than a blueprint for socio-economic reform. Moreover, scholars, such as Ezequiel A. Chávez, noted that the document lacks Morelos' characteristic religious tone and bears significant stylistic differences.[13] However, most importantly, Morelos never executed such a plan or followed the line of conduct which it suggested. Therefore, with the document exposed as apocryphal, the image of Morelos as a radical agrarian reformer collapses. Whilst it may be considered that Morelos was still a staunch proponent of independence, his outlook now represents a moderate approach rather than a radical divorce from the imperial order. His vision, like Hidalgo's, was grounded in upholding established institutions. Take his *Sentimientos de la Nación,* a foundational political document, for example. Whilst it certainly articulated a plan for an independent Mexico, it still operated within a framework that explicitly preserved Catholicism as the state religion, and endorsed elite rule.[14] Morelos' proposals thereby suggest a moderate conception of independence, veering away from any preconceived revolutionary socioeconomic reforms, and mirroring the creole conservatism of his predecessor.

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[8] Lillian E. Fisher, *American Influence upon the Movement for Mexican Independence,* The Mississippi Valley Historical Review, Vol. 18, No. 4 (Mar., 1932*),* p468. https://www.jstor.org/stable/189855
[9] Ibid., 464.
[10] Josefina Zoraida Vázquez, *The Mexican Declaration of Independence*, The Journal of American History , Vol. 85, No. 4 (Mar., 1999), p1363.
[11] Lucas Alamán, *Historía de Méjico*, Volume III, p559
[12] Ibid., 187
[13] Ibid., 190
[14] Virginia Guedea, *The Process of Mexican Independence,* The American Historical Review, Vol. 105, No. 1 (Feb., 2000), p123.

The death of Morelos marked a period of rebellious standstill, lasting until the emergence of the third major creole leader: Agustín de Iturbide, a former royalist soldier. His conversion to the insurgent cause in 1820 was less an ideological awakening than an act of political opportunism. Through this defection, he enabled himself to become the central focus of an emerging cult of personality. Even prior to his installation as Emperor, he had accumulated an impressive array of titles, ranging from President of the Regency to Commander of the Armed Forces.[15] He also organised public displays to exalt himself and meticulously construct an image of divine individualism. One celebratory march proclaimed: "A thousand times happy, oh! You are united by a sacred divinity with a hero."[16] These efforts expose Iturbide's egotism and insatiable lust for power. As Timothy Anna aptly noted, "it goes without saying, for Iturbide, nothing was too good."[17] His shift in allegiance is thus best understood through the lens of his personal ambition. The Plan of Iguala, which outlined the official terms of independence, was his 'ideological' masterpiece. Promising Catholic dominance, unity and independence to placate all factions,[18] it rather masked his wider political manoeuvre to solidify his ascension to Emperor. His leadership ultimately reflected a movement co-opted by a man whose legacy and divine status were always at the forefront of his ambitions, ahead of liberation or reform. Therefore, for Iturbide, independence served not as the revolutionary end to the movement but as a means to cement his legacy into the future of Mexico.

The continual allegiance of creole leaders to monarchical institutions reflected a trend of widespread royalism amongst urban citizens. Possessing a core population of creole elites,[19] cities were strongholds of opposition to rebellion and thus independence. Urban royalism manifested in two primary forms: military control and psychological warfare, with the latter proving more impactful. In Mexico City, for example, armed police posts and guarded gates endured until 1821, instilling an "atmosphere that was highly charged with fears of sedition and mass uprising."[20] Yet, the armed royalist presence was not as formidable as one may perceive: often preoccupied with fighting rural insurgents, their absence necessitated propaganda to be the primary tool of urban manipulation. Predominantly disseminated through pamphlets, its strategic target was creoles, aimed at quelling any growing support for sovereignty. For example, pamphleteer La currutuca's story of a pregnant woman's house being looted and her children killed in Zitácuaro, reinforced the societal chaos rebellion causes through emotive depictions.[21] Another pamphlet warned that New Spain would be overrun by "unos bárbaros enemigos de la honestidad de mi sexo," translating to *enemy barbarians of female chastity.*[22] Whilst financial instability and illiteracy may have mitigated the reach of these pamphlets, their message nevertheless was conveyed effectively through parish sermons. As Hamill Jr stated, "however it may have been performed or read, propaganda was designed…to entertain,

