

From Region to World, and Back Again

How Latin Americans Envisioned the Global (1810-1840)

Gladys Vásquez

Following the independence of many Spanish colonies in America in the early 19th century, the new American diplomats began seeking to integrate their new states into the international system.¹ To do so, they intensified their diplomacy through congresses and conferences where they created a discourse to integrate with the world as independent states. In 1822 Simón Bolívar summoned the leaders of the former Spanish colonies to the Congress of Panama, the first to initiate the routinization of the American congresses. Bolívar explained that the Congress's objective was to establish an American system that would trace the course of their relations with the world (Bolívar 2010 [1824]: 40ff.). Discussing the American system allowed diplomats to construct a world regional framework that provided a platform to envision the world and to think about global affairs.

How did American diplomats envision the global world through the lens of the regional world? They envisioned it as divided into the New World and the Old. Even though this vision was from a long tradition (Epple 2019: 137ff.), the relationship between the two worlds had changed since American independence. Spain refused to accept the independence of its former American colonies and the other European powers hesitated to accept them as sovereign equals (Petersen and Schultz 2018: 111). Observing this relationship of conflict, diplomats negotiated an American system that conceived international relations as a search for world equilibrium. To understand the world regional framework, it is therefore necessary to examine the comparative practices of the American diplomats, based on their observations of the world. This chapter evaluates the significance of observing and comparing both worlds as these diplomats attempted to construct their system of international relations by examining the communications, essays, acts, and treaties resulting from their interaction. These comparisons supported actors in constructing

images and narratives in which conceptualizations like ‘the New World’, ‘the Old World’, and ‘civilized and uncivilized’ were reconstituted.

The focus of this analysis is not on a dichotomy between the New World and the Old but on a triadic relation shaped by diplomats. According to Eppe, when people compare ‘they always imply a criterion that enables them to place differences and similarities in a comparative relation. This criterion in respect to which entities are compared is the *tertium comparationis*’ (Eppe 2019: 141). Through their interaction, the diplomats made comparisons between two entities, the New World and the Old, which became the two *comparata*. While these *comparata* were not new, independence made political order an important *tertium*, so actors shaped comparisons between both worlds in relation to it. Leal states that the notion of ‘order’ became fundamental in Iberoamerica due to the radical political transformations of the early 19th century. It was then that the notion of a ‘new order’ – understood as ‘a new order of things’ or ‘a new political order’ – was developed in contrast to ‘the old order’ or ‘the previous order’ (Leal 2017: 16).² Leal based these notions of order on the terms used by historical actors. In their discourses, diplomats compared the two worlds in terms of their political order: the ‘old order’ was represented by the absolute monarchy that had subordinated the New World in a colonial hierarchy, but independence had transformed the Americas into a world region that would institutionalize ‘a new political order’ opposed to this monarchy and that would reorder the world. The political order became the criterion for distinguishing the New World from the Old.

The chapter is structured as follows: I explain first the context of conflict and negotiation in which the diplomats were situated as well as the perspectives and purposes that conditioned their observations and comparisons of the world; then I consider the reconstruction of the New World based on a world regional discourse.

American diplomats and the post-independence context

The Hispanic American wars of independence were an irregular and violent process that began with the fall of the Spanish monarchy in 1810 and lasted through the first decades of the 19th century (Lynch 1986: 1). It was a conflict that marked the new relationship between the two worlds. While the American colonies were declaring their independence, Spain still claimed ownership over these territories. The conflict that initially arose between Spain and

its colonies was reinterpreted by the actors of independence when the Holy Alliance supported the return of the absolute monarchy in Spain. From then on, these actors observed a threat that spread from Spain to a broader Old World. Conversely, in an effort to resolve this conflict, the actors – American diplomats – attempted to negotiate with the Old World to recognize American independence. It should be noted that the professionalization of diplomacy did not occur in most parts of America until later in the 19th century. Early American states often required their representatives to engage in a variety of activities throughout their careers taking on, for example, both military and diplomatic roles. For this reason, when I use the term ‘diplomats’, I mean those responsible for planning, organizing, and establishing international relations. The negotiation proposals were discussed in the American Congresses of these years. Bernardo de Monteagudo, an independentist from a territory that is now Argentina, constructed a vision of a Hispanic American nation and stressed that a Hispanic American Congress should be held to end the war with Spain, consolidate independence and to confront the threat of the Holy Alliance (Monteagudo 1825: 16f.). It was precisely at the Congress of Panama that the formation of a large American confederation was proposed to enter into negotiations with the Old World on equal terms (Bolívar 2010 [1824]: 40ff.). Proponents of the confederation aimed to institutionalize a new political order in the New World whose authority was based on a General Assembly of American States that was going to create a new order of things in the world.

