Disciplinary Conquest
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U.S. scholars working on problems of Latin America from distinct disciplinary perspectives had to deal at some point with the question of empire. This was a multifaceted problem that included various interconnected questions: should the United States preserve its dependencies in the Caribbean and the Pacific? When and under what conditions would it be convenient to withdraw from occupied territories? Was education in self-government essential to the divestiture of power and the beginning of self-rule? Was the Monroe Doctrine obsolete with regard to the South American republics? Could the South American republics be trusted as allies in the preservation of regional peace and in the pursuit of common international goals? How could the distrust expressed toward the United States be dismantled? Would a policy of intellectual cooperation and cultural enticement pay off in the long run? Would the United States be able to attain hegemony without dominance?

These were the main questions that scholars, businessmen, and policy makers in the United States asked about the empire. It was clear to contemporaries that the United States had colonial possessions in the Caribbean and the Pacific. Through loans and the marines, the United States dominated the political and economic destinies of small countries in Central America. Yet it was also clear, particularly after 1906–1914, that south of Panama there were republics with a long tradition in self-government, with economies already integrated
in the world economy, and with standards of living that made them potential consumers of U.S. products. Scholarly engagements with South America after 1906 underscored the importance of these nations, particularly the so-called ABC powers (Argentina, Brazil, and Chile). In them U.S. observers saw the possibility of gaining market shares from European traders, bankers, and industrialists. During the First World War, the United States had gained new markets in South America. To maintain them, greater economic, institutional, and cultural engagement with South Americans was required. Pan-Americanism was the ideological and institutional solution to this problem.

The question of empire referred to both formal dependencies and informal areas of influence. It included the question of whether it was better and simpler that independent countries emulate U.S. institutions and cultural modernity—and, to some extent, acquiesce to its international policies—rather than to maintain costly colonial dependencies, with added responsibilities for policing, sanitation, education, and financial control. This type of calculation was implicit in discussions of U.S. hegemony and imperialism. While at moments it seems that commentators suppressed formal colonies when dealing with the question of informal empire in South America, the relationship between the two forms of hegemony was always present. In fact, it is my contention that it was the “rediscovery” of South America that confronted U.S. policy makers with the need to rethink its imperial, hegemonic engagement in the hemisphere. Scholars were alerted to the tensions between the formal and informal areas of U.S. influence and were eager to intervene in the debate, either to reinforce the belief in the hemispheric great divide or to extend toward Central America and the Caribbean the blessings of a more benevolent and less imperialistic hegemony.

In this chapter I deal with the ways in which new knowledge about South America influenced the U.S. scholarly perspectives on the question of empire. In general, five prominent scholars—Hiram Bingham, Clarence H. Haring, Leo S. Rowe, Isaiah Bowman, and Edward A. Ross—found arguments and reasons for rejecting U.S. colonial interventions and for expanding the forces of cultural engagement and scientific cooperation. The “novelty” of South America pointed in two opposite directions. On the one hand was the discovery that South Americans were enthusiastically acquiring the instruments of Euro-American modernity. This authorized the continuity and intensification of U.S. expert assistance in institution-building and sustained the illusion of developmental convergence between the United States and the white settler nations of the Southern Cone. On the other hand, scholars discovered in South America the enduring legacy of Spanish colonialism, manifested in servile labor, the exclusion of indigenous peoples, and an outdated aristocratic culture. There-
fore they repeatedly placed the question of U.S. hegemony in comparison with the experience of Spanish colonialism. The colonial legacy pointed toward the need to reform social structures, to correct the distribution of property rights, and to abolish outdated forms of social and racial discrimination.

Rejecting the Monroe Doctrine

The relevance of the Monroe Doctrine to twentieth-century inter-American relations was on the minds of U.S. Latin American experts. In 1913 the historian and archaeologist Hiram Bingham published a scathing condemnation titled *The Monroe Doctrine: An Obsolete Shibboleth.* The 1823 proclamation, Bingham argued, was no longer applicable to most Latin American nations. Certainly, it was obsolete in relation to the ABC countries. With time, the doctrine had come to stand as a justification for various forms of U.S. intervention in Latin America, generating widespread resentment across the subcontinent. To remedy this situation, Bingham proposed to abandon the ninety-year-old doctrine and to start building a more reasonable and productive U.S. foreign policy toward Latin America.

In rejecting the applicability of the doctrine, Bingham challenged every one of the arguments raised by its supporters. The Monroe Doctrine, he argued, was not a legal principle agreed on by a group of nations; it was a unilateral declaration by the United States that carried no international legal force. By making the defense of a group of countries the responsibility of the strongest nation, the doctrine contradicted the common and accepted principle that every nation had the right to defend itself. The argument that there was a “natural sympathy” between the United States and the Latin American republics was simply not true. As South American intellectuals were arguing, a great cultural gulf divided Hispanic America from Anglo-America. Any recent traveler, said Bingham, knew that South American intellectuals were writing about the important differences that separated the two Americas: Catholicism versus Protestantism, Yankee individualism versus Spanish state-centric life, and materialism versus spiritualism. The region’s elites felt more affinity with Europe than with the United States; their intelligentsias were fascinated with French ideas and culture (Hiram Bingham 1913c).

Bingham acknowledged that in the 1820s the Monroe Doctrine had served to protect the independence of the Spanish-American republics from the threat of Spanish recolonization. This protection was no longer needed. Others saw the doctrine as a protective shield that gave the South American republics the time it needed to catch up in economic, political, and cultural development.
Yet this progress had failed to materialize: the Western countries of South America were still trapped in the past, suffering from outmoded transportation systems and exploitative labor relations. If anything, the gap separating the United States from South America had widened.1

The United States, Bingham argued, had maintained a rhetorical commitment to the doctrine without enforcing it.2 In fact, the United States had committed acts of aggression against Latin American nations in the name of the Monroe Doctrine. Theodore Roosevelt in particular had established with the Roosevelt Corollary a new de facto Monroe Doctrine that implied U.S. sovereignty on the American continent. Bingham criticized the United States for taking an aggressive stand in the Venezuelan affair (1895), risking war. As intensely, he criticized the negative diplomatic consequences of the Spanish-American War. The war brought “fear and apprehension” among “our South American neighbors.” While New York newspapers praised the courage of U.S. soldiers for “saving” the Cubans from “Spanish tyranny,” he pointed out, newspapers in Buenos Aires were filled with caustic criticism of U.S. imperialism.