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[15] Timothy E. Anna, *The Rule of Augustín de Iturbide: A Reappraisal,* Journal of Latin American Studies , Vol. 17, No. 1 (May, 1985) p85. https://www.jstor.org/stable/157498?seq=1
[16] Ibid., 87
[17] Ibid., 88
[18] William Spence Robertson, *The Memorabilia of Augustín de Iturbide,* The Hispanic American Historical Review, Vol. 27, No. 3 (Aug., 1947), p446. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2507917
[19] Eric Van Young, *Islands in the Storm: Quiet Cities and Violent Countrysides in the Mexican Independence Era.* Past & Present, No. 118 (Feb., 1988), p149. https://www.jstor.org/stable/650833
[20] Ibid., 142
[21] Hugh M. Hamill, Jr, *Royalist Propaganda and "La Porción Humilde del Pueblo" during Mexican Independence,* The Americas, Vol. 36, No. 4 (Apr., 1980), p425. https://www.jstor.org/stable/981182
[22] Ibid., 426

inform and indoctrinate,"[23] and it did so to profound effect. Consequently, the insurgency failed to proliferate beyond the outskirts of cities: it was for this reason that Hidalgo retreated from Mexico City in November 1810. Through constant repetition of the rebellion's dangers and illegality, urban royalism successfully inculcated a fear of social revolution amongst creoles. The creole-led independence movement hence shifted away from an ideological path. Judicial confessions have revealed that friendship and family ties, instead, were the primary drivers behind participation. Take the example of José Piedra, a close friend of Morelos: his letters concerning upcoming battles displayed "little knowledge of insurgent politics or ideology but were written in the warmest and most intimate tone."[24] This illustrates how royalist propaganda had successfully undermined broader revolutionary conviction, leaving only kinship and personal loyalty as the main motivators of involvement for remaining creoles. Widespread royalist sentiment had therefore fractured creole unity, diverting the independence cause away from a genuine ideological pursuit, and instead toward either a desire to maintain social order or an obligation to participate due to personal ties.

All things considered, the notion of a principled creole movement for independence was an illusion. Rather, its instigators were motivated by royalist loyalty, conservatism and personal ambition, ahead of a genuine pursuit for national sovereignty. Independence, for them, thus served more as a vehicle for elite continuity than ideological revolution: ultimately revealing that the creole independence movement had become ideologically shallow.

The Anatomy of Rural Insurgency:

For the purpose of this section, rural insurgency will be treated as a single entity: one that emerged not from a unified political agenda, but from wider cultural and economic resistance. At the local level, insurrection functioned as a force for change, confronting both internal and external pressures.[25] Its aim was not the supposed endpoint of the military-political struggle, the consolidation of independence from Spain, but something more immediate and intrinsic. At the core of this unrest lay a perpetual agrarian crisis. Whilst late eighteenth-century Mexico experienced superficial colony-wide growth and prosperity, driven by northern mining provinces, a long shadow of poverty had spread and deepened across the countryside. The salient, underlying factor for the disruption of local economies was Mexico's unprecedented population growth, from 1.5 million in 1650 to 6 million by 1810. [26] This was felt most acutely in southern and central provinces, such as Oaxaca, whose 928 indigenous villages far outweighed only 83 haciendas. [27] As the population surged, the food supply was subsequently strained, culminating in increased encroachment upon hacienda land by armed peasant communities. Compounded by worker petitions for municipal status, rampant banditry, and a general breakdown of law and order, it is thus apparent that revolutionary fervour grew from economic distress rather than nationalist ideology.

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[23] Ibid., 431
[24] Eric Van Young, *The Other Rebellion: Popular Violence, Ideology, and the Mexican Struggle for Independence,* 1810-1821. p93
[25] Ibid., 497
[26] Brian R. Hamnett, *The economic and social dimension of the revolution of independence in Mexico 1800-1824,* Ibero-amerikanisches Archiv, Neue Folge, Vol. 6, No. 1 (1980), p2 https://www.jstor.org/stable/43392280
[27] Ibid., 3

Exacerbating this already unfavourable man-to-land ratio was a recurrent subsistence crisis that stagnated all agricultural production, resulting in a markedly uneven distribution of income. Droughts arrived in the autumn of 1808, devastating promised harvests, and triggering extreme maize price inflation. When drought returned in the spring of the following year, six out of the ten most important provinces in the colony lost over two-thirds of their maize, wheat and bean crops. [28] Consequently, a perfect opportunity for an elite monopoly emerged: hacienda owners could now exploit the low supply, purchasing all the remaining stock and reselling it at ten times the original price. [29] Peasants and the working poor could therefore no longer withstand the scarcity and soaring prices. The purchasing power of their income collapsed, triggering a broader economic contraction as aggregate demand plummeted. Even those marginally connected to the money economy found themselves affected, as cash income was still required to pay taxes, ecclesiastical fees, and for a variety of consumer goods. A merchant farmer in Tepecoacuilco observed that "at the present an infinite number of farmers have abandoned their lands,"[30] now taking to armed resistance. Rural rebels were therefore driven not by ideological abstractions but by concrete needs of securing cash wages, alleviating famine through grain raids and challenging exploitative authorities. Moreover, the economic crisis followed a relentless cycle: periods of local recovery, often associated with royalist "pacification", were repeatedly reversed by the resurgence of insurrectionary activity. Ravages of fighting led to depletion of resources: Royalist General José de la Cruz reported near total ruin; Pénjamo, a once rich farming area, was stripped of food and animals, likened to a desert.[31] Ultimately, the agrarian heart of rural rebellion lay less in nationalist sentiment than in systemic economic collapse. For the majority of rural insurgents, social survival and securing livelihoods took precedence over independence, with their struggle defined by immediate personal and communal interests.