This section focuses on how American diplomats positioned themselves in relation to the world in the post-independence context of conflict and negotiation. It shows who these diplomats were and why they observed and compared. Diplomats belonged to the *Criollo* elite of lettered men. Anderson describes the *Criollo* as a person of European descent (at least in theory) born in America. *Criollos* shared a common language and ancestry with the Spanish (Anderson 1993: 77). Even so, because they were born in America, *Criollos*, unlike the Spaniards, were not allowed to hold principal civil and ecclesiastical positions in the colonies. This is explained by the fact that America became part of Iberian globalization in the 16th century (Gruzinsky 2010: 51ff.), at which time a hierarchical relationship was built on its political subordination to Europe (Quijano and Wallerstein 1992: 584ff.)

Diplomats participated in a ‘*Criollo* legal consciousness’ that Obregón (2006: 820) defines as a limited set of shared discourses and practices concerning their awareness of regional unity. Obregón explains this con-

sciousness on the basis of two interpretations. First, they assumed that they were part of the metropolitan centre as descendants of Europeans at the same time as they challenged the centre with their regional uniqueness. They defined themselves in opposition to Europeans by claiming a sense of Americanness (ibid.: 815, 818). In his famous *Letter from Jamaica*, Bolívar wrote that Americans were ‘neither Indian nor European, but a species midway between’ (Bolívar 2015 [1815]: 17). Second, they also assumed that law in the region originated in Spanish law, but believed in the uniqueness of an American interpretation of that law (Obregón 2006: 815). To Bolívar, Americans derived their rights to the New World from Europe; however, they had to assert these rights against those same Europeans (Bolívar 2015 [1815]: 17).

The asymmetrical relationship between the two worlds represented the political hierarchy between America and Europe. After all, ‘it was European authors who prescribed what it was to be understood as “old” and what it was to be viewed by comparison as “new” and how the relationship between the two was to be evaluated’ (Epple 2019: 144). Feres recalls that the asymmetrical is defined as the condition in which one group names and another is named, but the named group is at the same time unable to react to the act of naming. The named group is almost always excluded from the political community (Feres 2017: 93). Nevertheless, from the 18th century on, it was American scholars who questioned the legitimacy of this asymmetrical relationship and claimed a new comparability assumed by them. Later, wars of independence increased the tendency to make comparisons from observations of the worlds in conflict. Because of American achievements in war, scholars observed a new order in the world where America, according to Feres (2009: 56), received a political identity. That meant the loss of legitimacy of the former power relation between the two worlds. The observation of this political transformation encouraged these scholars to shape a world regional discourse that recreated the old practices of comparison initiated by Europeans.

Hamnett (2013: 40) argues that independence transformed America into ‘a new factor in international politics’, but the lack of recognition of its independence by Europe became a cause of conflict that continued during the first decades of the 19th century. *Criollos*, who in the new context were already able to hold a government position, appointed their diplomats to negotiate this recognition. The preservation of independence was the maintenance of the new order (Leal 2010: 46). With this aim, they travelled in different delegations to Europe and presented themselves as Americans and no longer as subjects of Spain. They negotiated a shift from the former criterion of com-

parison that excluded America from the international political community. The break with the monarchical political order transformed the asymmetric relationship and made both worlds equal before the international community – this even though the Old World defended the old order and the New World assumed a political order formed by governments legitimately constituted by the ‘will of the peoples’ (*la voluntad de los pueblos*) (Monteagudo and Mosquera 2010 [1822]: 14), peoples who ‘had broken the chains that cruel Spain had imposed on them from the [Old World]’ (Bolívar 2010 [1822]: 3). The will of the peoples replaced the will of the monarch that founded the old order. The term ‘people’ could be understood at the same time as a set of inhabitants and as the place populated with inhabitants (Melo Ferreira 2009: 1120). This double meaning influenced the use of the term. However, when the diplomats mentioned ‘peoples’ they were referring mainly to the *Criollo* inhabitants led by their local political elites. During the negotiations, they displayed a vision of the world in which America and Europe no longer had a hierarchical relationship.

