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Pierre Force. *Wealth and Disaster: Atlantic Migrations from a Pyrenean Town in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016. 256 pp. $45.00, cloth, ISBN 978-1-4214-2128-5.

Reviewed by James Braun (University of Toronto)

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Commissioned by Sarah Foss (Oklahoma State University)

In *Wealth and Disaster*, Pierre Force reconstructs microhistorical narratives of two Navarrese-origin families to shed light on the macrohistorical processes of nation-building and geopolitics throughout the Atlantic World in the Age of Revolutions. Over three generations of migrations and reversals of fortune, Force examines how both intimate and national identities intersected to produce a paradoxical image of French colonial wealth: the "American uncle" as a figure of easy but tainted and ephemeral riches.

Force argues that unpacking the historical circumstances that fixed the "American uncle" in the French imagination has much to teach us about how transatlantic connections were created, sustained, and unraveled, not at the scale of nations and colonies but between towns, parishes, and families. The generational movements of the Lamerenx and Mouscardy families throughout the Atlantic basin illustrate why migration networks formed and how they connected different parts of the Atlantic World. The accumulation and loss of their fortunes helps us to reconcile the paradoxical instability but long-term durability of Atlantic trade systems. Force argues that the mercantilist isomorphism between war and trade made capital accumulation fragile and fraught. Individuals "hedged their bets" on risky business ventures through generational kin connections; winning, losing, and restoring fortunes required strong transatlantic networks through which to seed and reinvest capital.

The first half of the book explains how and why Marc-Antoine Lamerenx and Jean Mouscardy, respectively from noble and peasant families, left their mutual home of La Bastide Clairence and established adjoining coffee plantations in Dondon parish, Saint Domingue. Their migration histories and business strategies are revealed to be embedded in a variety of social networks: of kin, of nationality and of patronage, and of the monopolistic trade policies of French colonialism.

The first chapter discusses the circumstances and motivations of each man's migration. Force concludes that Pyrenean inheritance customs, which awarded the family estate to the firstborn and only modest stipends to additional heirs, pushed each to Saint Domingue. Both were second-born sons and thus excluded from the inheritance. But Force's analysis also shows the nuances of the trope of the penniless "cadets de Gascone" seeking their fortune abroad (p. 2). He contends that these migrations were financed by the family as a strategy to build family wealth and manage the assets of the family estate. Investing in a colonial plantation was much less costly than

providing a dowry for a younger son to marry an heiress and provided much better potential income than other career paths (priest, military officer, government employee) conventionally available to the disinherited. Marc-Antoine was the first migrant from Saint Domingue, but his experience and demonstrated wealth would inspire many, including Jean, to follow his footsteps.

This argument is reinforced in chapter 3, which focuses on the migration of Jean-Pierre Lamerenx, Marc-Antoine's nephew and presumptive heir to the Lamerenx estate. As a first-born son, Jean-Pierre's voyage to Saint Domingue appears anomalous. But Force explains it as a strategic decision made with his parents to manage the family's mounting debts and to follow Marc-Antoine's path to wealth outside the constraints of "a system that protected estates by rendering assets inalienable but at the same time condemned the master of the house to be endlessly assailed by creditors" (p. 79). Decisions to pursue fortunes in the colonies, and to use colonial wealth, were made with reference to the collective assets and well-being of the family.

Chapter 2 examines the Lamerenx and Mouscardy families' business pursuits in Saint Domingue, specifically their decisions to settle in Dondon parish and establish coffee plantations. Patronage networks and the mercantilist entanglements of commerce and warfare proved decisive in these developments. Force attributes the start of the Lamerenx plantation to two advantages: the patronage of Pierre Gédeon de Nolivos and Marc-Antoine's marriage to Elizabeth le Jeune, daughter of wealthy established colonists. The former enabled Marc-Antoine to be in the right place at the right time to take advantage of Saint Domingue's coffee boom. De Nolivos was among the first to cultivate coffee in Saint Domingue; the generational connections between these families made Marc-Antoine privy to the first experiments with coffee growing. His marriage to Elizabeth provided both the capital and the connections to cheaply acquire land in the parish best suited for coffee growing. As the granddaughter of a soldier who had first asserted French control over the island, Elizabeth had preferential access to royal land grants, upon which their plantation was initially built.

Elizabeth's land-buying privileges are but one indication of the close relations between war and commerce that structured wealth acquisition in Saint Domingue. Marc-Antoine's own career in the colonial militia was unremarkable but signified and enabled his social and economic status in the colony. Commissioned service in the militia was a commonplace strategy for men to make themselves marriageable to the daughters (or widows) of planters and thus start plantations of their own. And the monopolistic trade between metropole and colony, guaranteed and enforced through expensive and protracted military investments, enabled the exorbitant profits that made Marc-Antoine rich and lured so many more colonists through the promise of similar riches.

The second half of the book examines the continuities and dislocations produced by revolutions in both Haiti and France. It addresses how, on the one hand, categories of race, class, and nationality were reinscribed, but, on the other, how patronage and kinship continued to influence how people realigned themselves throughout these upheavals. As the boundaries of imagined communities and categories were in flux, people anchored their identities and group memberships through the more concrete relationships of family and sponsorship.

