

# Spanish Black Legend: its Origin, its Intention, and its Current Presence in Hispanic-Americans Cognitive System

Jose L. Vilchez<sup>1</sup>, Oscar Santiago Vanegas Quizhpi<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Universidad de Cuenca, Spain. Email: [jlvil@hotmail.de](mailto:jlvil@hotmail.de)

<sup>2</sup>Conservatorio Superior José María Rodríguez, Ecuador.

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## Abstract

Propaganda has been historically used for the benefit of certain social groups faced up to another. This propaganda is not always ethical at all. It is based on misconceptions, lies, and fallacies. We have analyzed (by using an experimental Psychology task) the presence and cognitive weight of certain *mental footnotes* and their influence on the Reasoning of Hispanic-Americans (Ecuadorian). These mental footnotes have been extracted from the classical work “A brief account of the destruction of the Indies” of Bartolomé de las Casas in 1552. The most relevant and significant finding of this study is the clear evidence that nowadays we can still find these historical falsehoods in the current cognitive system of Ecuadorian people which are product of a well-planned and maliciously orchestrated propaganda. We conclude that all the contents of the Spanish black legend are the consequences of the aspirations of some social sectors to boycott the Spanish culture.

**Keywords:** Spanish black legend, cognitive system, mental footnotes, propaganda, social media, fallacy.

Colonialism has been defined as “the form of domination between countries in which one country or metropolis keeps other country located outside its borders under its political power” (Lozano, 2016, p.177). This manner, it is evident that colonialism could be historically found in most countries of the five continents. However, the definition seems to define (better than other forms of management) the way of functioning of certain societies and the metropolis-satellite city relationships in the early 20th century (around World War I; cf. Escobedo Espinosa, 2018). In this sense, in this purely colonial period of the 20th century, we can find limited national sovereignty,

subordination to the dominant power, Eurocentrism, slavery, abuses and violence, restrained free trade, and ruthless civilization and progress (Césaire, 2006; Fanon, 2012; Ramos, 2015). In contrast, the analysis of the Hispanic vicerealties in America (e.g., Mignolo, 2014; Peters, 2017; Sánchez, 2016) shows the different organization of the land and the recognition of the citizens’ rights (which is especially relevant in the field of slavery, abuses and violence; e.g., Cook, 1998; Cook & Lovell, 2000; Poncela González, 2015). In this regard, the germ of Human Rights is the School of Salamanca at the beginning of the discovery of America in the 16th century (cf. Poncela

González, 2015). Regarding the traditional, narrow vision of the Spanish Empire related to the concept of colonialism (which was not), some skeptical and critical perspectives arise trying to contribute with evidence that contradicts this misbelief (Acuna-Soto, Stahle, Therrell, Griffin, & Cleaveland, 2004; Carbia, 2004; Cook, 1998; Cook & Lovell, 2000; Jimenez, 2016; Pérez, Sanchez, & Den Boer, 2015).

From a Philosophical point of view, we can analyze the origin of the concept *anti-colonialism*. According to Hegel (1812/2015), the relationship between concepts is given by antagonism. In this sense, *identity* and *difference* are not independent realities. Both concepts contain each other and, therefore, each one is equal to itself. Therefore, all things are in contradiction with themselves and this very internal contradiction constitutes the engine of a systemic and organic whole. Consequently, the concept of colonialism was born imbued its antithesis: anti-colonialism (whether or not it is the proper term for certain concepts; e.g. the Hispanic viceroyalty). This manner, the antithesis of colonialism emerges as a response to the Eurocentric vision from the European countries (in the 20th century); as a rejection of the denigrating practices resulting from their way of thinking (e.g., Bruno, 2016). Hence, anti-colonialist beliefs arise along all colonized territories, such as in the case of Mahatma Gandhi in India (e.g., Radhakrishnan, 2019), William Edward Burghardt Du Bois in the United States (e.g., Marable, 2015), Ibrahim Frantz Fanon in the Caribbean or Ho Chi Ming in Indochina (e.g., Rodríguez, 2004). Although these struggles were fair, the real issue in the concept of colonialism is that it includes other concepts (such as *discovery* or *miscegenation*; from the 15th century); mixing them and, furthermore, generalizing the concept itself to other types of practices. Obviously, not everything in this discovery was idyllic. A quite different thing is that both concepts (*colony* and *viceroyalty*) are the same.

Driven by the European powers which arrived late to the distribution of the Americas (e.g., United Kingdom; cf. de Lezo, 2015), the proto-manifestations of anti-colonial thought were already found in the Hispanic-American territories in the 15th and the 16th centuries (cf. Mignolo, 2006). However, this first emergence is prior to the appearance of the proper anticolonial manifestations in French and English colonial territories. Although there are several references for these origins, the controversial Fray Bartolomé de las Casas (1552/2006) would be the most significant amongst them. From the invention of Gutenberg's printing press (e.g., Cañedo Andalia, 2004), Anglo-Saxons have tried to overthrow Spanish Empire (e.g., de Prada, 2014); most of the time, on a clumsy and lack-of-historical-rigor manner (see <https://www.gutenberg.org/>) and even by using one of the own Spaniards and his work (the widely cited and misused book "A brief account of the destruction of the Indies" of de las Casas; e.g., 1552/2007).