The incorporation of Spain into the Holy Alliance in 1816 in support of restoring Spanish absolute monarchy shifted negotiations. Until that time, comparisons regarding the conflict had been based primarily on observations of America and Spain, but when Spain requested the support of the Holy Alliance at the Congress of Aachen in 1818 to regain control of its colonies, Americans began to observe the Old World beyond Spain. Monteagudo reflected that, until then, their struggle had been against ‘a nation that was impotent, discredited and sick with anarchy’ but from then on ‘the danger that threatened them was to enter into conflict with the Holy Alliance’ (Monteagudo 1825: 10). For this reason, negotiations by means of delegations were no longer sufficient because, as Monteagudo continued, Americans had to consider ‘the probability of a new conflict and the mass of power that (the Holy Alliance) could use against us’ (*ibid.*: 10).

Maintaining the pre-independence balance of power was the goal of the Holy Alliance (*ibid.*), according to the new leaders of the American governments. Faced with this situation, diplomats discussed new arguments for negotiation that would construct a balance of power where America’s independent position would be retained. The importance of establishing a balance of power to keep America from being subjugated again had already been stressed by Bolívar (2012 [1813]: 36):

The ambition of the nations of Europe carries the yoke of slavery to other parts of the world, and all these parts of the world should seek to establish a balance between them and Europe [...] I call this the equilibrium of the Universe, and it must enter into the forethoughts of American politics.

Following this vision, while representatives of the Holy Alliance relied on old order comparisons to sustain the legitimacy of the former balance of power, American scholars intensified comparative observations to legitimize the position and power they had achieved through independence. I will give more details of these comparative observations in the next section. Power was an important issue in this post-independence context; in particular, American leaders were very aware that their actual capacity to support their claims was limited. According to Robert Burr (1995: 38) the *Criollos* took their cue from observing the European experience which conceived international relations as a search for an equilibrium in power.

Americans analysed their position and considered their opportunities in a conflict between America and the Holy Alliance. This way they sustained the formation of an American alliance that would create a new international balance of power. Considering the European experience, Americans found the Congress of Vienna a successful diplomatic event but 'for the monarchies of the Old World' (Monteagudo 1825: 19), setting down laws of alliance and union through which they obtained successful results against France (Belis et al. 2010 [1826]: 159). For this reason, Bolívar summoned the American leaders to the Congress of Panama to create a great American confederation. He wrote that the congress was destined to establish 'a truly new order of things' through the formation of an extraordinary league against which the Holy Alliance could be inferior in power (Bolívar 2010 [1826]: 51f.). According to Leal (2017: 16), the first elaborations of a new order were shaped in debates that highlighted the struggle between constituted power (the old order) and a power in the process of being constituted (a new order). In contrast to the aims of the Congress of Vienna, stated Pedro Gual, Colombian Foreign Minister and author of the constitution of the Republic of Florida:

this confederation should not be formed simply on the principles of an ordinary alliance for offence and defence: it should be much narrower than the one that has been formed recently in Europe against the freedoms of peoples. Ours must be a Society of sister nations... (Gual 2010 [1821]: 8)

When diplomats discussed the construction of a confederation, they intended to distinguish their confederation from the characteristics observed in the European experience. To begin with, unlike the Congress of Vienna, the American gathering would create a permanent assembly. Then, the Congress of Panama would be the first of many congresses that would establish the routinization of diplomatic interaction. Thanks to this confederation, the nations of the New World would be linked by a common law that would fix their international relations (Bolívar 2010 [1826]: 52). Under this common law, the diplomats would resume their negotiations, representing not a single nation but a whole world region. The attendees at this first congress were the Republics of La Gran Colombia (currently Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela and Panama), Mexico, Peru, Bolivia and the Central American Federation (currently Guatemala, Honduras, Costa Rica, Nicaragua and El Salvador).