In practice, the United States had taken colonial possessions, contradicting the letter of the original Monroe Doctrine. Diplomatic incidents in the region had increased since 1898. Bingham denounced U.S. imperialist aggression in Panama in 1903. To control the Canal Zone, the United States had literally taken a province from a sovereign nation (Colombia) and made it into an independent state (Panama). The Panama affair sparked bitterness among South Americans. Secretary Elihu Root’s goodwill tour to South America (1906) was intended to mend relations. But Root’s speeches proved to be only empty rhetoric, for a mere two years later the United States sent warships to settle a dispute in Honduras. Meanwhile, in 1904, European creditors had attempted to seize the customs house of the Dominican Republic to cash in unpaid debts. The United States then instituted a receivership, unduly disposing of the revenues of a previously independent state.

In the face of all these actions, said Bingham, South Americans concluded that the Monroe Doctrine was synonymous with “interference and intervention” (1913c, 42). It was natural that less-developed nations would borrow to build infrastructure and public improvements, running occasionally into arrears in their payments. Yet there was no reason why the United States had to act as collector of unpaid debts. First, it was the Dominican Republic, then Honduras, then Mexico. The implications were ominous: under the Roosevelt Corollary, the United States had become responsible for the good financial behavior of small American nations. This was unacceptable to Bingham. The Roosevelt Corollary also caused great alarm in South America. This concep-
tion ran counter to an established principle of international law: the independence of sovereign states.

Bingham’s criticism of the Monroe Doctrine was explicitly anti-interventionist, based on the observed resentment these policies caused among South American intellectuals. After examining his 1913–1914 confrontation with Peruvian indigenistas and cultural nationalists, we are in a better position to understand his “obsolete shibboleth” publication. U.S. interventions in the Caribbean since the Venezuelan affair (1895) had caused such resentment among South American intellectuals that they were ready to boycott the work of U.S. scientists in the region.

Transforming the Monroe Doctrine

Rather than abandoning the Monroe Doctrine, the promoters of Pan-Americanism wanted to transform it into a multilateral policy of continental self-defense. Among them, nobody was as influential as political scientist Leo S. Rowe. In 1914 the American Society of International Law invited Rowe to discuss his position on the Monroe Doctrine (Leo S. Rowe 1914a). He argued then that the doctrine, as a principle of national self-determination, was still vital. Europe no longer entertained projects of colonization in Latin America, but its politics and ideologies (from left and right) continued to influence the American continent. So it was crucial to prevent the Latin American nations from being dragged into European rivalries. Yet Rowe considered that, instead of a unilateral policy statement of the United States, the doctrine should be sustained by all the nations in the Americas and collectively enforced. He stressed the need to make the Monroe Doctrine Pan-American, that is, a cooperative enterprise of mutual protection of national sovereignty.

He noted that not all countries in the hemisphere were equal. Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean were bound to the national interest of the United States, as their raw materials and foodstuffs were crucial for the well-being of U.S. workers. The United States should be able to intervene in areas where disorder and instability threatened the region’s security. In South America, by contrast, nations with sufficient political stability and economic assets shared the same interests and ideals as the United States. The ABC countries in particular posed no threat to the economic or political welfare of the United States: they could be instrumental for the peaceful settlement of regional disputes. In his lecture Rowe affirmed the diplomatic great divide. Due to reasons of “national security,” there were areas where the United States had a legitimate right to intervene.
We are interested in the welfare of Mexico, of Central America, and the West Indies primarily because their stability and their progress ultimately affect the well-being of our own people, and we are interested in their attitude toward us because that attitude has a distinct bearing on our national safety. (Leo S. Rowe 1914b, 24)

But there were other places of relative peace and stability, governed by progressive men, where the United States should never intervene directly (South America). Consequently, he thought the United States should establish principles of “American foreign policy” differentiated by region.

The Monroe Doctrine could be accepted as a foreign-policy principle, he argued, only if it was not applied as an undifferentiated mantle of protection over the whole continent. Rowe envisioned an “American concert” with the South American nations, able to bring peace to the region by disarming long-standing rivalries. Argentina, Chile, and Brazil could play an important part in the making of this regional peace. Rowe agreed with Bingham on three points. First, political international conditions had changed dramatically since 1823. Now that Europe had moved toward republican forms of government, America and Europe were no longer so different in their political ideals. Second, Washington policy makers had twisted the original meaning of the doctrine so that now it stood for U.S. dominance. In addition, the doctrine had sparked much criticism and opposition in Central and South America. With regard to U.S. responsibility for the financial mismanagement of small nations, Rowe was unequivocal: it was not the role of the United States to attempt to keep European bankers out of Central America and the Caribbean. In this regard, Rowe’s talk challenged President Woodrow Wilson’s call to emancipate Central and South America from the grip of European capital (the so-called Mobile Address). To him, Wilson’s call sounded like Dollar Diplomacy.

As to the nature of U.S. hegemony, Rowe was in favor of “soft power.” Gunboat diplomacy or threats based on sheer economic or financial supremacy should be abandoned and replaced by a policy of “influence through example.” South Americans would appreciate the United States leading the region in the resolution of conflicts through arbitration and in the improvement of education and living standards. That is, in addition to promoting the ABC as a leading force of peace in the region, he advocated U.S. involvement and responsibility in economic and social development. He viewed the Pan-American system as an empire by consent, as a commonwealth in which Latin American nations voluntarily agreed on principles designed by U.S. policy makers. Crucial to this entente was the agreement among the intelligentsias of the American
republics on common principles and ideas (“intellectual cooperation”). Later, during the Wilson presidency, Rowe presented the Pan-American system as a sanctuary of peace in a world at war and thus a model to be imitated by the League of Nations.

**Hemispherical Racial Cooperation?**

In *South of Panama* (1915) the sociologist Edward A. Ross mentioned the Monroe Doctrine only in connection with the question of Asiatic immigration. Peru, in particular, and South America, in general, seemed to be receiving increasing numbers of Chinese immigrants. The Chinese constituted cheap labor and as such, threatened the existing wage level in the region. Furthermore, Ross considered Chinese immigration to threaten indigenous cultures. He predicted that by the end of the century, twenty to thirty million “Orientals” would find their home in South America, erasing all possibility of “Indian improvement.” Ross called for U.S.-South American cooperation in limiting the Asian immigration wave. Thus, in a curious way, he invoked the Monroe Doctrine to defend the Americas from the “teeming Orient” (Edward A. Ross 1915, 93).

