

STATE FORMATION AND DEMOCRACY IN LATIN AMERICA, 1810-1900



Fernando López-Alves

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TO AURORA ALVES, TANIA LOPEZ, AND

HELENA PASQUARELLA

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Introduction

As the proverb says, “getting started is half the battle,” and a good beginning we all applaud. But in my view a good start is more than “half,” and no one has yet given it the praise it deserves.

—PLATO, *The Laws*

Riddles and Cases

During the eighteenth century, concepts such as “nation” and “nationalism” became part of Europeans’ everyday political jargon. Whether nationalism stemmed from deep structural changes, self-conscious political ideologies, or—as Benedict R. Anderson (1983:7) has suggested—a cultural (and imagined) “deep horizontal notion of comradeship,” sovereign nations started to become the norm while dynastic empires and monarchical institutions became the exception. In nineteenth-century Latin America, state makers were frantically at work. They designed republican institutions, elaborated on the concurrent notions of common citizenship and popular sovereignty, tried to centralize power, and created, along the way, a different ladder of social stratification responding to new notions of civil society and societal discipline. Their degree of success varied. The final product differed, in some cases radically, from the ideas and the political practices of the first generations of state makers. In other cases, the final outcome bore some resemblance to the original design. But in no case did the political institutions of the nations emerging in the early twentieth century remain similar to either the colonial period or the republicanism that triggered independence.

If we were to conceive of the process of nation building studied in this

book as “postcolonial,” then the emphasis should be placed on “post.” The agrarian societies that emerged from the convulsive nineteenth century definitely represented, in Barrington Moore’s (1966) terms, different “paths” of institution building and regime formation. They differed in natural endowments, levels of development, and the use of labor. But the most striking difference was political. In countries such as Chile, Uruguay, and Colombia, political parties prevailed. In others such as Argentina and Brazil, weaker parties—similar to loose cliques or movements—confronted serious obstacles to becoming party machines. Even where they succeeded, as in Argentina, some still faced constraints in forming party systems. In terms of state institutions, Chile, Argentina, and Mexico grew stronger and were able to monopolize coercion, but others such as Uruguay, Colombia, and Venezuela remained weak and maintained only a feeble presence in the countryside.¹ State makers also differed from one another across countries. A political elite, alongside the traditional coalition of landed and mercantile interests, crafted the state in Colombia, Chile, Uruguay, Argentina, and Peru; in Venezuela and Paraguay, however, the military and associated militias virtually created the state.

This book seeks to solve two riddles that are essential to explaining these differences. The first riddle deals with the complexities of state formation. It involves problems of power centralization, state building, and the design of government institutions. A central question is how and to what degree the organization called the “state” gains control of the principal means of coercion within a defined territory.² To survive, this entity must maintain a relatively centralized, differentiated, and autonomous structure. Charles Tilly (1990:131) writes that this is accomplished “by creating an organization that is at least partially distinct from those that govern production and reproduction in the territory, by seizing, coopting or liquidating other concentrations of coercion within the same territory, by defining boundaries, and by exercising jurisdiction within those boundaries.” We will seek to explain two parallel but not always directly correlated processes of state formation: the building of state capacity and autonomy.³ Because the evolution of the state bureaucracy and the armed forces were not necessarily identical, the case studies in this book treat them separately.

In adopting this conventional definition, I have purposely left in the

background the notion of “a state” as a cultural construct. We shall see how cultural components of state making can comfortably dialogue with structural and collective action theories. In comparing Uruguay and Argentina (countries that have very similar cultural backgrounds) with Colombia, Paraguay, and Venezuela (countries that have very different cultural makeups), the chapters tangentially explore the impact of culture on state making, although a fuller exploration will be left for another time in order to sharpen the book’s focus. By the same token, this analysis does not give center stage to the personality, ethnicity, and cultural background of state makers, important components in the nation-building process. The choices that state makers made, and the strategies that they followed, apparently affected institution building, but the book does not exclusively concentrate on the process of individual decision making to explain outcomes.⁴ A strong emphasis on the cognitive processes of state makers based on a broad sense of “rationality” proved limiting, and defining “irrationality” poses a theoretical problem. Considering the broad sense in which rationality is often described, one could come to the surprising conclusion that during more than 230 years of history (when one combines the three main cases of this book), actors made no “irrational” choices.