To the American diplomats, the Congress of Vienna defended the legitimacy of the order of the *ancien régime* by which Spain claimed possession of its former colonies, whereas the Congress of Panama defended a new order of the world based on the legitimacy of American independence. At the same time, this *truly new order* would establish a *perfect balance* (Bolívar 2010 [1826]: 52). Bolívar understood this perfect balance as resulting from actions taken by the Confederation to prevent any power from dominating the American states and altering both their internal and external order; in the first case the confederation would be the arbiter that would prevent any American state from accumulating more power with respect to the other American states, and in the second the Confederation would combine the efforts of the American states to prevent any European power from seeking to return America to the old order. For Monteagudo, the Congress was a necessity, a view that he sustained in his essay 'On the Necessity of a General Federation among the Spanish-American States' when he was Minister of Government and Foreign Affairs for Peru. He explained the two purposes of the confederation: to unite the resources of the American peoples against the common enemy and secondly, to gather the representatives, who until then had problems communicating, in one place to organize an American system directed by a permanent assembly (Monteagudo 1825: 5ff.).

As a result, when considering their own system of international relations, the diplomats created a world regional framework. Excluded for centuries from public positions, this framework allowed *Criollos* to justify their position as leaders of the New World and a new order of the world. To construct the American system, they assumed comparability from a political point of view.

In this sense, to demonstrate that America and Europe were equal political actors in the world order, the diplomats placed similarities and differences in a comparative relation by focusing on the political order and their relation with morality, history and the standard of civilization.

The reconstruction of the New World

The vision of the New World before independence was built on comparisons whose most 'prominent topics were comparisons of climate, of nature, of the role of European antiquity, religion and customs, of the level of art culture and sciences; and of physique, disease and sexuality or the relationship between sexes' (Epple 2019: 153). While these comparisons may have recognized some advantages for the New World, they were not meant to break the hierarchical relationship. However, independence changed the topics of the comparisons. Leaders of the new republics that emerged, like Monteagudo, presented independence as an event that changed their 'way of being and existing in the universe', that is to say, it canceled all the colonial obligations and indicated their new relationships with the world (Monteagudo 1825: 5). As Epple and colleagues understand it, 'the one who claims comparability and detects or determines the perspective, the tertium comparationis, holds the power to confront and to evaluate the comparata' (Epple et al. 2020: 16). American diplomats then set their standard for comparing the world, discouraging comparisons that legitimized the colonial relationship and encouraging those that provided the New World with a political identity in the new order. It should be stressed, as Feres (2009: 54) argues, that during the first decades of the 19th century there was a period of high politicization and conceptual change. This section focuses on the work of diplomats to reconstruct the world order and the image of the New World – more specifically, on how they put America in a new relationship with Europe when the legitimacy of independence was both a cause of conflict and a motive for negotiation with the Old World.

Before continuing, I should mention the geographical vision of both worlds generated by the diplomats. The Old World was not clearly defined. On some occasions it represented only Spain, but then this vision was extended to the members of the Holy Alliance. The position of Great Britain as part of Europe was also not fixed. However, they made a distinction for Southern Europe (*Mediodía de Europa*) even though they did not clearly define it. The European South was seen as a victim of the principles of the Holy

Alliance. The New World, meanwhile, was better defined, mostly understood as the America that had been colonized by Spain (*la America antes Español*), but they also had a more extended vision of the continent that generated controversy. Some argued about including the United States, Haiti or Brazil, while others, for political and cultural reasons, thought that these republics should not be included.

Once independence was obtained, America was assumed to be similar to Europe because it became a 'subject of international law' (Chiaromonte 2016). Both worlds were equal (or almost equal): 'We are constituted in states with rights equal to those of the Europeans' (Vidaurre 2010 [1826]: 189), was a statement constantly reproduced by the diplomats. Even though the two world regions pursued different political orders, their political orders made them both legitimate subjects of international law, having the same rights before the international system. It should be stressed that 'comparing begins with an assumption that the two comparata are in some way similar' (Epple 2019: 142). As actors assumed this new comparability, they began to relate similarities and differences between the New World and the Old, based on two levels of observation: the act of observation and the act of self-observation. In the first case, they emphasized similarities between the two worlds for the purposes of negotiation while in the second case they emphasized their differences in view of the conflict between them.