But Ross’s use of the Monroe Doctrine held little appeal for Latin Americans. U.S. Americans and South Americans were not ready to cooperate on racial issues. Elite South Americans, for the most part—the indigenistas excluded—were not particularly worried about the disappearance of indigenous cultures. In the countries most transformed by European immigration, indigenous peoples were excluded from the discourse of progress. Argentines and Uruguayans were ready to point out to foreign visitors that “Indians” had long before disappeared. Ross had extrapolated to South America a problem that was politically decisive in the United States.

Race was an overriding concern for the U.S. sociologist. In this terrain he found a possible parallel between the U.S. Indian frontier and the Chilean frontier south of the Bío Bío River. In the new territory recently conquered by the Chilean army from the Mapuche peoples, Ross found the energy of a rough and egalitarian democracy, like that of the United States after the Indian Removal Act (Edward A. Ross 1915, 101–2) In this sense, Ross seemed to uphold the Western movement as a civilizational conquest productive of a democratic culture. Fortunately, his proposal for a racial Pax Americana found few supporters.
What did U.S. scholars think about the economic conquest of South America? While generally in agreement with commercial and financial expansionism, they raised doubts about the transformative power of U.S. technology and mass consumer culture. In addition, U.S. scholars showed concern about the ethical dimension of U.S. enterprise abroad.

The archaeologist Hiram Bingham was not enthusiastic about the opening of the Panama Canal. In a 1914 article he estimated that the economic benefits that would derive from this technological marvel would be ephemeral. Though he acknowledged that the interoceanic canal was already generating great expectations among Ecuadorians, Peruvians, and Chileans, he thought this reflected a temporary wave of economic optimism, a passing collective delusion. Any long-term profitability of such investments would depend on adequate geographical knowledge. Bingham’s own geographical inquiries convinced him that the Andean cordillera was like a “Chinese wall” that rendered much of the inland territories of the region inaccessible. The lack of navigable rivers made the introduction of mass consumer products quite problematic. For the moment, the building of railroads across the Andes was an enormously costly proposition. The markets of South America offered few real opportunities for the immediate future.

Ross and the geographer Isaiah Bowman also found the U.S. economic penetration of South America problematic. To Bowman, the natural environment of Andean nations presented great obstacles that even U.S. advanced technology and large capital could not easily overcome. To Ross, race, social inequalities, and local custom imposed severe limitations on the development of mass consumption on the western coast of South America. Their pessimism about the possibility of progress in the Andean nations underscored the exceptionality of the ABC nations, whose economies, societies, and cultures were much influenced by Europe and not yet in the economic orbit of the United States. The “modernity” they observed in Argentina, southern Brazil, and Chile was more European than “American.”

In *The Andes of Southern Peru* (1915) Bowman addressed the question of economic penetrability in detail. Here was a region that, due to the diversity of its climate and environments, presented vast natural resources to be developed. But the very conditions of the natural environment—high plateaus, large deserts, isolated settlements, harsh climate—limited the feasibility of an easy deployment of U.S. capital and modern technologies in the Andes. True, there were already U.S. mining companies extracting copper and silver in Peru.
and Chile, U.S. firms participating in the extraction and processing of nitrates in northern Chile, and U.S. engineers building impressive railroads in the region. But none of these enterprises had been able to transform the traditional landscape of poverty and petty-commodity production in Andean valleys and deserts.

Bowman’s term *conditional conquest* underscored these severe limitations to economic development. The conquest of the region by modern technology and mass consumer goods was reserved for a distant future. For the time being, the “true conquerors” of the environment were the Andean shepherds and farmers who, through the centuries, had adapted their lifestyles to the harsh conditions of highlands, deserts, and dry valleys. By contrast, foreign mining enclaves had failed to conquer the environment. Their company towns lived in closed spaces wholly dependent on outside supplies produced by the peasant economies of the highlands. Nitrate firms, however financially sound, depended on the vagaries of climatic changes. A year of unusual rains could wash away the nitrates and, consequently, the companies’ profits.

Regarding the question of “commercial conquest,” Ross was pessimistic about the power of U.S. companies to transform the consumer habits of South Americans. Deeply rooted social habits, great social inequalities, and the lack of “energetic races” conspired against the development of mass markets in the region. In Colombia traditional habits and customs limited the purchasing capacity of local markets (Edward A. Ross 1915, 12). He reported the story of an U.S. entrepreneur who opened a shoe factory in Cali, only to discover that upper-class Colombians preferred imported shoes and lower-class Colombians wore no shoes at all. Ross depicted the Cauca Valley as “an indoor patio,” shut off from the Pacific by the jungle and the cordillera. Isolated, people lived “uneventful lives” and spent the day visiting each other and gossiping about trivialities (ibid., 10). The opening of the Panama Canal had begun to awaken the dormant energies of Colombians. Enterprising Antioqueños had introduced the U.S. spirit of progress to Colombia, if not what he called a “Hebraic” energy.

It is a striking fact that not only do the Antioquians often show the Semitic countenance and Hebraic traits, while their province abounds in Biblical place names, but they regard themselves, and are regarded by others, as Hebrews. It is supposed that long ago numerous converted Spanish and Portuguese Jews settled in this province, and became the seed of this pushful race. (ibid., 14)

Yet outside of this region, people’s energies were dormant, the way of life quite provincial. In Quito and Cajamarca he saw traces of Moorish influence that
dated back to Spanish colonial times. In Lima poverty, disease, and overcrowding reinforced his belief in the social and cultural backwardness of the region. The city of kings had birth and mortality rates typical of Oriental countries (ibid., 42–44). Hence, it was difficult to think of Peru, Ecuador, and Colombia as thriving markets eager to import U.S. goods.