De las Casas has become iconic over the years. The contrasting assessments of this historical personality range from the role of savior of indigenous people against the ecclesiastical imperialism in America to the self-incongruous author who artificially sought fame and recognition (e.g., Hernandez, 2015); with a narcissistic personality (cf. Ordóñez Alberca & Vilchez, 2022). In this sense, Rodríguez and Sánchez (2015) consider de las Casas's prejudiced ideas related to the initial American discovery as historical misinterpretations; they are the result of animosity towards Spain due to the finding of the new world (e.g., Cook, 1998). This ideological battle is represented in the anti-Hispanic propaganda promoted by the nations opposed to Spain in that era (based on envy, aversion, and hatred). In this sense, one of the most important points to understand the motivations behind this propaganda is the

schism between Catholics and Protestants since 1517 (cf. Sánchez, 1990).

Some historians (by perpetuating historical fallacies) have had a significant and dangerous influence on the collective mind (cf. McNeil, 1986). In the path of knowledge, we should ask ourselves whether there are more plausible alternatives to these versions of History. In this sense, an early reference--that counter-argues the false practices related by de las Casas (1552/2006)--is found in Francisco de Quevedo y Villegas (1604). In his work titled "Spain defended", the author refuted de las Casas's alleged facts and drew attention to the problems in the Spanish-English diplomatic relations at that time (as the key factor of the success of the Spanish black legend). In this sense, those misconceptions spread fast thanks to the beliefs about Spain; already deeply established in the protestant Europe (e.g., Sánchez, 1990). The term black legend was coined for the first time in the book "The Black Legend: Studies About the Concept of Spain Abroad" (cf. Juderías, 1914), although the misconceptions related to it started much earlier. These fallacies about Spain and its discovery have not been corrected yet, even though they still act as propaganda (e.g., Sánchez, 1990). The anti-Spanish prejudices and distortions are nowadays present and cognitively active in Europe and America (as we will show in the present study).

Regarding propaganda, this kind of communication affects the masses when it is inserted into the social consciousness through colloquial ideas. In this sense, Joseph Goebbels (the architect of the National Socialist Party) was a great connoisseur of colloquial ideas' power (Ruiz, López-López, & Chavero, 2019); by introducing common people to simple concepts that were easy to remember and repeat. In other words, the objective of propaganda is to exercise "discipline in the public mind as much as an army imposes discipline on the bodies of its soldiers" (Bernays, 2008, p. 33).

Lakoff (2010) considers propaganda as the vehicle that provides conceptual structures (*mental schemas* in terms of Piaget, 1928) to the masses, constituting a cognitive framework that serves for future reasoning; whose effects are long-term maintained. Precisely, when the facts do not fit those frames, frames are kept but facts are ignored (Lakoff, 2010). In this sense, an indispensable variable for a good campaign is the use of emotions and stereotypes to provoke reactions in the masses (Bernays, 2008); emotions are quite persuasive (Pizarroso, 1993). This technique of appealing to the emotionality of the public has been well-known since ancient times; both the skills of musicians and orators are based on how they move the affections of their audience (Cicero, 2002). Aristotle (2019) precisely criticizes the sophists for convincing spectators by using techniques that move their emotions. Regarding this point, another powerful propagandistic effect is based on the instinct of war (Bernays, 2000). In war, the enemy is presented as evil to justify the struggle. This instinct influences even those who are not interested in anything since it connects to the need for victory that human beings inherently have (Lippmann, 2003).

## Research objectives

The term 'black legend' was coined at the beginning of the 20th century and collected complaints about how the real metropolis-satellite (colonies) relationships were being carried out. Even though the management of Spain of their viceroyalties was not so, all kinds of relationships have been wrongly categorized the same. However, the only critique that seems to be kept a long time refers to Spain. The malicious propaganda has a significant influence on social conceptions. The way to transmit and communicate those concepts is in the form of *mental footnotes* (in terms of Vilchez, 2019a, 2018, 2016). The implicit information known as "mental footnotes" can condition and control an entire reasoning

process (cf. Vilchez, 2019b, 2015), which in turn might influence daily decision-making. We want to check the presence of anti-colonial mental footnotes in the cognitive system of Hispanic Americans and to study how far and how deep their current influence on participants' reasoning. To this aim, we will analyze the work "Brevisima relación de la destrucción de las Indias" ("A Brief Account of the Destruction of the Indies") of Bartolomé de las Casas (1552/2006).

## Method

The study uses both qualitative and quantitative perspectives. To identify the most significant anti-colonial mental footnotes inserted in the work "Brevisima relación de la destrucción de las Indias" (de las Casas, 1552/2006), the frequency of words in the text was counted and it was selected the most frequent word (*Indian* and its plural [*Indians*]; qualitative analysis). After that, the weight that those concepts (in form of the whole sentence in which the word was present [the actual mental footnote]) had on the cognitive processing was measured. An experiment was created with this goal in mind. At this stage, participants had to decide if a given assertion was true or false. This methodology has been previously used in the literature (Vilchez, 2022; Vilchez & Sacaquirin-Rivadeneira, 2023).

