*H-France Forum*
Volume 16 (2021), Issue 1 # 1

James Livesey, *Provincializing Global History: Money, Ideas, and Things in the Languedoc, 1680-1830.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020. ix + 214 pp. Figures, notes, and index. $45.00 (hb). ISBN: 978-0-3002-3716-0.

Review essay by Gail Bossenga, Independent Scholar

What does it mean to "provincialize" global history, and how would that be done? That is the question that James Livesey invites us to consider in his provocative exploration of Languedoc over the period 1680-1830. Livesey frames his inquiry by referring to the debate surrounding the so-called "Great Divergence."[1] According to this thesis, throughout history, prosperous areas around the globe, such as parts of China and India, enjoyed periods of impressive economic growth sustained by rising levels of urbanization, trade, population, and agricultural productivity. This momentum, however, always reached a ceiling that capped its development. Then around the mid- eighteenth century, Britain and parts of Western Europe broke through this bar and began to experience an era of unprecedented, self-sustaining growth made possible by industrial capitalism. What enabled these areas to transcend the previous limitations experienced by flourishing, yet still traditional, economies?

Many factors have been suggested to account for the rise of the West. One approach argues that European exceptionalism was responsible. Europe enjoyed unique advantages such as favorable political constitutions, legal frameworks, property rights, commercial networks, reliable systems for diffusing knowledge, flexible credit systems, the possession of critical natural resources, and the like. Others, by contrast, contend that Europe's take-off was made possible by new global contacts. Europe reaped unprecedented benefits from the colonization of the Americas, discovery of new foodstuffs, exploitation of precious metals, and rapidly expanding intercontinental trade.[2] Of course, the two positions do not have to be mutually exclusive.

From this much larger debate, Livesey draws our attention to several factors. First, as he observes, some scholars have argued that the industrial revolution could only emerge in Britain because a wider cultural environment underpinned its technological prowess, that is, a culture that joined together the conceptual authority of the Scientific Revolution with the pragmatic know-how of artisans. This favorable intellectual setting prioritized the usefulness of knowledge to society and was embedded in transnational institutional networks, like the Republic of Letters. Second, he notes that self-sustaining growth required ending, or at least reducing, so-called productivity traps, that is, situations in which the promising economic expansion of traditional societies became siphoned off into unproductive activities, such as status seeking, idle lifestyles, and the enjoyment of revenues from monopolistic situations (rent-seeking). Third, he cites economic historians who have argued that growth requires a favorable institutional environment, in which secure property rights and efficient markets make it possible to use land, labor and capital more productively.[3]

Drawing on these arguments, Livesey points out that self-sustaining growth cannot rest on scattered advances from great inventions, the activity of a few wealthy merchants, or subsidies from the state. Its conditions have to become widespread and embedded in the activities, habits, institutions, and tacit forms of knowledge that condition the use of money, the exchange of information, cooperation with others, a reasonable expectation of gain from inventions, and the like. Arguing that this kind of climate conducive to self-sustaining growth necessarily had to involve a wider area of the Atlantic world than the thriving port cities and industrial areas of Northwest Europe alone, Livesey decides to explore the question in the south of France, in Languedoc. Rather than focusing solely on elites, he seeks to examine how a local, innovative "knowledge culture" that was open to cosmopolitan currents could take root at the provincial level. It is important, he states, to identify local contexts that "allowed subalterns to mobilize and to limit elite rent seeking" (p. 3). In this way, Livesey sets out to illustrate how provincial elites, peasant households, and local political institutions acquired a mindset that understood the value of maximizing the growth of resources, rather than extracting rents from a static economy. This process was critical to the emergence of the Great Divergence.

Livesey organizes much of his book through an institutional perspective. Since institutions join together practice, regulations, resources, and implicit knowledge, their action simultaneously molds and responds to both culture and the arc of economic growth. Over the course of the eighteenth century, according to Livesey, a growth-oriented, outward-looking perspective emerged in Languedoc through the dynamic interaction between global currents and provincial institutions. In a number of cases, these changes began to challenge existing institutional practices that had enshrined privilege and prevented a more meritocratic, vigorous society from advancing. He selects several institutions for closer study: the provincial Estates of Languedoc, the University of Montpellier, the *Société royal des sciences*, local societies promoting agricultural development, and the effects of a new type of plow, the "swing" plow, on village life.