In the Central Valley of Chile, Ross found green, cultivated fields and well-kept towns. Yet large social inequalities limited the development of markets. The miserable huts of rural inquilinos contrasted with the marble mansions of absentee landowners in Santiago (ibid., 100). The low standard of living of tenants and laborers in rural Chile anticipated reduced markets for modern imported commodities. Only in southern Chile, where German immigrants had settled after the defeat of the Araucanos, did Ross find an emerging “rough frontier democracy” with traces of social egalitarianism: maids and farmers’ daughters were difficult to distinguish by their clothes (ibid., 101–2). Argentina, by contrast, had accepted the improvements of U.S. modern technology. It was the “most metallic country” of South America; its countryside displayed many “metal fences, posts, gates, railway ties, windmill towers, and telephone poles” (ibid., 117). Here was a “country of hope” where general prosperity was spilling over to the average worker.4

Enclave Economies Absolved

These U.S. scholars were perhaps too lenient toward U.S. corporations operating in South America: banana, copper, nitrate, and petroleum companies in particular. Ross’s judgments about U.S. enclave economies in Peru and Mexico were especially empathetic and favorable. The real enemies of social equality and progress were local landowners and local elites, not U.S. companies.5 This was a departure from his previous work, Changing America (1914), where Ross had launched a striking condemnation of U.S. business culture.6 Now Ross failed to extend this criticism to U.S. investment in Latin America. The sociologist found no fault with the labor policies of Cerro de Pasco Mining, the largest firm in Peru owned by U.S. Americans. The company, producing two thousand tons of pig copper a month, employed over twelve thousand local workers, most of them Indians from the highlands. Work conditions were hard, due to the thin air of high altitude and the prevalence of pulmonary disease, but the company provided local workers with medical checkups and good housing. Indian miners had good appearance: “red cheeks, magnificent chests, and strong back muscles, but their arms and legs are poorly developed” (Edward A. Ross 1915, 48–51).
Nevertheless, U.S. mining corporations used an indentured labor system called the *enganche*. Recruiters called “hookers” (*enganchadores*) made drunken Indian peasants sign labor contracts, advancing them loans for fiestas. After sobering up, the Indian found himself sent to a distant mining camp, to toil in a freezing mine gallery. Asked why they did not use the regular wage system to attract miners, the manager of the firm said that it was impossible to get Indian laborers to work underground unless compelled by debt (ibid., 153–54). To Ross, this outdated recruitment system was but a small stain in the modernizing and humane record of U.S. mining companies in the Andes. Similarly, in his book about the aftermath of the Mexican Revolution, Ross portrayed U.S. managers of mining and industrial conglomerates as reasonable businessmen who had accepted the transformations brought about by social upheaval. They silently accepted the new labor rights established in the 1917 constitution, learned to negotiate with the unions, and were grateful that “Bolshevism” had not produced greater expropriations and state controls. Some of them, he said, were happy to see their workers well paid, well fed, well housed, and enjoying the new hospitals and schools (Edward A. Ross 1923c). It was not U.S. capitalists but local landowners who longed for a return to their lost privileges and the restitution of their confiscated lands.

For all his condemnation of corporate culture in the United States, then, the sociologist failed to see major faults in the conduct of U.S. business enterprise in South America. He exculpated Cerro de Pasco Mining with regard to its exploitative recruitment system. He praised the pragmatism of U.S. firms in Mexico for adapting to the postrevolutionary social environment. Ross saw nothing disconcerting about the U.S. informal empire in the region. Other scholars thought otherwise. Rowe was one of the earliest to condemn U.S. business practices, Washington’s unilateral Pan-Americanism, and U.S. armed interventions in the Caribbean. As early as 1911, he blamed U.S. corporations for the bad reputation of the United States in South America: early U.S. entrepreneurs in Latin America who resorted to fraud to close business deals, and the “lawlessness” of U.S. corporations, which on occasion financed revolutions in the Caribbean. In addition, Rowe argued, the U.S. “missionary spirit” had created ill will among South Americans.7

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**South American Attitudes and Economic Imperialism**

Whether or not U.S. scholars viewed the activities of U.S. corporations abroad with suspicion, they agreed that South Americans had developed negative attitudes toward U.S. economic expansionism and U.S. military interventions.

Scholars and the Question of Empire
The historian Clarence H. Haring purposefully studied U.S. business practices and South American reactions to these practices. In *South America Looks at the United States* (1928) Haring framed the issue within the contours of “economic penetration,” a term that stood for what we now call economic imperialism, neocolonialism, or, simply, dependency. Countries endowed with natural resources could become the object of ambition of more powerful nations.

But regions so favored, unless they have also a responsible government, a numerous population and a vigorous industry, may become the theatre of the economic ambitions and rivalries of more powerful countries, or at least the scene of intensive foreign capitalist enterprise which may undermine their economic if not their political independence. (Haring 1928, 80)

In Haring’s view the First World War presented an exceptional opportunity for U.S. business firms to capture markets previously dominated by European traders and industrialists. Trade to the region increased 300 percent between 1910–1914 and 1926. As a result, specializations based on comparative advantage developed. The United States sold manufactures and some commodities to South America (machinery, motor cars, iron and steel, cotton goods, lumber, and grain), while South America exported to the United States raw materials and foodstuffs (coffee, nitrates, copper, wool, hides, rubber, and cacao). At this point in time, this specialization was not an issue of contention (ibid., 82).

U.S. foreign direct investment, though modest in comparison with European investment, was already quite large by 1910, particularly in mining. This was superseded by U.S. private loans to South American governments. While these loans may have exerted some economic leverage in the southern republics (favoring U.S. firms in government contracts), it was not evident that they served as instruments of political intrusion. After the end of the war, the extension of U.S. banking facilities in South America, in conjunction with a series of technological advances, transformed the United States into something more than a commercial competitor to Europe. It was at this time that the United States became synonymous with economic exploitation and political intervention. To Haring, much of this negative image was the artful creation of foreign and local publicists engaged in anti-American propaganda. By itself, economic supremacy in areas of trade and finance were not sufficient to explain the degree of anti-Americanism Haring found in South America.

Haring considered the problem of “economic imperialism” to be another name for intensified competition, from 1900 to 1930, between European and U.S.
manufacturers for South American markets. In reaction to this economic struggle, the local press and radical agitators disseminated an increasing volume of anti-American propaganda in the subcontinent. The arguments they used to generate anti-American feelings were deceitful and, in some cases, outrageous. To Haring, the opening of South American markets during the First World War had caught U.S. business firms unprepared. As a result, their early business practices were sloppy and impolite, and this gave U.S. firms a bad reputation (Haring 1928, 82–83). After the war, the extension of U.S. communication, banking, and shipping gave U.S. companies a firmer base on which to compete for South American markets. The crisis of 1920–1921, in particular, forced U.S. corporations to improve their methods to meet the challenge of European competition.