### Qualitative research

**Procedure and materials.** The most relevant (frequent) mental footnotes of the text (in its Spanish version, "Brevisima relación de la destrucción de las Indias"; de las Casas, 1552/2006) were calculated (by using R i386 3.6.1 software). The word *Indian* (and its plural) was selected. In this manner, every statement containing the word *Indian* was examined in the text. Sentences that came before or after that statement were also examined to clarify the semantics of the phrase (cf. Vilchez & Sacaquirin-Rivadeneira, 2023). Finally, for the translation of the mental footnotes from Spanish

to English, the English version of "A Brief Account of the Destruction of the Indies" (de las Casas, 1552/2007) was used. In general, we do not think the text is properly translated but we had to accept it since it is supposed to be translated by professionals.

### Quantitative research

**Participants.** In this stage, fourteen university students, aged 18-38 ( $M = 23.69$ ,  $SD = 5.33$ ; 13 females), took part. Participants gave their informed consent and were not compensated financially for their time. Every participant stated having normal or corrected-to-normal vision and hearing, and they were unaware of the experiment's goal.

**Stimuli.** In the decision-making task, 84 mental footnotes collected during the qualitative research phase (see Table 1) were used. Every sentence was shown in the middle of a computer screen. The monitor was around 85 cm away from participants. Considering that the text's capital letters were 1.06 cm in height, each character's visual angle was 0.006. Two types of statements were displayed in red following each mental footnote: (a) "this statement is true"; and (b) "this statement is a lie". To aid participants in order to concentrate on the truth/lie entity of the previously provided mental footnote, the terms *true* and *lie* were bolded. The aim of this procedure was to isolate and to strengthen participants' Response Times (RTs); not to analyze their ability to read.

**Procedure and materials.** The paradigm used in the experiment was a decision task. After providing their informed consent, the participants were sat in front of a computer screen and were given the task instructions, which specified that several sentences would be presented until the participant's response (spacebar). Subsequently, the sentences "this statement is true" or "this statement is a lie" appeared on the computer screen. The task consisted in pressing the key "p" or "q" when participants respectively agreed or disagreed to these two kinds of asseveration; as it is shown in Figure 1.

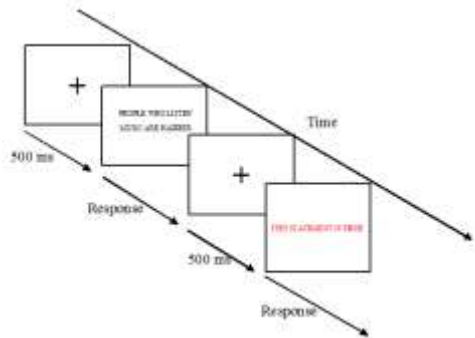


Figure 1. Schematic of the decision task.

Note. Presentation sequence of the task: fixation point, mental footnote, fixation point, agreement/disagreement to the statement presented.

To acquaint participants with the task, there was a practice block consisting of ten trials. Irrelevant mental footnotes like “people who listen to music are happier” and “having a degree makes it easier to work” were included in this practice block. The experimental block consisted on the presentation of 168 mental footnotes (the 84 from the qualitative stage; see Table 1) randomly presented and followed by both statements “this statement is true” or “this statement is a lie”.

OpenSesameTM software was utilized to record participant responses and show stimuli (Mathôt, Schreij, & Theeuwes, 2012). A HP Intel® CoreTM 2 T5500 mobile Intel® 945 Express Chipset Family screen adapter with 1,66 GHz/1,66 GHz processor with 0 RAM GB was used as the hardware.

Research design. The first Independent Variable (IV) was named Reality of mental footnotes (i.e., “this statement is true”/“this statement is a lie”). A cluster analysis of participants’ RTs to those asseverations was used to create the two groups within both kinds of the reality of the statements (cf. Vilchez & Sacaquirin-Rivadeneira, 2023). This analysis made possible to constitute the second IV

(manipulated “by selection”); named Kind of mental footnote (with two levels: “Strong mental footnotes” and “Moderate mental footnotes”). The count of participants’ choices (agreements and disagreements to the asseverations) and the participants’ RTs were the Dependent Variables (DVs). Two descriptive, quasi-experimental designs were applied with a: (a) 2 (Reality of mental footnotes) x 2 (Kind of mental footnote) design for the count of participants’ choices; and (b) 2 x 2 design (with the same IVs) for the RTs.

Data analysis. The total number of data rows was 2,688 (168 trials x 16 participants). To create the second IV, the RTs were subjected to a k-means analysis to group mental footnotes with comparable reaction patterns. Every observation in the k-means vector quantization belongs to the cluster that has the closest centroid (Mahajan, Nimbhorkar, & Varadarajan, 2009). The distribution of the data is used to generate the centroids rather than just the RT mean alone. This computation enables mental footnotes with comparable forms of responses to be clustered together. Two categories of mental footnotes—“Strong mental footnotes” and “Moderate mental footnotes”—were grouped this way; generating the two levels of the second IV (Kind of mental footnote).