By the end of the book, however, Livesey has largely abandoned this broad institutional frame of reference. Instead of showing us whether, or not, transformations during the eighteenth century led to accelerating economic growth during the nineteenth century—the problem of the Great Divergence—he contents himself with simply stating that by the postrevolutionary period "global values" had become embedded at multiple social levels. The connection between global values and economic change remains unknown. "The cultural changes in the provinces," he claims, "made a global world, they did not make a capitalist world" (p.166).

Livesey's retreat from the complex economic issues surrounding the Great Divergence, and for that matter the problem of the economic impact of the French Revolution, is not surprising. Languedoc, after all, has often been considered a relatively underdeveloped region of nineteenth-century France, a latecomer to modern capitalism rather than a leader ushering it in.[4] His assertion that provincial cultural changes in the eighteenth century created a global world, rather than a capitalist one, calls out for more precise explication. In what way do cultural changes, independently of economic linkages and interconnections, create a global world?

The strength and interest of Livesey's book lies in his series of case studies during the old regime, drawn from archival research, where he probes the interplay between traditional provincial institutional networks rooted in privilege and more progressive currents, some of them fed by overseas impulses, that began to offer alternatives. In a study of the medical community, Livesey describes the traditional organization of the renowned medical faculty of the University of Montpellier as a privileged body whose positions were governed by patronage and inheritance. By contrast to the university's traditionalism, the new *Société royal des sciences*, founded in 1706, began creating a different route for the study of the life sciences, or "biology" as it was coming to be known.

The adoption of the work of Carl Linnaeus by the Royal Society was instrumental in helping to destabilize established intellectual and social hierarchy within the medical community in a number of ways. The Linnaen system rejected longstanding methods of scientific classification, was easily put into use in the field, and relied on the aid of amateur botanists and voyages of botanical discovery to assemble collections of flora from across the globe. These innovative tendencies were reinforced by the Society's decision in 1743 to recruit foreigners into its midst as "associates," the majority of whom were important Protestant scholars from northern European cities. Connections to the wider continental world of science thus became an important alternative to the Parisian networks which had long dominated scientific status and recognition. The cumulative effect of small changes such as these, Livesey writes, "was to create new terms for the exercise of power and influence" (p. 84).

Turning from cities and science, Livesey explores how both provincial elites and agents of the royal government started to recognize the value of the practical knowledge of artisans and farmers as a way to increase provincial productivity and enhance state power. These unsung, and often anonymous, experimenters introduced new products, experimented with eradicating pests, and attempted to climatize exotic and valuable plants. It is not clear how far down the social ladder these creative botanists, gardeners, and experimental farmers actually extended. Their efforts, however, exhibited a momentum of their own, independent of state encouragement, and testified to the growing interaction between the world of official learning and hands-on knowledge. Livesey does not provide detailed information on the economic effects of this agricultural experimentation. He does note that it could lead to a variety of outcomes both positive and negative: more effort directed to market-oriented crop production for cash, but also environmental stress on the land and more intense exploitation of peasant family labor.

Livesey uses the case of the swing plow—the first workable replacement in half a millennium for the traditional heavy wheeled plow—as a way to examine why important technological advances required a supportive institutional and cultural environment in order to have lasting effects. The new plow, an invention of Scottish blacksmiths in the eighteenth century, was better suited to less fertile areas and less labor intensive. Artisans in France conducted additional experiments to make this type of plow work best for their local soils. A machine as critical as the plow, notes Livesey, was embedded in the structure of the community in multiple ways. Hence a fundamentally new design carried the potential to affect social hierarchies, alter evaluations of resources like land, and force individuals to master new cognitive skills.

According to Livesey, legal and institutional obstacles in multiple institutions impeded the adaptation of a number of these progressive new developments. Because inadequate patent law in France failed to grant artisans protection for their innovations, for example, blacksmiths were dissuaded from investing time in improving plow design that might not be rewarded (pp. 126-127). In another case situated at the *Jardin bontanique royale* of Montpellier's medical university, one of the head gardeners became so widely respected that in 1788 he was inducted into the Linnean Society of London. Earlier in 1779, however, he had been fired from his position at the university because aspects of his expertise threatened the established structure of the medical community. From examples like these, Livesey concludes that although a gradual evolution of innovative practices at the provincial level was laying a foundation for new forms of expertise and economic growth, institutional obstacles and the old system of privilege retarded advance. The result was growing tension: "the social and cultural innovations of the eighteenth century," he declares, "far from securing the political regime, would—and did—create political crisis" (p.115).