Haring noted that German and British traders responded to the invasion of U.S. goods, trademarks, and technologies with “sharp commercial practices” such as price-cutting, secret discounts, gifts to customers, and outright bribery of government officials. In addition, European traders, with the help of friendly newspapers or viva voce, disseminated anti-American propaganda. Haring accepted these practices as normal in situations of intensified competition. The traditional press in the ABC countries, hitherto friendly to the United States, had begun in the early 1920s to disseminate anti-American propaganda. Newspapers leveled charges of “economic imperialism” against U.S. big business and U.S. banks. An economic weekly in Buenos Aires blamed U.S. banks for the depreciation of the Argentine currency. The main Brazilian newspaper characterized the “coffee loan” as an entry door to U.S. financial domination. Even as traditional and reasonable a newspaper as La Razón (Buenos Aires) claimed that the United States had used the settlement of Tacna-Arica to gain important concessions for U.S. firms in Peru. In addition, South American papers claimed that U.S. investors had turned Cuba into an “economic colony” of the United States.

To anyone who picked up and read a newspaper in Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires, or Santiago in the mid-1920s, the idea that the U.S. firms were building an economic empire in Latin America was evident. Understandably, radical propaganda—particularly after the Russian Revolution—contributed ammunition to the increasing rejection of U.S. “economic imperialism.” Socialist unions saw any U.S. intervention in Mexico or Central America as a cause that justified important political mobilizations. But, in Haring’s view, if the traditional press and radical labor communities coincided in the prognosis of “Yankee imperialism,” this was something more than mere anti-American propaganda.
Haring took the threat of South American anti-Americanism seriously. He attributed it to past U.S. interventions in Central America and the Caribbean and to the continued use of Dollar Diplomacy. U.S. high-tariff policies produced further animosity. Past U.S. interventions in Panama, Haiti, Santo Domingo, and Central America had predisposed South Americans to think that the United States, despite claims to the contrary, was gaining political control in smaller nations. Haring saw the politics of Dollar Diplomacy dangerously extending to poor and small states in the Andes.

As the Monroe Doctrine operates today, American loans, at least when made to small and weaker states, tend to political control and the people become increasingly suspicious of the American hand in their affairs. This is not only true of the tiny Caribbean states, but as has already been intimated, may easily become the situation in some parts of South America, as Bolivia today. (Haring 1928, 97)

To counter charges of economic imperialism and political interference, Haring called for a complete separation between U.S. business and U.S. foreign policy. The U.S. government should not support or give any protection to U.S. loans in the region. By calling on the State Department to adopt a Gladstonian attitude toward business imperialism, Haring was extending the great divide to the terrain of Dollar Diplomacy. If in small Caribbean states, some intersection between finances and government were tolerable for the sake of “national security,” in South America that intermixing of finance and foreign policy was unacceptable. In addition, Haring demanded that the State Department implement guidelines for proper business conduct for U.S. corporations in the region. Furthermore, U.S. diplomats should seek “open doors” in South America, without engaging in local politics or being in any way connected to particular business interests (ibid., 100–101).

In short, the Harvard historian rerouted the charges of “economic imperialism” toward the territory of foreign policy. U.S. corporations and products were in fact engaged in a fair competition with European traders and manufacturers. The charges of “economic imperialism” were a reflection of South Americans’ disgust concerning U.S. past interventions in the Circum-Caribbean and the current practices of Dollar Diplomacy. A policy of hemispheric cooperation based on the principles of Pan-Americanism should pay adequate attention to these charges. If the United States were to persuade the South American elites of its benevolent intentions, important changes in U.S. foreign policy were required. Just befriending South American intellectuals
was not enough. The United States needed to put an end to military interventions in the Circum-Caribbean and to restrain U.S. corporations from meddling in Latin American politics.

_Toward a Theory of Informal Empire_

Bowman was the first to enunciate a defense of informal empire, as a reassurance against the impending demise of territorial empires. Bowman returned from the Paris Conference (1919) with a Wilsonian global vision.¹⁵ The new world order would require a remapping of political boundaries. Wilson’s principle of national self-determination required that negotiators allocate ethnic groups within fixed geographic boundaries, in ways that would prevent future wars. Old balance-of-power diplomacy needed to be abandoned. National representation in the League of Nations would facilitate the peaceful resolution of international disputes. The economic position of global powers would no longer be dictated by the possession of colonies.¹⁶

This new “global vision” was clearly advantageous to the United States. The nation with the strongest economy—the best technology, the most appealing consumer products, and the most advanced methods of mass production—would prevail without the need for military interventions or the acquisition of colonies. Wilsonian liberal internationalism masterfully represented the expansive tendencies of the U.S. corporate world. A world with no barriers to the expansion of trade, investment, and technology would favor the most competitive economy and society. This world vision was consistent with a critique of European colonialism.¹⁷ In 1919 the world had been completely parceled so that no expansion of national territories seemed feasible. Soon, territorial colonialism would give way to economic expansionism (Neil Smith 2003, 184). After the war, U.S. policy makers expected that U.S. capital, technology, and ways of life would expand across Latin America and Asia. This expansion would necessitate no territorial acquisition. U.S. economic and technological preponderance would safely restore U.S. exceptionalism. For, unlike European colonialism, U.S. economic supremacy was predicated on superior technology, mass production, and modern advertising.

To the extent that Bowman shared this view he was an anti-imperialist. The historian Neil Smith writes,

Bowman’s attitude toward empire captures the new mix of geography and politics that defined these formative years of the American Century. Imperialism to Bowman was a system of direct political coercion
and control over a people and had no place in the modern world. Its rationale was economic exploitation—of labor, raw materials, crops, and commodities—and political and cultural domination. (ibid., 187–88)

U.S. economic supremacy over Latin America was, in this sense, a non-imperialistic type of hegemony. To Bowman, the principle of national self-determination was absolute. But he also deeply believed that some populations lacked enough civility and practice in government to determine their own affairs. He was prepared to admit that a collective organization of strong nations should be granted a mandate over more primitive and disorderly nations. In this way, the new League of Nations could legitimate prior U.S. interventions in Central America and the Caribbean. Interestingly, this idea of a soft imperialism, exercised for the protection of the weak, was the basis of the British policy of “colonial trusteeship.”