For the Americans, the threat of the Holy Alliance, the presence of the Spanish army in their territory and its confrontations with the liberating armies, the sending of military reinforcements from Spain and the Spanish resistance to recognizing independence, confirmed the continuing conflict between both worlds. The conflict increased reflexive comparisons in which diplomats distanced America from Europe creating an insight that made them politically superior to the Old World. This distance was created from self-observation, from observing what was specific to them through which they shaped their image of America. It was then that the criterion of political order was used to distinguish forms of government and their political system. In this sense, diplomats identified two forms of government: monarchical government situated in the Old World and republican government situated in the New. On the other hand, both worlds sustained the legitimacy of their governments by the formation of international systems, one created at the Congress of Vienna and the other at the Congress of Panama. When diplomats discussed the institutionalization of the American international system, they created a self-image of a unique New World. Obregón

states that American regionalism in international law is a consequence of a *Criollo* legal consciousness that assumed a belief in American uniqueness (Obregón 2006: 815, 817), since it was a big nation that became independent and a subject of international law by *the will of the people* and not by will of a monarch. For them, Europe defended the return of absolutism while America defended the institutionalization of liberalism. In his analysis of liberalism in the Ibero-American Atlantic, Fernandez (2009: 706) affirms that in those years *liberal* had a political-moral sense associated with freedom and equality and opposed to tyranny and despotisms. Diplomats transformed the perception of the New World through images of a world ideally placed to develop liberal principles through a system that would balance the world, namely the American Confederation. During their interaction, the main differences reflected were based on two topics: the political system and its relation to history.

According to the *Criollo* legal consciousness, differences were self-interpreted as advantages vis-à-vis a monolithic European view of the world (Obregón 2006: 817). In this interpretation, European order was reconstructed as the political system of the *ancien régime* but American order was constructed as a liberal system made up of nations that had fought together for freedom, and eventually transformed themselves into a single nation, the *American nation*. These qualities made America the ideal place to establish a successful confederate system. The Colombian scholar Miguel Pombo described European forms of government as monarchies characterized by 'tyranny and despotism' (Pombo 2010 [1811]: 32f.). Pombo was executed in 1816 during the Spanish reconquest of New Granada for his publications defending a federal system in America, like '*Principles and Advantages of the Federative System*' of 1811. He argued that America was a place that secured freedom for the people in opposition to Europe that preserved the privileges of a few (ibid.: 43). His negative description of the political features of Europe comes out when he (ibid.: 32f.) asks himself if America will follow any particular European people's system:

Will it be that of the indolent Spaniard, perpetual slave of his aged habits, eternal victim of his kings and of a ministry necessarily corrupted? Will it be that of the Portuguese, ignorant and always degraded under the tutelage of England? Will it be that of the Prussian in his military slavery? Will it be that of the German with his numerous masters? To the Pole under the despotism of the nobles? To the Muscovite with his still barbaric luxury and his slavery? To Italy with its misery and its palaces? To France with its despotic emperor

on the ruins of the Republic, or to England in short that with its Magna Carta, its constitution and its liberties, still has the vices of feudal tyranny?

In addition, the American system would be superior because it was formed by a *family of nations*. Since they were a family, they had stronger ties than the European nations united only by vicious institutions (ibid.: 43). It should be noted that diplomats sustained America's new image by reappropriating concepts such as legitimacy, freedom, and nation (Fernandez 2009: 43). During these years, political concepts were transformed into singular collectives (Fernandez 2007:169), for example 'freedoms' became 'freedom', 'the American nations' became 'the American nation'. Diplomats also referred to the American system as 'the great American family united in a federal pact' (*pacto de la grande familia americana*) (Guadalupe Victoria 2010 [1827]: LX). On the other hand, the New World had as an advantage its knowledge of the European confederal experience. Manuel Lorenzo Vidaurre – who wrote *American Letters*, and *Plan of America* with a dedication to Bolívar – affirmed that diplomats sent to the Congress of Panama had analysed Europe's 'errors and sciences, virtues and vices of sixty-two centuries' (Vidaurre 2010 [1826]: 185f.). Other analyses established, for example, that the association of the 13 cantons of Switzerland was a union that did not defend the new rights but preserved the old ones (Pombo 2010 [1811]: 43), while the bases of the American confederation were liberal principles (Alamán 2010 [1831]: 262). Likewise, there was no routinization of the Swiss conferences (Pombo 2010 [1811]: 43). Conversely, however, America would have a permanent assembly that would promote constant conferences in established places (Gual 2010 [1821]: 9). The Belgian confederation had the vice of very dispersed sovereignty among its provinces (Pombo 2010 [1811]: 44), while the American confederation would form an assembly that would function as an intermediary among the provinces (Pando 2010 [1826]: 68).