Every option in the decision task was counted for the first DV. The primary goal was to elucidate most of the choices made at each level of the Kind of mental footnote (second IV) and Reality of mental footnotes (first IV). Conversely, we employed the Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test of goodness of fit for the second DV to verify that the data distribution of RTs for every cluster group was normal. This verification was done to determine whether to apply a non-parametric (Wilcoxon signed-rank) or parametrical (Student’s t) test to examine the differences in RTs between the two levels of mental footnote types in each level of the Reality of mental footnotes.

## Results

### Qualitative research

In preliminary analyses, the ten most frequent words in the text were: (a) Indian/s (187); (b) land (129); (c) Spaniards (121); (d) people (100); (e) Christians (92); (f) God (90); (g) nation (80); (h) lord (74); (i) men (60); (j) landowner (60). Since Indian was the most frequent word, sentences purely related to that word (as a theoretical concept) were considered. When repeated, the same sentence was excluded (e.g., “The Spaniards never received

any injury from the Indians...”); that makes that the number of mental footnotes are less than the number of times that the concept appears in the text (apart from the cases in which the word was repeated several times in the same sentence). After this selection, 84 mental notes were considered (see Table 1). In the English translation of the text (cf. de las Casas, 1552/2007), the concept of Indian/s might not appear because it is substituted by its pronouns (he or they); that means sometimes the word Indian/s does not appear in the translation.

Table 1. Mental footnotes obtained in the qualitative research.

Mental footnotes related to <i>Indian/s</i>
**The Spaniards never received any injury from the Indians, but that they rather revered them as persons descended from heaven, until that they were compelled to take up arms, provoked thereunto by repeated injuries, violent torments, and unjust butcheries.
***They violently forced away women and children to make them slaves, and ill-treated them, consuming and wasting their food, which they had purchased with great sweat, toil.
Which everyone according to his strength and ability freely bestowed on them.
***They began to understand that such men as those had not their mission from heaven and some of them concealed their provisions and others to their wives and children in lurking holes, but some, to avoid the obdurate and dreadful temper of such a nation, sought their refuge on the craggy tops of mountains.
They began to consider by what ways and means they might expel the Spaniards out of their country, and immediately took up arms. Both offensive and defensive, as resemble reeds wherewith boys sport with one another, more than manly arms and weapons.
***If at any time it happened, (which was rarely) that the Indians irritated upon a just account destroyed or took away the life of any Spaniard.
***They promulgated and proclaimed this law among them, that one hundred Indians should die for every individual Spaniard that should be slain.
The Spaniards and certain party of horse (which proved very offensive to the Indians) made such havoc and slaughter among them, that the half of this kingdom was laid waste and depopulated.
Indians had ever a just cause of raising war against the Spaniards, and the Spaniards on the contrary never raised a just war against them.
*The Spaniards were carried by them on the shoulders in a pensil vehicle or carriage, or kind of beds made of net-work by the Indians; for in truth they made use of them as beasts to carry the burthens and cumbersome baggage of their journeys.
**The Spaniards upon what American coasts so ever they arrived, exercised the same cruelties, slaughters, tyrannies and detestable oppressions on the most innocent Indian nation.
***Seeing themselves perish and die without any redress, they fled to the mountains for shelter, but others desperate, put a period to their days with a halter, and the husband, together with his wife and children, hanging himself, put an end to those calamities.
By the ferocity of one spanish tyrant above two hundred Indian hanged themselves of their own accord.
**A certain person here in the same isle constituted to exercise a kind of royal power, happened to have three hundred Indians fall to his share, of which in three months, through excessive labour, one hundred and sixty were destroyed, insomuch that in a short space there remained but a tenth part alive, namely

thirty.
*They consulted how to persecute those that lay hid in the mountains, who were miserably massacred, and consequently this isle made desolate.
***And although Spain has been sufficiently furnished with the purest gold, yet it was dragged out of the bowels and mines of the said countries by the Indians, where (as we have said) they perished.
***This ruler, with his accomplices found out new inventions to rack, torment, force and extort gold from the Indians.
***Indians should be commended on the penalty of a bloody war, death, and perpetual bondage, to embrace the Christian faith, and submit to the obedience of the Spanish king.
***You, Cacique and Indians of this continent, the inhabitants of such a place, which they named; we declare or be it known to you all, that there is but one God, one hope, and one king of castile, who is Lord of these countries; appear forth without delay, and take the oath of allegiance to the Spanish king, as his vassals.
***A great number of Indians with a fervent desire of recovering their wives and daughters appeared in arms against the Spaniards, and when they drew near the enemy, they unwilling to lose the prey, run the wives and maidens through with their swords.
The Indians through grief and trouble, smiting their breasts, brake out into these exclamations: Oh, perverse generation of men! Oh, cruel Spaniards!
***He commanded the Spaniards to make excursions, that is, to rob other provinces, permitting and granting these thieving rogues leave to take away by force as many of these peaceable people as they could, who being chained that they might not sink under the burthen of sixty or eighty pound weight.
It frequently happened, that of our thousand Indians, six only returned home, and so they died by the way.
Those were journeys, which we travelled frequently in the service of Christians, and in some tract of time we returned to our habitations, wives and children: but now there being no hope of a return, we are forever deprived of their sight and conversation.
Spaniards did by force plunder the Indians of the whole stock of corn that they had laid up for the support of their families, and by these indirect courses above thirty thousand perished with hunger. Nay it fortun'd at one time, that a woman oppress'd with insufferable hunger, deprived her own son of his life to preserve her own.
Spaniards appropriated the lands of the Indians, tilled the lands and fed on their poor food.
***Spaniards had the Indians inside their houses (principal Indian, old, women and children) and they made them served nights and days without rest.
Now the Indians are but slenderly stored with servants; for it is much if a Cacique hath three or four in his retinue, therefore they have recourse to the subjects; and when they had, in the first place, seized the orphans, they required earnestly and instantly one son of the parent, who had but two, and two of him that had but three.
Five or six ships made ready to be freighted with Indians that were sold in the regions of Panama and Perusium, where they all died.
***And by this means, there have been taken out of this province five hundred thousand inhabitants and upward, who before were freemen.
Indians when transported out of their native country into any other, soon die; because they are shortened in their allowance of food, and the task imposed on them no ways diminished, they being only bought for labour.
***It was a thing worthy of pity and compassion to behold this wretched people in what a condition they were when they prepared themselves to receive the burthens laid on them by the Spaniards. They came to them naked, their privities only vailed, their shoulders loaded with food.