A last case looks at the system of public credit run by the Estates of Languedoc. Oddly, although he emphasizes harmful elements of privilege, rent-seeking, and obstruction at work in other institutional environments, Livesey almost completely ignores this dimension of the Estates. Instead, he characterizes the growth of public debt as an innovation that was solely governed by "coherent norms of rationality" and taught people to view the future in terms of economic growth and opportunity (pp. 34, 46). "The coherence and the integrity of the fiscal system," he emphasizes, "should not be lost under the later collapse of the monarchy and the trials of the Revolution" ( p. 29).[5]

To connect the existence of instruments of public credit in France, and Europe more widely, to global currents, Livesey argues that the flow of silver from the new world, which caused price inflation, stimulated Europeans to develop financial instruments like the publicly-backed bonds known as Spanish *juros* and French *rentes*. Yet this explanation is anachronistic. The issue of the first French *rentes* in 1522 predated the Spanish exploitation of South American silver mines. Rather the demand for credit, as Larry Neal states, stemmed from the "grandiose military goals" of European rulers in relationship to their far more limited taxing power.[6]

To fight their chronic wars, monarchs across Europe needed large sums of money quickly, which required loans. Because rulers could default on funds that they borrowed with legal impunity, however, financiers would only lend to them at extremely high rates of interest. To remedy this situation, governments across Europe devised systems whereby privileged corporate bodies like provincial estates, parliaments and cities borrowed on their own credit for rulers. The French absolute monarchy excelled at borrowing funds via a whole variety of privileged intermediaries, including the Estates of Languedoc.

Livesey rejects the influential thesis of William Beik who posited that the system of credit relying on privileged bodies, like the Estates of Languedoc, served primarily to extract surplus value from the laboring classes and channel these funds to the elites who received interest on the money that they lent to the royal government.[7] According to Livesey, the Estates of Languedoc should better be viewed as a "prudent capitalist" that sought "to maximize the growth of resources, not maximize the rent from them" (p. 7). In the eighteenth century, he argues, the reliable returns from provincial bonds encouraged a growing, more socially diverse spectrum of local people to invest. Emoluments paid to provincial officials and fiscal agents slowly declined, so that less money was funneled into the pockets of unproductive intermediaries. Public debt was made "virtuous" because it supported "public goods," especially the construction of roads that facilitated access to markets (p. 46).

Livesey, however, ignores evidence that complicate his story. Unlike the successful British financial system, where no explicit privileges exempted any social group from taxes guaranteeing the public debt, the French tax system was riddled through and through with fiscal exemptions. Livesey never explicitly discusses tax privileges in Languedoc, notably that lands classified as "noble" there were exempt from paying the tax on land known as the *taille réelle*. Only tangentially do we learn that civic privileges of the urban *bourgeoisie* also conferred exemption from certain municipal taxes (p. 112). Owing to the regressive nature of the tax system servicing the provincial debt, provincial *rentes* redistributed income from poorer groups to those who were better off.

Consent to loans and taxes, furthermore, rested solely with the Estates of Languedoc. Little "consent" was actually involved, since the royal government effectively set the provincial tax load without much discussion. The Estates were the most aristocratic body in the province. The first estate was composed solely of bishops and archbishops. Membership in the second estate was limited to those with at least four generations of nobility on the male side and ownership of one of the 23 exclusive baronies that conferred a hereditary seat in the Estates. Many members of the Third Estate were selected by bishops and lords and were not even commoners. Within the rarified atmosphere of the Estates, an even more privileged clique of court-connected insiders living in Paris effectively called the shots. Female relatives of the archbishop of Narbonne, titular head of the Estates, and the Comte de Polignac, first baron of the Estates, were favorites of Marie Antoinette. The military governor was a relative of the king. Emoluments given annually to the military governor, archbishop, and three executive agents (*syndics*) of the Estates alone totaled 349,775 *livres*.[8] Many barons did not even show up and sent designated *envoyés* instead. Livesey argues that the system of *envoyés* shows that the Estates were flexible. An alternative interpretation might be that the Estates housed a bastion of royal clients who were not even from Languedoc and were richly rewarded for rubber-stamping the royal government's will.

According to Stephen Miller, between 1740 to 1789, eight provincial estates provided about 330,000,000 livres of loans for the monarchy. Languedoc was responsible for half that amount.[9] Using records at the diocesan level, Livesey argues that residents of Languedoc themselves received the returns paid out on provincial annuities. Examining records at the provincial level, however, Miller calculated that in this period, nobles in Paris and Versailles subscribed to 33% of the loans of the estates, and if creditors of the Third Estate of Paris are included, the total rises to 60%.[10] Strong evidence exists, therefore, that most of the money being paid out to service provincial *rentes* flowed out of the province to Parisians.