Although rural insurrection was undoubtedly agrarian, the reality is that rebels' motivations were complex, overdetermined and usually non-ideological. Material deprivation alone does not suffice to explain the insurgency, not due to a lack of credibility or anecdotal support, but because other direct and equivocal evidence also deserves consideration. Instead, a behavioural register, where motivators of suggestibility, coercion and curiosity, should also enter the analytical framework. The subsequent discussion draws primarily on testimonies from captured insurgents. Before delving into the microhistory, it is necessary to address and refute common critiques of these testimonies as a primary source. The context of interrogation must be considered: fearing for the freedom of their lives, the accused would have been surrounded by royalist soldiers with guns and possibly physical restraints.[32] The majority consequently tried to exculpate themselves in one way or another, alleging they did not understand their actions or failed to calculate their implications. These responses should not be dismissed as disingenuous but treated as credible: the consistency of reasoning across multiple testimonies is unlikely to be coincidental. That said, these confessions will not be

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[28] Eric Van Young, *The Other Rebellion: Popular Violence, Ideology, and the Mexican Struggle for Independence,* 1810-1821. p72

[29] John Tutino, *Toward Insurrection: Provincial Elites, Political Conspiracies, and Drought*, 1808-1810 From Insurrection to Revolution in Mexico: Social Bases of Agrarian Violence*, 1750-1940,* p121. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv301gv1.8

[30] Eric Van Young, *The Other Rebellion: Popular Violence, Ideology, and the Mexican Struggle for Independence,* 1810-1821. p75

[31] Ibid., 86

[32] Ibid., 112

approached blindly, where all questioning is avoided. Rather, a premise of overdetermination will be adopted, assuming people typically acted in such situations from a variety of motives. Whilst certain testimonies may be underscored with prevarication, they nonetheless reveal the wider social and cultural logic behind rebellion.

The most frequently cited testimonial explanation was coercion, with many rebels claiming they were forcibly conscripted into serving the 'separatist' cause by insurgent bands. Consider the case of José Rodriguez: a man who served in the rebel force for two years only because escape was impossible under constant surveillance. [33] Similarly, among forty-five accused insurgents sent from Cuernavaca to Mexico City in March 1811, at least eight reported being forcibly recruited. [34] Such cases were far from unique. Whilst it may seem improbable that so many rebels offered the same excuse, further evidence from within the movement renders this claim credible and logically consistent. Rebels were undeniably violent, as demonstrated by a 15-year-old witness to a riot in an 1811 riot: he recounted "they were still stabbing [the bodies] with swords, and…cut off their heads… threw them in a sack and tied it to the pommel of the saddle."[35] Given such brutality, it is thus plausible that rebels employed threats and violent harassment as recruitment tools. Indeed, other accounts, such as Felipe Villanueva, did not recall any explicit threat, only detailing evocative language about defending the cause of the Virgin of Guadalupe. [36] Yet even this appeal likely carried an undertone of implicit menace, moral suasion and emotionally charged rhetoric. Most rebels were thus drawn into rural insurgency unconsciously, without any clear and, certainly not, ideological purpose. Additional accounts point to curiosity and suggestibility as genuine motivators for rebellion. In a society where only ten per cent lived in urban areas, most individuals were confined to the tight constraints of small communities in which social change was slow and external events were poorly understood. This is exemplified by José Juan de Dios Osorio, who was described by his attorney as "inclined toward novelty, and to do what others do, acting mechanically."[37] Many joined simply to observe or engage with the national upheaval, following orders without questioning or ideological conviction. The tendency to surrender individual agency was further reflected in those who enlisted themselves via familiar bonds. Interpersonal ties often drove insurgency; Eusebio Maria Rodriguez, for example, only joined because his lifelong friend had.[38] Overall, rural rebels demonstrated no consistent reference to ideology or any programmatic critique of the colonial regime. Whilst such intellectualisations may have existed, they remained fragmentary, buried within a broader set of motivations that firmly tilted away from any nationalist sentiment.