Two or three days after some of them, who hid themselves among the dead bodies, being all over besprinkled with blood and gore, presented themselves to the Spaniards, imploring their mercy and the prolongation of their lives with tears in their eyes and all imaginable submission, yet they, not in the least moved with pity or compassion, tore them in pieces.
***All the nobility and commonality of the city thought of nothing else, but how to exhilarate the spirit of their captive king, and solace him during his confinement with a variety of diversions and recreations; and among the rest, this was one, viz, revellings and dances which they celebrated in all streets and highways, by night and they in their idiom term <i>mirotes</i> .
***Indians seeing this not to be exampled cruelty and iniquity executed against such a number of guiltless persons, and also bearing with incredible patience the unjust imprisonment of their king, from whom they had an absolute command not to take up arms against the Spaniard, the whole city was suddenly up in arms fell on the Spaniards and wounded many of them, the rest hardly escaping.
Indians destroyed a great number retreating on the bridges made over their lakes in this just and holy war, for the causes above mentioned, deserving the approbation of every upright judge.
Indians perceiving that this barbarous and hard-hearted people would not be pacified with humility, large gifts, or unexampled patience, but that they were butchered without any cause, upon serious consultation took up a resolution of getting together in a body, and fighting for their lives and liberty.
**Spaniards took this course to prevent them for the future; and made this a law, that as many of the Indians of what age or sex so ever as were taken, should be cast into these ditches that they had made. Nay they threw into them women with child, and as many aged men as they laid hold of.
***Every one culled out a hundred, or fifty, according as he thought convenient for his peculiar service, and these wretched Indians did serve the Spaniards with their utmost strength and endeavor; so that there could be nothing wanting in them but adoration.
Those that escaped, with other Indians, engaged the Spaniards by force of arms.
***It was the usual custom of this tyrant, when he made war with any city or province, to take along with him as many of those Indians he had subjugated as he could, that they might fight with their country-men; and when he had in his army twenty, or sometimes thirty thousand of them, and could not afford them sustenance, he permitted them to feed on the flesh of other Indians taken prisoners in war.
He as the death of many by the intolerable labour of carrying ships by land, causing them to transport those vessels with anchors of a vast weight.
***He separated and divided families, forcing married men from their wives, and maids from their parents, which he bestowed upon his mariners and soldiers, to gratified their burning lust. All his ships he freighted with Indians, where hunger and thirst discharged them of their servitude and his cruelty by a welcome death.
*How many parents has he robbed of their children, how many wives of their husbands, and children of their parents? How many adulteries, rapes, and what libidinous acts hath he been guilty of? How many hath he enslaved and opprest with insufferable anguish and unspeakable calamities? How many tears, sighs and groans hath he occasioned? To how many has he been the author of desolation, during their peregrination in this, and of damnation in the world to come, not only to Indians, whose number is numberless.
***Eight hundred Indians (that had rational souls) were given in exchange for a burthen-bearing-beast, a mule or camel.
A companion of this governor employed eight thousand Indians in erecting a wall to inclose his garden, but they all died, having no supplies, nor wages from him, to support themselves, at whose death he was not in the least concerned.
A certain visitor of purses rather than souls happened to be here present, who detained grandees as slaves, till they had delivered him all their idols, for he fancied they were made of gold or silver, but his expectation being frustrated, he chastised them with no less cruelty than injustice.