When diplomats observed their history, they looked for reasons that made the New World a unique place to establish a successful confederation; for this reason, they wanted to present the history of the political evolution of the New World. Guillermo Zermeño (2017 [2009]: 575) explains that history became a set of new experiences after independence because, according to Javier Fernandez (2009: 13), the experience of time changed and people became aware of the historicity of societies. Carole Leal (2017: 23) also states that the acceleration of historical time was defined by the actors as a revolution that divided the waters between the past (*the old order*) and expectations of the future (*a new order* to be created). Thus, the results of two important historical moments

described modern American politics: the civilizations before the Spanish conquest and independence. As far as the colonial past was concerned, it was seen as an interruption in their historical evolution. Reflecting on their past, diplomats observed that confederalism had existed in America before the conquest. Bolívar wrote that independence restored the old confederalism (Bolívar 2010 [1824]: 41). Similarly, Pombo stated that this system was not foreign to the New World, he affirmed that 'the Swiss, the Dutch in the old continent had the idea of federal government, but we also established it among the different nations of the America at the time of their invasion' (Pombo 2010 [1811]: 39), like the federation of the Tlaxcaltecas and the barbarian and federative state of the heroic Araucanos (*ibid.*: 40). During independence a 'concept of history emerged and it was marked by the consciousness of a historical actor who is making history (for) posterity' (Almarza 2009: 685); in this way, diplomats were making history in their present by organizing the Confederation that would defend the future of independence which, according to Vidaurre (2010 [1826]: 185), was an incomparable moral and political revolution. When they reconstructed their history, it was the combination of a glorious past, a liberal present and a hopeful future that reshaped the image of the New World.

Being accepted into the family of civilized nations was the best way for diplomats to guarantee their new political order. They wanted to continue to negotiate political equality with their European peers, so they focused on the similarities between the Old and New World, which made them both subject to international law. When American diplomats compared both political orders, they observed that both worlds were constituted by states (monarchical and republican) who created principles and norms that regulated their international relations. That made them subjects to international law. Also, both worlds had formed international systems (Concert of Europe and American Confederation) that relied on the continuation of their congresses. Both organized congresses (Congress of Vienna and Congress of Panama) that encouraged the interaction of their diplomats to create regulations. Both international systems aimed to preserve their internal orders because the international order depended on internal order. However, the Old World's system defended the principle of intervention to maintain internal order in the event of a threat to its monarchical legitimacy. For American diplomats, the principle of intervention was a threat to the legitimacy of their independence before the civilized world. By considering these similarities, they sought to demonstrate that American order was created not by barbarians, but rather by peoples who had gained their freedom and deserved acceptance with full

rights in this civilized world (Vanegas 2009: 1044). They found in the notion of civilization an argument to support their discourse of political equality. According to Obregón (2006: 823f.), civilization was also part of the *Criollo* legal consciousness and a power discourse that assigned political, cultural and moral virtues. There were already differences between the Old and New Worlds with regard to the first two virtues; however, morality was a virtue that could enable greater comparability. Consequently, they highlighted two aspects of their political similarities: their standards of civilization and of morality.