The fiscal role of the provincial estates is critical to understanding the origins of the Revolution in Languedoc. The need to service the massive rise in bond issues by the Estates after France's mid-century wars turned local seigneurs and the provincial estates into competitors for revenues generated by the peasants. Increasingly, the provincial estates opposed seigneurs who wanted to increase seigneurial dues, not because in principle they wanted to free peasants from such dues, but because they wanted to ensure that peasants were able to pay taxes that secured debt servicing. On the eve of the Revolution, the local nobility had turned against the Estates and had begun waging a vociferous battle for representation of the nobility as a whole in the Estates.[11]

Livesey classifies the investment by the Estates in road building as a public good. It is not clear, however, that these roads helped the peasants who, unlike large landholders, lacked substantial harvests to export. Strong population growth during the eighteenth century had led peasants to subdivide their holdings and experiment with commercial crops like viticulture, maize, silk worm cultivation, and various forms of rural industry to survive. This industriousness made them reliant on the market for their food. Meanwhile, the price of grain increased. For all their efforts, therefore, the standard of living of peasants did not rise; that of landlords did. At the end of the old regime in Languedoc, subsistence riots were increasing.[12] In short, evidence suggests that by 1788 inequities embedded in the fiscal system linking Paris and Versailles to the province were feeding revolutionary unrest.

Livesey states that it is important to "pay attention to the role of the French Revolution" (p. 15). After all, the Revolution was a watershed not only in France, but Europe as a whole, for eliminating a whole range of privileged bodies and arbitrary property rights that weighed down the economy. Yet Livesey never really explores reasons for its origins in Languedoc. As a result, the Revolution appears almost as an extraneous event that develops without warning signs or input from local social groups.

Perhaps one reason for this is that Livesey tends to tell the story of institutions partially, as one of confrontation between old obstructive and newly emerging institutional patterns. Institutions of any complexity, however, do not just serve one purpose. They respond to multiple pressures and often support contradictory ends. Hence, contradictions *within* institutional systems themselves can create pressure for change and generate unforeseen consequences.[13] In the case of public credit, tensions generated by the Estates' structure of power made it potentially a school for not just one set of new norms, but two. By expanding access to money, the Estates may have helped to create new attitudes toward economic opportunity, as Livesey argues, at least among some social groups. However, the inequitable access to power perpetuated by the patronage-laden, privileged Estates also generated an even deeper consciousness of the need for equal rights and fair practices of political representation, the bedrock of French revolutionary citizenship. Once this demand for political and economic justice was unleashed in the context of financial crisis, the effects were uncontrollable.

In evaluating the results of the Revolution, Livesey follows different tracks. When discussing agriculture, he follows the interpretation of economic institutionalists who view the Revolution as central to eliminating insecure property rights that hindered economic development. Owing to revolutionary legislation, for example, it became far easier to redistribute the use of scrub lands in a rational manner and allow marginal land to be used for more profitable commercial undertakings like viticulture.

His discussion of the Revolution and public debt, by contrast, only addresses the problem of whether or not the National Assembly would assume the massive debts of the estates raised on behalf of the monarchy. Because the estates were abolished, he does not investigate the issue of post-revolutionary access to credit. Instead, he argues that the experience with public credit in the old regime provided valuable intellectual lessons that were not forgotten: "new attitudes to risk and investment and new understandings of development and the public good had been rehearsed" (p. 51). Yet work by economic historians has shown that political instability, war, monetary experiments, and rampant inflation during the Revolution devastated credit networks across France, a problem that took the first half of the nineteenth century to fix. According to this research, "it was not until the 1850s that the connection between political instability and financial crisis was finally broken."[14]

When considering results of the Revolution, Livesey argues that the emergence of a climate of reason was the most important result of the Revolution. The meanings of "global" and "rational" are "interdependent," he states, and were "made visible in the lived historical experience of the people of Languedoc" (p. 145). It is not clear why global norms are necessarily rational ones. Livesey's own evidence shows the meaning of reason during the Revolution was contested, appropriated by different social groups for their own purposes, and complicated by warfare. The *sans-culottes*, like Rousseau, were suspicious of reason and intellectual elites. After the Revolution, the national government often succumbed to "bureaucratic blindness" and persisted in seeing the peasants as ignorant and misguided (p. 148)**.** He ends the book by asking, "did a sovereign reason, embedded in the state and incarnated in a newly dominant class, succeed in establishing hegemony?" (158). He does not answer that question, but does note that it involves exploring the concept of the "bourgeois self" (p. 159). The conclusion to the book is unclear.