***Spaniards killed many Indians hanging them and burning them alive, throwing them at the dogs and cutting off their feet, hands, heads and tongues.
The cause of the Indians is most just, as well by the law of nature, as the divine and humane, they by force of arms, destroying them, hacking them in pieces, and turning them out of their own confines and dominions.
Spaniards used to trace the steps of the Indians, both men and women with furious dogs.
An Indian woman that was sick happened to be in the way in sight, who perceiving that she was not able to avoid being torn in pieces by the dogs, takes a cord that she had and hangs herself upon a beam, tying her child (which she unfortunately had with her) to her foot; and no sooner had she done, yet the dogs were at her, tearing the child, but a priest coming that way baptized it before quite dead.
*The terrified people delivered up their children, and by this means there was an end made of this sacrilegious merchandize, and thus the Cacique satisfied the greedy desires of the (I dare not say Christian) Spaniards.
***Indians now find in the promises of the religious, that the Spaniards should not enter into this country, null and void; nay that the Spaniards brought idols from other places to be put off there; when as they had delivered up their own to the priests to be burnt, that there might be only worship of the true God.
What is most flagitious and wicked persuaded the Indians, that Spaniards were introduced by those priests.
They term them warlike Indians, who betake themselves to the mountains to secure themselves from spanish cruelty; and call them country Indians, or inhabitants, who by a dreadful massacre are delivered up to tyrannical and horrible servitude.
**The Indians of this country use to break out into such words as these, when they are driven, loaded like brutes through the uncouth ways in their journeys over the mountains, if they happen to faint through weakness, and miscarry through extremity of labour, they are kicked and cudgel their teeth dasht out with the pummels of their swords to raise them up again, when tired and fallen under weighty burthens, and force them to go on without respiration.
The Indian lords and subjects gave them a debonair and brotherly reception, serving them with wonderful alacrity, furnishing them with daily provisions in so plentiful a manner, that they might have sufficed a more numerous company, for it is the mode among Indians of this new world, to supply the Spaniards very bountifully with all manner of necessaries.
***As soon as they were arrived according to custom, they were entertained like celestial messengers, with great affection, joy and respect, as well as they could, for they were ignorant of their tongue, and so made use of signs, for the present.
As soon as they were upon deck, the perfidious rogues, set sail for Hispaniola, where they were sold as slaves.
***There can be nothing crueller and more detestable then the tyrannical usage of the Spaniards towards the Indians in their pearl-fishing.
**They have destroyed all the Lucayans by this intolerable or rather diabolical exercise, for the accustomary emolument or gain of lucre, and by this means gained the value of fifty, sometime one hundred crowns of every individual Indian. They sell them (though it is prohibited) publicly.
Spaniards were a long time consuming the land, the Indians served them as if life and salvation depended on it, they suffered the continuous oppressions and regular importunities, which were intolerable.
What Spaniards consumed in one day was equal to what was enough to feed a house where ten Indians lived.
*All the Indians, with their wives and children if possible, should be taken into custody; in closed in some large capacious place, and that there it should be signified unto them, whosoever desired to be set at liberty should redeem himself at the will and pleasure (as to price) of the unjust governor, or at a certain rate imposed upon himself, his wife and every child's head.

Several of them sent home to discharge the demanded price of their redemption, and procured their freedom, as well as they could by one means or other, that so they might return to their livelihood and profession, but not long after he sent other rogues and robbers among them to enslave those that were redeemed.
**Spaniards carried the Indians loaded with three and four <i>arrobas</i> (a weight of around 25 pounds), wrapped in chains. If anyone were tired or passed out of hunger or weakness, they cut off their head by the chain collar (just for not to stop and to disassert the others) and they distributed the load of that one on which the others were carried out.
All the Indians were made slaves because of the perversion of the tyrant and greedy Spaniards; because of blind and stubborn will to fulfill his insatiable greed for money.
*Spaniards are going to be rich and great lords due to the destruction, killing and robbery of the <i>Indias</i> .
One of the governors commanded his soldiers to go to a certain village, and if they denied them provisions, to put all the inhabitants to the sword.
He commanded, they should be delivered up, as prisoners to their mortal Indian enemies, who begged with loud clamors and a deluge of tears, that they might be dispatch out of this world by their own hands.
***I have seen the Indians bestow very liberally on them gold, silver, and jewels.
***Nor did the Indians ever betake themselves to their arms in an hostile manner, till by infinite injuries and cruelties they were compelled thereunto: For on the contrary, they gave the Spaniards an amicable and honorable reception in all their towns, and furnished them with provisions, and as many male and female servants as they required.
**Spaniards gathered together as many Indians as filled three houses, to which, for no cause, (or a very inconsiderable one) they set fire, and burnt every one of them.
***I have seen the Spaniards let loose their dogs upon the Indians to bait and tear them in pieces.
***I saw them send to several Cacique and principal Indians, promising them a protecting passport to travel peaceably and securely to them, who, no sooner came, but they were burnt.
***According to information from the Indians themselves, that there are to this day far greater quantities of gold kept hid and concealed than ever were yet detected or brought to light, which by means of the Spanish injustice and cruelty, they would not then, nor ever will discover so long as they are so barbarously treated, but will rather chose to dye with the herd.
***They sent some Indians for gold, who frequently, and at several times, brought him a great quantity of gold, and many jewels; but because the king did not, according to his promise, bestow upon him an apartment made of pure gold, he must therefore forfeit his life.
**For fear of the known cruelties that tyrants imparted to Indians, they escaped to the mountains.
***Spaniards persecuted the Indians who escaped to the mountains, found them and killed men, women and children, because they didn't forgive anyone.
Commands all these Indians, sleeping and taking their rest, after supper, being wearied with the heavy drudgery of the day, to be slain by the sword: And this stratagem he put in practice, to make a greater impression of fear on all the minds of the inhabitants.
*Spaniards punished to Indians who left (who escaped of the great carnage) as if they had done some injustice and it belonged to them give punishment.
To consummate all of their great cruelty, Spaniards looked for all Indians who had been hidden among the mountains and ordered that everyone be stabbed. Thus, they were killed and thrown down the cliff.
Spaniards had very rough dogs trained and fierce to kill and tear the Indians.
***To keep the dogs, Spaniards bring many Indians chained along the road, as if they were herds of pigs and kill them to have public carnage of human flesh as dog food.