Bowman used a similar argument—the tutorship over inferior peoples—to justify U.S. colonial possessions in the Caribbean and the Philippines. In addition, he argued that the U.S. monitoring of the finances and politics of weaker nations in Central America and the Caribbean was preferable to direct U.S. rule (Bowman 1921). The expansion of U.S. influence in South America, moreover, was not a form of imperialism; it was a development that followed naturally from the expansion of U.S. capital and technology. Increased U.S. needs for tropical foodstuffs, the existence of undeveloped natural resources in the region, and the superiority of U.S. institutions had fueled U.S. economic expansionism in Latin America. This type of supremacy was the inevitable outcome of unregulated market forces.

In a 1948 article Bowman tried to adjust his previous views of Latin America to the conditions of post–Second World War trade and the communist menace. The United States had embraced a responsibility in world affairs that it was determined to keep, he stated. The policy of isolationism was consigned to the past. Further industrial development, given its limited natural resources, required U.S. companies to look outside to “world pioneer lands.” It was imperative for the United States to have free access to mineral resources, food, fibers, and oil produced by the dependent and colonial world. Accessibility to trade and investment were now the key to international development (Bowman 1948).

In the new world opened to U.S. investment and trade, Latin America would continue to play a role, but one smaller than those of other world regions. During the war, the United States had maintained a mutually beneficial trade in raw materials and foodstuffs with the region. Yet the region was unprepared for
postwar development. Bowman based his prognosis on geographic and historical reasons. In spite of its connections to world markets, Latin America had not overcome the isolation, separateness, and lack of transportation that he had observed in 1913–1915. Geographic isolation continued to reproduce intense regionalism and internal political fragmentation. In the concert of backward nations Latin American countries faced an additional difficulty: the coexistence of dependence on foreign capital and “primitive” peasant economies. To these two features Bowman added the other legacies of Spanish colonialism: political elitism, disdain for work, continuity of great landed estates, and disregard for legal norms. In this, his prescriptions were different from those of dependency theory. U.S. capital, aware of all these obstacles to development, would be reluctant to invest in the region. Moreover, as most good land was already occupied and cultivated, there was little room for additional agricultural development. And the region had not successfully dealt with its monumental “Indian problem.” Countries with a majority population of Indians would simply bypass the opportunity for rapid development: “It is idle to talk of universal suffrage and democratic majority procedures to an Indian group ignorant of political theory, incapable of choice, and walled off by centuries of deep-seated hostility toward whites” (Bowman 1948, 138).

Latin American countries had changed substantially, he acknowledged. They all had signed the Act of Chapultepec (1945), favoring a regional defensive union over the great experiment of a new world order, the United Nations. But they were hesitant about the new ideological divide of the day. If in the 1930s the region had been the target of Nazi propaganda, now it was a “soil prepared for the Communist sowing.” After so many efforts to push Latin America in the direction of liberal capitalism and republican democracy, the United States could not trust the support of Latin America in this new ideological conflict (ibid., 136). Apparently, the cultural policies of Pan-Americanism first and Good Neighborhood later had failed to produce a convergence in political and social ideas. By 1948, Bowman was disillusioned with the whole hemispheric idea. The informal empire had produced neither domination nor hegemony.

Some Empires Are Better than Others

In the interwar period U.S. scholars were clearly redefining the nature of empire. Modern empires had to provide public goods to their extraterritorial subjects, and in order to exert technological and cultural influence, they had to engage more closely with the life and history of their hinterlands. This entailed

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moving the question of imperial influence or hegemony to the territory of culture and knowledge.

Haring was an expert on the comparative history of empires. He considered European expansion overseas since the sixteenth century to be a “stupendous achievement” of Western civilization. In 1921 he offered his Yale students a course on the “Expansion of Europe” (History 169), which focused on the question of empires.20 In this course, he presented as the central dynamic of history the evolution from “old” to “modern” empires. At the beginning, it was discovery that gave some nations (Spain and Portugal) the right to colonial possessions. With time, however, naval power became the decisive force in inter-imperial competition. At that point, France, England, and Holland displaced the older Iberian empires. During the nineteenth century, the British empire achieved the largest expansion of sovereignty ever known. Over time, Great Britain shifted from an “old empire” built on naval supremacy and commerce to one based on the emigration and colonization of new lands. The settler colonies in Australia, South Africa, New Zealand, and Canada were part of Britain’s “new empire,” which reflected a less aggressive type of imperialism.

In these classes Haring defended the U.S. empire in the Caribbean and the Pacific as a provider of public goods. The British had given India political unity, internal peace, and a stable justice system. In similar ways, U.S. rule in the Caribbean and the Philippines had built social infrastructure and promoted a series of institutional reforms that were equally civilizational in nature.21 In Haring’s view the “American Empire” was a composite blueprint for doing things: government, architecture, roads, education, agriculture, public health, and so on.

Empires were to Haring laboratories of learning. Through the acquisition of the Indian subcontinent, Britain had come to administer an extraordinary diversity of races, religions, and grades of civilization. India was “the greatest living museum of races and languages.”22 Since early on, the British colonial administration had understood the necessity to study Indian languages, traditions, and forms of thought as a means to better govern this diversity. Later, experience demonstrated the fragility of such territorial empires. The British failed to understand that in order to survive, modern empires had to give in to colonial demands for self-rule. U.S. rule in Puerto Rico and the Philippines constituted a notable improvement in this direction. As colonial peoples would struggle for independence, it was the task of the modern colonizer to prepare them for self-government.23

Modern empires, argued Haring, were no longer territorial dominions or systems of trade protected by gunboats. They were cultural extensions of the
metropolis. The ascent of former colonies on the world scene was sufficient proof of the good services of empire. The British Commonwealth was, in this regard, exemplary: Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa had become prosperous self-governing nations, tied to England by “bonds of race and sympathy,” whose voices were taken into account in the formulation of dominion policy. A similar reasoning could be applied to the Latin American republics. After emancipating from Spain, they had constituted republican governments and gained experience in self-government. From the U.S. perspective, the relevant question was how to make these nations embrace Anglo-American traditions in economic, political, social, and cultural spheres.

Modern imperial hegemony was based on the dissemination of metropolitan culture over its hinterlands. Haring argued that the United States should try to spread intellectual and cultural influence in its Latin American hinterland, as the British had done in its dominions. Rather than a territorial empire, the modern U.S. empire should be a loose confederation of self-governing nations, guided by a Big Brother. Without mentioning it, Haring was describing the Pan-American Union (PAU), as it was conceived in the 1920s. We know that Haring enthusiastically embraced Pan-Americanism. The leaders of this movement had envisioned a new type of empire: one based on the persuasion of ideas and culture.