Turning to indigenous communities, testimonies reveal that their struggle was rooted in local politics and longstanding opponents. Seldom venturing beyond their villages, their efforts were concentrated on reshaping local structures of wealth, power and precedence. Take, for example, the sanguinary raid on the Hacienda de Guadalupe in September 1811, involving twenty indigenous men. [39] Of the

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[33] Eric Van Young, *The Other Rebellion: Popular Violence, Ideology, and the Mexican Struggle for Independence,* 1810-1821. p107
[34] Ibid., 109
[35] Ibid., 130
[36] Ibid., 132
[37] Ibid., 106
[38] Ibid., 102
[39] William B Taylor, *The Foundation of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe de los Morenos de Amapa, The Americas , Vol. 26, No. 4 (Apr., 1970),* p440. https://doi.org/10.2307/980185

eleven captured afterwards, their testimonies shared a common thread: collectivity. The small nucleus of indigenous men all described travelling together, witnessing or participating together and returning to their hometown as one unit. As with many other indigenous groups, this incident reflects a broader trend of marked communalism and a distinctly localist sphere of action. Moreover, all the accused remained within the immediate vicinity of their native areas; even in the occasional instance where they acted outside their localities, they were still found in cohesive groups based upon their town of origin. Testimonies have thus revealed that native communities rebelled collectively, pursuing their own distinct cause on a grassroots level.

Indigenous outbursts took the form of village riots, directed at local, not national, politics. Between 1700 and 1820, over 150 village riots shook central Mexico, with nearly fifty in the final two decades.[40] Despite the backdrop of armed 'independence', the nature and motives of these rural uprisings endured. Villagers sought to restore social and economic equilibrium within their communities, addressing long-standing local conflicts over land, labour and authority. Outsiders were often attacked as threats to traditional patterns of community: the 1810 Atlacomulco riot sought to remove a local magistracy and constabulary, whose personnel was so congruent with the landowning elite, to restore customary societal structure.[41] In extreme cases, they even burned hacienda archives to erase external claims and regain autonomy. [42] Symbolic acts of flag raising, effigy destruction and commemorative mass gatherings further highlight the intergenerational resistance of indigenous rebellion and its fundamentally separate context from the independence movement. Village riots, therefore, remained resolutely localist, continuing the past aim of reshaping structures of wealth, power, and precedence, rather than forging a new nation.

Overall, insurgency at a local level represented a fragmented and complicated mosaic, with nearly all pieces being non-ideological. Rebels were driven by famine, coercion, curiosity and deep-rooted communal loyalty rather than abstract political aspirations. Rural insurgency ultimately responded to a profound crisis, both economic and cultural, thereby prompting a pursuit of material justice and the preservation of cultural autonomy.

Conclusion

Conclusively, Mexico's struggle for independence was by no means a single, unified national endeavour. Contrary to traditional historiography, insurrection was divided into two overlaying but fundamentally distinct components: the creole-elite insurgency and broader rural rebellion. The glorified creole leaders, who initiated and advanced the movement, were ultimately ideologically shallow and largely conservative. Specifically, national heroes Hidalgo and Morelos sought not to overthrow the imperial order but to defend familiar structures against domestic corruption and chaos. Iturbide's leadership further reinforces creole-elite pragmatism as the primary incentive for securing their own political dominance. Furthermore, everyday creoles were ideologically apathetic,

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[40] John Tutino, *Riot, Agrarian Social Change and Peasant Rebellion in Nineteenth-Century Mexico: The Example of Chalco,* Rebellion and Revolution: Rural Social Conflict in Mexico, p98 https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt7ztqzt.7

[41] Eric Van Young, *The Other Rebellion: Popular Violence, Ideology, and the Mexican Struggle for Independence,* 1810-1821. p382

[42] Ibid., 390

having been indoctrinated to fear that a rupture to the colonial order would lead to subsequent barbaric chaos, were it to succeed. In short, the creole-led movement began with a shout and ended in a conservative coup that replaced the viceroy. However, the events in between have been romanticised and selectively remembered to construct a narrative of independence that neither the beginning nor the end truly embodied.

In the countryside, insurgent motives centred around immediate and material realities, wherein famine and economic injustice sparked revolts. Yet, the rural insurgency was composite, with rebels' primordial loyalties towards each other, their hometowns and superordinate groups, often taking precedence over the struggle for independence. Having dispelled the common misconceptions, it is clear that the popular narrative of a united independence movement is flawed twofold: it was not united and ultimately not concerned with liberation. Therefore, Mexico’s eventual declaration of sovereignty functioned as a veil, disguising the struggles for power, stability and community, which genuinely drove the pursuit for independence.

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