Note: \*Strong mental footnotes for the phrase “this statement is true”. \*\*Strong mental footnotes for both “this statement is true” and “this statement is a lie”. \*\*\* Strong mental footnotes for the phrase “this statement is a lie”.

### Quantitative research

Cluster groups. The k-means test revealed two categories of mental footnotes (Strong mental footnotes and Moderate mental footnotes), with respect to “this statement is true” (from the variable Reality of mental footnotes). Sixteen mental footnotes (ten of which were shared by both levels of the Reality

of mental footnotes) were strong, and seventy were moderate. The Strong mental footnotes in this level of the IV are shown in Table 2. Regarding “this statement is a lie” (from the variable Reality of mental footnotes), there were 41 Strong mental footnotes (ten of them shared; see Table 1).

Table 2. Choices for “this statement is real in the current society” and “this statement is unreal in the current society”.

“this statement is real in the current society”		
Strong mental footnotes	Count of agreements	Count of disagreements
a) “A certain person here in the same isle constituted to exercise a kind of royal power, happened to have three hundred Indians fall to his share, of which in three months, through excessive labour, one hundred and sixty were destroyed, insomuch that in a short space there remained but a tenth part alive, namely thirty.”	9	5
b) “They have destroyed all the Lucayans by this intolerable or rather diabolical exercise, for the accustomed emolument or gain of lucre, and by this means gained the value of fifty, sometime one hundred crowns of every individual Indian. They sell them (though it is prohibited) publicly; for the Lucayans were excellent swimmers, and several perished in this Isle that came from other provinces.”	8	6
c) “How many parents has he robbed of their children, how many wives of their husbands, and children of their parents? How many adulteries, rapes, and what libidinous acts hath he been guilty of? How many hath he enslaved and oppressed with insufferable anguish and unspeakable calamities? How many tears, sighs and groans hath he occasioned? To how many has he been the author of desolation, during their peregrination in this, and of damnation in the world to come, not only to Indians, whose number is numberless.”	13*	1
d) “The Christians were born by them on the shoulders in a pensil vehicle or carriage, or kind of beds made of net-work by the Indians; for in truth they made use of them as beasts to carry the burthens and cumbersom baggage of their journeys.”	13*	1
e) “They consulted how to persecute those that lay hid in the mountains, who were miserably massacred, and consequently this isle made desolate.	8	6
f) “All the Indians, with their wives and children if possible, should be taken into custody; inclosed in some large capacious place, and that there it should be signified unto them, whosoever desired to be set at liberty should redeem himself at the will and pleasure (as to price;) of the unjust governour, or at a certain rate imposed upon himself, his wife and every child head.”	10*	4
g) “Spaniards punished to Indians who left (who escaped of the great carnage) as if they had done some injustice and it belonged to them	14*	0

give punishment.”		
h) “Spaniards took this course to prevent them for the future; and made this a law, that as many of the Indians of what age or sex so ever as were taken, should be cast into these ditches that they had made. Nay they threw into them women with child, and as many aged men as they laid hold of.”	8	6
i) “Spaniards carried the Indians loaded with three and four <i>arrobas</i> (a weight of around 25 pounds), wrapped in chains. If anyone were tired or passed out of hunger or weakness, they cut off their head by the chain collar (just for not to stop and to disassert the others) and they distributed the load of that one on which the others were carried out.”	11*	3
j) “Spaniards gathered together as many Indians as filled three houses, to which, for no cause, (or a very inconsiderable one) they set fire, and burnt every one of them.”	7	7
k) “I have seen the Indians bestow very liberally on them gold, silver, and jewels.”	12*	2
l) “The Spaniards never received any injury from the Indians, but that they rather revered them as persons descended from heaven, until that they were compelled to take up arms, provoked thereunto by repeated injuries, violent torments, and unjust butcheries.”	11*	3
m) “The terrified people delivered up their children, and by this means there was an end made of this sacrilegious merchandize, and thus the Cacique satisfied the greedy desires of the (I dare not say Christian) Spaniards.”	8	6
n) “Spaniards are going to be rich and great lords due to the destruction, killing and robbery of the Indians.”	12*	2
ñ) “For fear of the known cruelties that tyrants imparted to Indians, these escaped to the mountains.”	14*	0
o) “The Indians of this country use to break out into such words as these, when they are driven, loaded like brutes through the uncouth ways in their journeys over the mountains, if they happen to faint through weakness, and miscarry through extremity of labour, they are kicked and cudgel their teeth dasht out with the pummels of their swords to raise them up again, when tired and fallen under weighty burthens, and force them to go on without respiration..”	12*	2

Note. \*Majority of agreements/disagreements in each mental footnote (in the case of).