Chapter 4 recounts the flight of the Lamerenx family and Jean Mouscardy to Santo Domingo and France respectively, as the uprising of the enslaved swept away the French colonial order. Amid the shifting allegiances of the insurrectionists and the colonial powers, Force considers the question of why Haiti's rebels-turned-national founders paid such scrupulous attention to the property rights of plantation owners. Connected to this question is the puzzle of Jean-Pierre Lamer-

enx's revolutionary military career; the slave-owning coffee planter served as an aide-de-campe to Toussaint l'Ouverture. Nevertheless, as l'Ouverture consolidated control over Haiti and invited planters to reclaim their sequestered plantations, Jean-Pierre chose instead to join his cousins who had since settled in Cuba.

Force offers two explanations for the strange affinities between Haiti's liberators and the ***grands blancs*** plantation owners of the colonial order. First, a complex political calculus associated the uprising of the enslaved to the royalist cause in revolutionary France. Jean-Pierre, as an aristocratic heir, was distrusted by the French republican forces quelling the revolt. He fled to Spanish Santo Domingo, which initially supported l'Ouverture. L'Ouverture in turn needed officers who knew Haiti and trusted each other; French colonial militia officers exiled to Spain satisfied both those requirements. Second, successive authorities in Haiti—republican France, l'Ouverture's rebels, and ultimately President Jean-Pierre Boyer—envisaged monopolistic trade with France, albeit with plantations run on free rather than enslaved labor, as key to postrevolutionary prosperity. Careful attention to the ownership of the plantations during the long upheaval was seen as crucial to restoring that relationship afterward.

Chapter 5 focuses on the postrevolutionary travels of Charles Lamerenx, Jean-Pierre's son. The Lamerenx family ultimately settled in Matanzas, Cuba, and established a new coffee plantation. But the exile of French aristocrats to colonial Spain was precarious; the Napoleonic invasion of Spain in 1808 provoked nationalist pressures to expel French refugees. For reasons unclear, Charles was the only Lamerenx to be caught in this expulsion. Force argues that Charles's subsequent travels through Santo Domingo, New Orleans, and Cartagena, his imprisonment in Cadiz, and eventual return to France were "determined by conflicts in Europe, as well as by colonial officials who acted essentially as free agents and waged war in the name of this or that sovereign power" (p. 130). Charles's attempts to settle and remain mobile, both successful and unsuccessful, are explained as expressions of the inchoate and shifting national identities that characterized the Atlantic basin of the early nineteenth century.

Force relies on extensive archival work, primarily legal documents, to follow these generational sagas. The Lamerenx family in particular, perhaps because of their noble status and their comparative postrevolutionary mobility, produced a rich history of civil suits within and between families, as well as appeals to the Crown for honors, military assignments, and occasionally clemency. Through these documents Force is able to interpret much about the loyalties, relationships, and business strategies of people represented therein.

This documentation is supplemented with literary data, in the form of coffee grower manuals as well as fiction and memoirs by Alejo Carpentier and Démesvar Delorme (a Mouscardy descendant), to illustrate the social categories and cultural ideas through which contemporaries understood the Atlantic basin. The combination is effective as Force consistently treats the archival evidence as authoritative; for example, he uses sequestration documents and newspapers to challenge Delorme's family legend of Jean Mouscardy's flight from Haiti. This misremembering is nevertheless generative in explaining the nostalgia for ***les grands blancs***. Where gaps exist in the archival record, conjectures with reference to literary materials are explained as such, offered conditionally and with explanation.

Force's analysis coincides with ideas pioneered by Mark Granovetter and Viviana Zelizer and popularized through the new economic sociology, that economic actions and their meanings are embedded in the social networks and institutional rationales in which actors circulate.[1] The generational conflicts between nation, religion, and family experienced by the Lamerenx family

offer important insights into how relations at these different scales operate within and against each other. But Force's argument often relies on an implicit methodological individualism, which is somewhat puzzling given that his analysis so often points to understanding individual actions within larger units of analysis. The "puzzle," for example, of Jean-Pierre's migration to Saint Domingue is resolved by contextualizing his actions as part of a strategy to preserve the house and keep his family solvent.

The limits of this perspective are made most clear in Force's contention that nationality in the Age of Revolutions was a matter of choice. Certainly, he demonstrates that nationality throughout the Atlantic basin was fluid and continually reinvented, but it is less clear that members freely chose their associations. Jean Mouscardy, Jean-Pierre Lamerenx, and Charles Lamerenx had considerable (although not absolute) agency in determining their national affiliations. The Lamerenx women, who fled to Santo Domingo at the outset of revolution and pleaded continually for the protection of the Spanish Crown, seemed to have nationality assigned to them as a matter of expediency. The retinue of house slaves that accompanied them to Santo Domingo and eventually Cuba had even less discretion. For many of ***Wealth and Disaster***'s protagonists, it was dispersed kin networks that determined the choices that were and were not available for claiming home and nationality.

Overall, ***Wealth and Disaster*** offers a rich and nuanced account of how fortunes were won and lost in the colonial Atlantic basin. Its account of intersecting logics of family, nationality, race, and class illustrate both the possibility and importance of greater conversations between economic sociology and economic history.

Note

[1]. Mark Granovetter "Economic Action and Social Structure: The Problem of Embeddedness," ***American Journal of Sociology*** 91, no. 3 (1985): 481-510; and Viviana Zelizer, ***The Social Meaning of Money*** (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997).

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