Independence reopened a dispute over the New World's place in the history of civilization (Gerbi 1955). During the colonial era, Spain was 'quoted as example of civilization in relation to its colonies in America' (Feres 2017: 97). However, as Monteagudo (1825: 19) put it, America acquired, through the war of independence, indisputable rights in accordance with the forms of civilized countries. As the diplomats claimed, America was in an advanced stage of civilization inspired by the 'republican spirit that is the soul and the invisible agent of the civilized world, that manifests itself and sprouts above all' (Roldán 2017 [1831]: 2120). American uniqueness fostered the spirit used to reshape the image of the New World; nevertheless, to legitimize this image before the Old World, they must establish their own institutions to present themselves to the world as civilized (*Actas del Congreso de Cucuta* 1821). During these years, the concept of civilization was understood as a model to imitate: civilized families were contrasted with the barbaric peoples of the world (Feres 2017: 96f.). It was then that the civilized served to 'make comparisons between nations and peoples', and 'to produce a dualistic geography of the world, divided between civilized and uncivilized' (ibid.: 97). In this sense, the advanced state of civilization of the New World allowed diplomatic negotiations as equals.

To prove that the New World was at a high stage of civilization, the abolition of slavery throughout the confederate territory was one of the first points to be discussed on the Congress of Panama's moral agenda. The agenda's main points, in fact, were the will to avoid war (Monteagudo and Mosquera 2010 [1822]: 11) and the end of slavery (Revenga 2010 [1825]: 76). In his speech for the inauguration of the Congress of Panama, Manuel Vidaurre expressed the sentiment that the Confederation must be based on 'peace with the universe, respecting the governments established in European countries, even when they are diametrically opposed to the general one that is adopted in our America' (Vidaurre 2010 [1826]: 186). Likewise, slavery could not be part of the civilized

world. José R. Revenga (2010 [1825]: 76f.), Colombian minister of foreign affairs, was very clear in his instructions to Congress of Panama diplomats, Pedro Gual and Pedro Briceño, when he specified that

the interest shown by the civilized world in the abolition and suppression of the slave trade in Africa also demands that the Assembly of American States deal with it. This matter presents our Republics with a beautiful opportunity to give a splendid example of the liberality and philanthropy of its principles.

Many members of the *Criollo* elite owned slaves and found the proposal to abolish slavery a threat to their economic interests. Although diplomats were highly interested in proving that they followed the customs of the civilized world, the original idea of abolishing slavery was replaced by the idea of banning the slave trade, also established at the Congress of Vienna.

Conclusions

This chapter has highlighted the impact of the reconstruction of the New World by observing and comparing. Diplomatic interaction created a vision of the world based on a new relation between the New and Old Worlds in light of the independence process. In this context, diplomats desired to legitimize America's independence, so their comparisons were used as a strategy to negotiate their vision of being integrated into international society. Their main interest was the establishment of a new global order, in that sense, they were determined to negotiate the *tertium* that would move the *comparata* to a new political order and change the relationship between the two worlds. Diplomats encouraged a new comparability on the basis of a political perspective, their own political perspective, since the New World was conceived of as a unique political entity that had created a new symmetrical power relation that regulated interaction between the two worlds. In this way, the global world was developed within world regional discourse.

By creating an American Confederation, they sought to generate a new balance in the world. Consequently, comparative practices became politicized in discussions about the distribution of power. It was through regional global discourse that the Americans diplomats tried to assert their arguments about the distribution of power in the world. Having carried out this analysis, I would like to highlight some of the issues raised by the process of reconstruction of the New World and the world order among American diplomats. The

first thing to be noted is the development of a new space for discussion as a result of the diplomatic interaction that began with the process of independence. This process was characterized by an intense politicization of the semantics inherited from colonial times. Thus, these discussions encouraged a reappropriation of the concept and image of the New World. These transformations have previously been studied above all from a conceptual point of view. This chapter was intended to be a contribution to understanding this reappropriation of the New World and its impact on the world regional framework not only as a conceptual transformation, but also as a transformation of its image, one that, in Anderson's words, lives in the mind of every member of a nation (Anderson 1993: 23).

Notes

- 1 The term Latin America was not created until the second half of the 19th century. As this chapter considers how the regional framework provided a platform for thinking about global affairs, I have stayed true to the terminology of the historical actors I am studying. I use 'America' to designate what is now commonly known as 'Latin America'.
- 2 All translations in this chapter are my own.