Participants' choices. Regarding “this statement is true” (the only one where the difference of RTs was significant; see following section), Table 2 shows that the strongest mental footnotes--that people think are true--are: (c), (d), (f), (g), (i), (k), (l), (n), (ñ), and (o). The rest of them have practically an even count of agreements/disagreements. The two mental footnotes that have unanimity are (g) and (ñ); i.e., *Spaniards punished to Indians who left (who escaped of the great carnage) as if they*

*had done some injustice and it belonged to them give punishment; and For fear of the known cruelties that tyrants imparted to Indians, these escaped to the mountains*, respectively. Both mental footnotes refer to the Indians' escape from the Spaniards result of the alleged cruelty towards them. The rest of Strong mental footnotes (that participants think they are true) spin also around cruelty; apart from killing and robbery (see Table 2).

Comparisons in RTs between Moderate mental footnotes and Strong mental footnotes. First of all, with regards to “this statement is true”, for both the Moderates mental footnotes,  $Z(14) = 0.15$ ,  $p = .2$ , and Strong mental footnotes,  $Z(14) = 0.18$ ,  $p = .2$ , the data distribution of RTs follows a normal distribution. Regarding “this statement is a lie”, likewise, for both the Moderates mental footnotes,  $Z(14) = 0.12$ ,  $p = .2$ , and Strong mental footnotes,  $Z(14) = 0.11$ ,  $p = .2$ , the data distribution of RTs fits to a normal distribution.

Secondly, with regards to “this statement is true”, there is a significant difference between both groups of mental footnotes in their RTs,  $t(13) = 2.2$ ,  $p < .048$ ; the lowest RTs are for the Strong mental footnotes ( $M = 1,442.66$  ms,  $SD = 1,058.5$ ) in comparison to the RTs for the Moderate mental footnotes ( $M = 1,649.49$ ms,  $SD = 1,568.14$ ; see Figure 2). Regarding “this statement is a lie”, there is non-significant difference between the Moderates mental footnotes and Strong mental footnotes for their RTs,  $t(13) = 2.05$ ,  $p = .061$ .

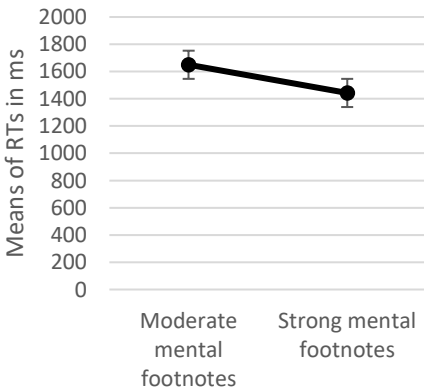


Figure 2. Means of Response Times (RTs) for each group for “this statement is true”.

Conclusions

The present study shows, as it was its aim, how certain thoughts are still present in the Thinking and Reasoning of Hispanic Americans

(Ecuadorian people in this case). As the main results pointed out, there is a fake belief that Spaniards were unnecessarily cruel while the America discovery (see Strong mental footnotes [g] and [ñ], that people think they are true [“this statement is true”]; Table 2). The rest of Strong mental footnotes that people think they are true deal with a more-than-untruthful, supposed killing and robbery (see mental footnotes [c], [d], [f], [i], [k], [l], [n], and [o]; Table 2). Regarding “this statement is a lie”, although the statistics k-means clustered two different groups, their difference of RTs is not significant.

Taking into account that propaganda has a significant and determining effect on the human Attitude, Motivation and Behavior (e.g., Bernays, 2008, 2000; Lakoff, 2010; Lippmann, 2003), these results are socially relevant. These misconceptions prevent from a future, possible re-unification of the countries that share the same culture and Language (e.g., Mogroviejo, 2009). Apart from that, these thoughts create an unnecessarily environment misadjusted that makes difficult the cohabitation of linked nations.

The most relevant and significant finding of this study is the clear evidence that nowadays we can find lies, misconceptions and fallacies in the current cognitive system of Hispanic-American which are product of a well-planned and maliciously orchestrated propaganda. Let`s take a simple but clarifying example. The battle of Cartagena de Indias (cf. de Lezo, 2015). Already in the 1711, the recently constituted United Kingdom (1707) had plans to denigrate the great Spanish Empire; we have just to take into account the work “A proposal for humbling Spain” (Roberts, 1711). This malicious intention led into the attempt to conquer Cartagena de Indias and its consequent fiasco (cf. Zafra Caramé, 2017); preceded by the religious schism of 1517 (cf. Sánchez, 1990).

We, as scientists, do not believe in chances. All the contents of the Spanish black legend (cf. Juderías, 1917), its historical roots (de las

Casas, 1552/2006) and the current presence (the current work) are the consequences of the more-than-likely aspiration of some social sectors to boycott the Spanish culture (e.g., Roberts, 1711). It is time for Spaniards and Hispanic-Americans to wake up from their complexes and insecurities and contribute to the worldwide development from their culture and vital perspective.

### Ethical statement

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### Data Availability Statement

The data will be available on reasonable request.

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