Livesey's book is at its best when presenting the on-the-ground case studies that illustrate how interaction between global currents and provincial institutions opened up pathways for change. He concludes that the impetus for change in the provinces "was clearly exogenous," in which the discovery of the Americas played a large role (p. 166). There certainly were exogenous sources of change at the provincial level, but the significance of the Americas is not so clear.

What struck me was how often Livesey's research showed the importance of *European* networks for keeping paths to innovation open. These European avenues offered access to status, patronage, and expertise when religious confessionalism, political arbitrariness, or institutional sclerosis closed off opportunities within the French state itself. Age-old contacts between universities, an expanding and diversifying Republic of Letters, new associations of scientific societies, the Huguenot diaspora of financiers from Languedoc, and the transfer of new Scottish plowing techniques across national boundaries within Europe all helped Languedoc to stay abreast of, and contribute to, advances in critical areas like medicine and agriculture. If anything, based on Livesey's research it seemed that European-wide collaborative connections were becoming more deeply institutionalized at the same time as European states were increasing their own power. The reach of these networks was becoming more global in scope, in the sense that Europeans were increasingly coming into contact with people from other cultures. Nonetheless, Europeans continued to provide the leadership, the bulk of the membership, the financing, systems of classification, and technology underpinning the exchanges.

Finally, "provincializing" global history raises the question of how Languedoc fit into larger patterns of geography and periodization. As Kenneth Pomeranz has observed, before 1800 a polycentric world with no dominant economic core existed. A single hegemonic European core, oriented around the North Atlantic world, only emerged with nineteenth-century industrialization.[15] Livesey says very little about how this profound global transition from a Mediterranean world to an Atlantic one influenced Languedoc. He contests the idea of an immobile province serving only as a passive recipient of outside forces. Yet at times, his emphasis on the eighteenth century as a decisive period of transition can lead one to think that the province was relatively immobile before then. This was far from the case.

Already in the Renaissance, the renowned University of Montpellier was in contact with Arab learning. In the early modern period, merchants from the province made fortunes exporting cloth, grain, salt, and dyes to international markets including those in the Levant, moved into tax farming and government military contracts, and ultimately became the most important source of financiers for Louis XIV's France. The grip of financiers from Languedoc became so powerful that eventually its financiers directed all the royally-chartered Atlantic companies during Louis XIV's reign and helped to pave the way for John Law's "System." Protestant, but often nominal converts to Catholicism, they formed part of the formidable Huguenot financial network that allowed them access to access to Northern European capital markets like London, Amsterdam, and Geneva that were critical to the French royal government. The arrival of the Genevan banker Jacques Necker, the expansion of global warfare with the Seven Years War, and the solidification of Paris as the financial center of France signaled the decline of their influence.[16]

Livesey posits that, despite the upheaval of the Revolution, Languedoc was able to preserve a spirit of innovation that would allow its citizens to be "engaged successfully in the globally-oriented world of the nineteenth-century" (p. 165). Might the centralization of the French state around Paris, the harmful economic effects of the French Revolution on port cities and credit, and the post-revolutionary consolidation of banking and industry in the north Atlantic have also impeded Languedoc's successful engagement? This is not to say that the province was doomed to economic inconsequence. It would be helpful, however, to have more information about how critical conjunctures like these helped to shaped Languedoc's relationship, culturally and economically, to a changing global world.

NOTES

[1] Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

[2] Patrick O'Brien, "Ten Years of Debate on the Origins of the Great Divergence," *Reviews in History* (review no. 1008). URL: https://reviews.history.ac.uk/review/1008.

[3] Jack A. Goldstone, "Efflorescences and Economic Growth in World History: Rethinking the 'Rise of the West' and the Industrial Revolution," *Journal of World History* 13, no. 2 (2002): 323-389; Margaret Jacob and Larry Stewart, *Practical Matter: Newton's Science in the Service of Industry and Empire, 1687-1851* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004); and Joel Mokyr, *A Culture of Growth: The Origins of the Modern Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016); Jean-Laurent Rosenthal, *The Fruits of Revolution: Property Rights, Litigation, and French Agriculture, 1700-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Douglass North, *Institutions, Institutional Change, and Economic Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

[4] François Crouzet. "Les origines du sous-développement économique du Sud-Ouest." *Annales du Midi* 71, no. 45 (1959): 71-79.