But there was a problem. In the 1920s members of the South American intelligentsia began to question the good intentions of the northern colossus, due to its repeated military interventions in the Caribbean and Central America. It became harder to explain to them that U.S. dominion in Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Nicaragua was different from the old Spanish empire. In a way, the residual presence of “old empire” was undermining the project of a “modern empire” of culture and expert knowledge. In the late 1920s Haring grew impatient with U.S. policy in Central America and the Caribbean. In an interview given to the Harvard Crimson in 1927, he criticized Washington’s policy in Nicaragua. Recurrent military interventions in Central America and the Caribbean made it quite difficult to promote Pan-Americanism. Although the United States should maintain its long-term strategy of defending canal rights and political order in the region, there was no need to intervene in the affairs of Nicaragua every time an election result was not acknowledged by the losing party.

In the 1930s Haring came to see South America as the future frontier of ideological persuasion. In part, this reformulation was related to the new political climate: military coups, Nazi sympathizers, and autarchic economic policies. Now spreading the gospel of democracy, economic progress, and
social equality became crucial for extending U.S. hegemony. The Spaniards had created hierarchical societies based on racial oppression and labor servitude and had restricted education to elites. To overcome these obstacles, the only open avenue was a new wave of colonizers—experts, entrepreneurs, and social reformers—who would put South America’s natural resources in motion, under conditions of greater social equality. In this way the region might return to the path of progress and civility pioneered by the United States.26

Postcolonial Pan-Americanism

Rowe was among those who argued for a more benevolent and cooperative U.S. empire. On the issue of Washington’s control of the agenda of inter-American relations, he favored a policy of multilateral hemispheric cooperation. He coined the term constructive Pan-Americanism to refer to the reforms he expected to see implemented in the inter-American system. Four principles were the basis of his reform agenda: (1) the countries of the Americas should banish forever the fear of mutual or external aggression; (2) they should avoid falling into the trap of the European balance of power; (3) within the region, it was necessary to prevent the hegemony of one group of countries over another; and (4) American nations should help each other solve their common financial, social, and industrial problems.27

The first two principles called for the construction of a defensive system, based on a concerted effort to keep the continent isolated from European conflicts. Within the pax, peace could be sustained through the arbitration of regional disputes. During the 1920s, Rowe thought the inter-American system could be the model for the League of Nations. The fourth principle entailed an extension of cooperation to areas under the sovereignty of national states: social, industrial, and financial policies. Underneath his notion of hemispheric cooperation was the conception of the United States as the grand arbiter of Latin American disputes. Since the expertise in policy problems resided in the United States, inter-American cooperation would consolidate U.S. prestige in areas of government, sanitation, policing, education, finance, and technology. In short, Rowe’s vision of U.S. continental hegemony relied on U.S. expert knowledge.

Rowe’s “constructive Pan-Americanism” required a 180-degree turn in U.S. policies as they were conceived in the 1920s.28 Rowe was among the first to demand a multilateral or cooperative approach to hemispheric defense. His most resonant diplomatic success was the recruitment of Argentina, Brazil, and Chile as brokers in the resolution of the 1914 Mexican imbroglio. After the fiasco of the Vera Cruz naval assault, President Wilson took Rowe’s advice
and called the ABC powers to mediate in the U.S. conflict with Mexico. Challenging Wilson’s nonrecognition policy, Rowe argued that the United States should not place itself in the position of judge of constitutional government for Mexico. His promotion of the ABC powers as arbiters in inter-American affairs was greatly appreciated in South American diplomatic circles.

Rowe (1917a) called for greater efforts in inter-American cooperation for the solution of common problems. The United States, he thought, should become a partner in the promotion of “democracy.” It should help Latin America to raise its standards of living, eliminate peonage, enact protective labor legislation, produce agrarian reform, and generate educational opportunities for all. The cooperation he had in mind would work chiefly through the educational system. Financial and commercial cooperation was not enough; a true better understanding should be attained at the intellectual and cultural level (ibid.).

At first glance, Rowe’s progressive stand—his promotion of a multilateral and constructive Pan-Americanism, concerned with solving social problems and with monitoring the development of democracy—seems to contrast with his early positions on “insular government.” Rowe had previously supported U.S. colonial ventures in the Caribbean and the Pacific, presenting U.S. interventions as legal, constitutional, and progressive. To an extent, Rowe’s changing views about U.S. policies toward Latin America were the product of his spatial displacement—and the greater knowledge gained—from the formal to the informal dependencies of the U.S. empire. His extensive travels across South America presented him with a new imperative: here were well-consolidated nation-states, republics with sufficient political stability and fiscal prudence to avoid situations favorable to European gunboat diplomacy. Temporal displacement also mattered. It was one thing to speak of Latin America at a time dominated by Theodore Roosevelt’s vision of the right of the United States to exert tutelage over the poor and unstable small Caribbean republics. It was quite another to speak about the inter-American order during the interwar period. Secretary Root’s visit to South America in 1906 had opened the discussion of national autonomy, peaceful resolution of disputes, and the benefits of mutual knowledge. This was later complemented by Wilson’s principle of national self-determination and the participation of South American representatives in the League of Nations (ibid.).

Rather than representing a break in Rowe’s thinking about empire, then, “constructive Pan-Americanism” constituted an adaptation of his conception of U.S. superiority and “helpfulness” to the South American situation. The opening of the Panama Canal, in his opinion, was more than a U.S. engineering feat. It provided a practical lesson in governance. In the Canal Zone, U.S.
Americans had demonstrated that modern sanitation methods could control endemic diseases and that clear and enforceable rules could bring order to the most disorderly of populations. Rowe’s enthusiasm about the persuasive power of U.S. expert knowledge and the superiority of U.S. government institutions remained strong after the outbreak of the First World War. During this period, he shifted his focus from constitutional government to democracy. Whereas Caribbean nations were not ready for constitutional government, the ABC nations could entertain the idea of experimenting with political, industrial, and social democracy. During his visit to Buenos Aires and La Plata, Rowe realized that Argentines and U.S. Americans had much in common. If this were so, a policy of cultural enticement and intellectual cooperation would do the trick.