[5] At one point, Livesey concedes that "it is difficult to…avoid the suspicion that some incoherence and irrationality in the financial system was the cause of the French Revolution" (p. 28). That thought is not pursued.

[6] Larry Neal, *The Rise of Capitalism: International Capital Markets in the Age of Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 3-4. James D. Tracy agrees that the need to finance war spurred the development of public credit in Europe and gives silver little, if any, causal role. *A Financial Revolution in Habsburg Netherlands: Renten and Teneniers in the County of Holland, 151-1565* (Berkeley, 1985), pp. 21-27, 100. Jean-Laurent Rosenthal and Bin Wong stress that whereas warfare stimulated the development of an elaborate European network of public credit, the peaceful Chinese empire developed no mechanism of public credit until the incursion of the bellicose European powers in the nineteenth century. *Before and Beyond Divergence: The Politics of Economic Change in China and Europe* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011), pp. 146-149, 161-162.

[7] William Beik, *Absolutism and Society in Seventeenth-century France: State Power and Provincial Aristocracy in Languedoc* (New York: Cambridge University, 1985); and his "Review Article: The Absolutism of Louis XIV as Social Collaboration," *Past & Present* no. 188 (2005): 195-224.

[8] Stephen Miller, "Absolutism and Class at the End of the Old Regime: The Case of Languedoc," *Journal of Social History* 36, no. 4 (Summer 2003): 886n29; and his *State and Society in Eighteenth-Century France: A Study of Political Power and Social Revolution in Languedoc* (Washington, D.C., Catholic University of America Press, 2008), pp. 91-92. On the connections of the Archbishop of Narbonne's widowed niece, who was also his de facto mistress, to Marie Antoinette see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arthur_Richard_Dillon. Livesey classifies emoluments as public goods because they included salaries. Vida Azimi observes that salaries in the ancien regime did not reflect the actual performance of duties. "Heur et malheur des 'salariés publics' sous la Révolution," in *État, finances et économie pendant la Révolution française: colloque tenu à Bercy les 12, 13, 14 octobre 1989*, ed. Guy Antonetti (Paris: Comité pour l'histoire économique et financière de la France), pp. 159-200.

[9] Stephen Miller, *State and Society*, pp. 105-106; see also Marie Laure Legay, "Le crédit des provinces au secours de l'état: Les emprunts des états provinciaux pour le comte du roi," in *Pourvoir les finances en province sous l'ancien régime*, ed. Françoise Bayard (Paris: Comité pour l'histoire économique et financière de la France), 2002.

[10] Miller, *State and Society*, pp. 109-117. The transition of Paris in the 1720s into a net borrower of funds from the provinces is discussed by Philip T. Hoffman, Gilles Postel-Vinay, and Jean-Laurent Rosenthal, *Priceless Markets: The Political Economy of Credit in Paris, 1660-1870* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), pp.168-173.

[11] Miller, *State and Society*, pp. 142-143. Livesey cites Miller to argue that the elite did not turn on itself, but this misrepresents Miller, who documents the large number of provincial nobles who opposed the rule of the Estates.

[12] Miller, *State and Society*, pp. 175-190. On the costs and benefits of road building to different social groups see Robert Foster, *The Nobility of Toulouse: A Social and Economic Study* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1960), chapter 2. Jack Goldstone documents similar demographic pressures on the lower classes across much of France in "The Social Origins of the French Revolution Revisited," in *From Deficit to Deluge*: *The Origins of the French Revolution*, eds. Thomas Kaiser and Dale Van Kley (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), pp. 94-99.

[13] Karl Orfeo Fioretos, Gabriela Tulia Falleti, and Adam D. Sheingate, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Historical Institutionalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 181-194. See also Sheilagh C. Ogilvie, "'Whatever is, is Right?' Economic Institutions in Pre-industrial Europe,' *The Economic History Review* 60 (2007): 668-71.

[14] Hoffman, et al., *Priceless Markets,* p. 208.

[15] *Great Divergence*, p. 4.

[16] On the importance of the Languedocian financiers, Guy Chaussinand-Nogaret, *Les financiers de Languedoc au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N, 1970). According to Chaussinand-Nogaret, the ideas of Toulousain banker, Antoine Crozat, provided the inspiration for John Law's creation of the Company of the Occident, p. 16.

Gail Bossenga
Independent Scholar
gail.bossenga@gmail.com