Rowe (1902c) came to prefer economic supremacy over formal empire, and, with time, he came to see cultural and intellectual engagement as the best assurance for economic and political hemispheric unity. In South America indirect influence through economic supremacy could only go so far. Rowe was aware that in order to coopt South Americans, a great effort should be made in undoing previous misconceptions. The cooperation from South American governments and peoples would not come as the spillover of more intense economic interactions. Rowe came to envision the PAU as a sort of U.S. commonwealth, guided by common interest and ideals. Clearly, he attributed the greatest responsibility to the United States in steering the ship of Pan-Americanism toward peace, prosperity, and mutual understanding.

But he repeatedly insisted that, in order to gain sufficient consensus about policies and ideals, the PAU should conduct a well-planned and sustained effort in cultural and intellectual cooperation. This was Rowe’s idea of informal empire. In his view, U.S. hegemony would be the end result of a long, laborious effort in cultural diplomacy. To a certain extent, he projected a progressive theory of empire. The inter-American system would serve as a political mechanism for the cooperative solution to “common problems,” a label that included issues such as child welfare, common education, labor legislation, a robust public opinion, and so on.

A Continent for Democracy

In an article published in 1922 Rowe addressed the question of the state of democracy on the continent. The republican form of government, he said, was well established across the Americas. What was now at stake was the future of democracy. In his view Latin American nations were striving to “bring their social organization into closer harmony with their political institutions” (Rowe
The problem of democracy was that small landed elites controlled the political destinies of Latin America. The majority of the population, on the other hand, lived in poverty and in “abject economic dependence.” In South America the workforce remained unorganized and with relatively low standard of living. Efforts to raise the well-being of workers through popular education were failing. Bad nutrition, inadequate housing, and unhealthy cities conspired against social leveling. Latin America, proposed Rowe, had to push harder for social equality. The spread of democracy in the American continent required a “comprehensive plan of social legislation.” The great landed estates should be divided up and sold to landless tenants in order to create a class of small-farmers, the true basis of a democracy (Leo S. Rowe 1922).

In political terms the Latin American nations needed to bridge the gap between their constitutions and their actual government. Though the federalist system had been established by constitutions, most governments were centralized. Mexico and Argentina were examples of this divide between constitutional forms and governmental reality. The greatest challenge facing the southern republics was to create governments responsive to the wills of the majorities. Latin Americans had yet to learn political self-control, true respect for the law, and the art of reaching consensus through public discussion. This required a long process of education, which Rowe now said the United States could not provide. Departing from his own earlier recommendations, he said that the Latin American republics themselves had to learn these lessons.

Twenty years later, in the midst of the Second World War, Rowe revisited the question of democracy in the Americas. He recounted the story of Pan-Americanism as a successful building of hemispheric solidarity. The Good Neighbor Policy had radically changed the spirit of cooperation between the United States and Latin America. After the Montevideo (1933) and the Buenos Aires (1936) conferences, the American republics had united in the defense of hemispheric peace and had agreed on the principle of nonintervention. After Pearl Harbor, the nations of the hemisphere were ready to defend democracy. Despite minor deviations, the Latin American nations had sided with U.S. democracy and rejected European totalitarianism. At the end of the Rio de Janeiro meeting (1941), ten nations declared war against the Axis powers, and nine more severed diplomatic relations with them (Leo S. Rowe 1942).

Faced with an attack on democracy, the Latin American nations had joined the United States in the greatest struggle in history. More diligently and more resolutely than the British Commonwealth, the countries of the Pau had responded to the call of the hour. Rowe was enthusiastic about this response. Latin American nations were united for the defense of democracy against Nazi
aggression and against the lack of respect for international treaties and the rule of brute force. And Rowe imagined—as he had done before with reference to the League of Nations—that the hemispheric union would continue to serve as an example for the world (ibid., 77).

**Conclusion**

In several ways, U.S. scholars dealt critically with the question of empire. They questioned the contemporary validity of the Monroe Doctrine, pondered the transformative power of U.S. enterprise in the Andes, suggested a shift toward the provision of technical assistance to growth and welfare, tried to build a multilateral system of hemispheric cooperation, and emphasized the need to promote a better understanding of “American democracy.” These views contributed to project new responsibilities for the United States in South America: those of promoting hemispheric peace, increased economic integration, and better understanding between the two Americas. While at first scholars criticized U.S. interventions in the Caribbean and the principle of the Monroe Doctrine, it is clear that by the mid-1920s and early 1930s, the center of the debate had shifted toward issues of culture and knowledge.

Criticism of the Monroe Doctrine extended to the question of U.S. interventions in the Circum-Caribbean. Scholarly positions varied substantially in this regard. Some thought the U.S. colonial experience in the Caribbean could help the United States understand the new diplomatic scenario in South America. Others flatly rejected outmoded forms of interaction in favor of cooperative diplomacy, international law, and the arbitration of international disputes. For instance, there were important differences between Bingham and Rowe. Bingham favored the application of the Drago Doctrine to inter-American relations, rejecting the role of the United States as an “international policeman” for European creditors. Rowe, though condemning the methodology of Dollar Diplomacy, tended to view the Circum-Caribbean as an area of political instability and fiscal disorder that demanded occasional U.S. interventions. With regard to South America instead, he recommended building a spirit of cooperation and trust geared to the solution of common problems.

In the scholarly discussions of Rowe and Haring, we can discern a clear preference for “modern” forms of imperial engagement, that is, for empires that provided public goods and general welfare to their subject populations, and for an imperial bureaucracy ready to engage with the question of culture in the peripheries. In a way, these scholars anticipated the shift in U.S. foreign policy toward Pan-Americanism first, and Good Neighbor Policy later. A wiser
and more enduring hegemon would consider the ways of life of originary inhabitants of the land, would more closely monitor the behavior of U.S. corporations in South America, and would take inventory of the growing dissent among the southern intelligentsias about the perils of foreign economic intrusion and dominance.

The “rediscovery” of South America opened the way for scholars to project U.S. progressive and reformist impulses on the social and cultural landscape of the subcontinent. For example, Ross and Bowman introduced the question of social and racial inequality in the dialogue between the two Americas. The benevolent empire not only carried the banner of regional peace and national self-determination, but also presented itself as a moral force for the reduction of such inequalities in the region. While the U.S. colonial experience in the Caribbean and Central America had imposed on the United States the roles of law-giver, instructor of self-government, and financial, sanitary, and police advisor, South American nations presented to U.S. experts the opportunity for studying the different dimensions of “development,” a magical fountain from which unending words of expert advice could flow.