The second riddle involves problems of coalition formation and seeks to discover the conditions under which more open and democratic regimes may emerge. State building is directly related to coalitions and regime type. Since Aristotle, people have disagreed over precisely what to include in the definition of “regime” (e.g., institutions, values, and rules). They also disagree as to how regimes rise and evolve, and how to classify them.⁵ My interest here is in types of coalitions and their impact on regime formation. The book adopts the definition of regime given by Ruth Berins Collier and David Collier (1991:789), which includes the method used to select the government and representative assemblies (such as coups or elections), formal and informal mechanisms of representation, and adopted patterns of repression. This definition rejects the identification of a regime with its incumbents or the public policies they choose, unless these policies change the regime itself. A central query of this book is whether these agrarian societies carved distinctive “paths to democracy”; thus this second riddle relates to democratic theory and the conditions under which democ-

racy can emerge in nonindustrial settings. The definition of democracy used here refers to political democracy, as opposed to social democracy or economic democracy, and echoes the “procedural” version of democracy that Robert Dahl (1956, 1971) has called “polyarchy.”⁶

Comparisons, the Argument, and the Cases

To answer these riddles, this book studies two scenarios: first, societies that shared a number of economic, cultural, and social features but did not breed similar institutions or regimes; and second, societies that did not have much in common structurally, culturally, and socially but bred similar states and regimes. These scenarios allow us to explore any correlation between the timing of power centralization and regime formation. For instance, did the rise of stronger states in the early stages of nation building contribute to a tendency toward more corporatist and state-centered policy making? Did slower processes of power centralization encourage pluralism, stronger party politics, and robust local governments? Or is there even a correlation between the type of ruling coalition and different processes of power centralization?

The book finds that when either political parties or armies took the more active role in institution building during the process of state formation, the resulting regimes were more or less democratic. As a consequence, states also differed in their degree of power centralization, the strength of their bureaucracies, and the scope of their capacity and autonomy. Civil-military relations lay at the core of state building. I suggest that the balance within this equation depended on the characteristics of civil and external conflict, combined with the pace, type, and range of rural mobilization. Therefore, war and the collective action of the rural poor provided central engines of institution building. They contributed to the construction of the central army, the rise of new social classes, and the emergence of civilian organizations. They determined the pace of state making and the growth of a shared notion of nationality among populations that varied geographically and culturally. And finally, they marked the geographic boundaries of the state.

Rather than focusing on the causes of war, the book emphasizes the impact of war on classes, institutions, and coalitions. In nineteenth-

century Latin America, conflict resulted from the conventional causes identified by most of the literature: invasions, territorial expansion, competition for resources, control over domestic or international trade, participation in decision making, class interests, military pressures, and disagreements over institutional design.⁷ This study, however, is not about war alone or the often too general notion of “conflict.” Rather, it offers an empirically grounded argument about types of war in combination with types of rural mobilization, and the resulting states and regimes. It was the type of war, rather than the frequency of war, that shaped a country’s “path” of state making. And it was the type of rural mobilization, rather than the type of rural economy, that shaped political parties, modified systems of labor relations, and often set the limits on state capacity. My argument neither neglects the enormous impact of capitalist development and the world economy on nation building nor dismisses structural theories of state formation that focus on types of economies, the exploitation of natural resources, and the characteristics of financial, agrarian, or industrial capital. Nonetheless, it does reveal the limitations of these popular premises.

My argument is grounded in an in-depth comparison of three cases—Uruguay, Colombia, and Argentina—during their most intense phase of state and regime formation, from approximately 1810 to 1900. To broaden the book’s comparative scope and make theory testing more reliable, Paraguay and Venezuela serve as “control” cases. These last two cases pose the question of whether authoritarian-militaristic outcomes in Latin America resemble other types of authoritarian rule in Eastern Europe or Asia and help to sharpen the book’s focus on civil-military relations. Indeed, unlike in the three main cases, the army became the major state maker in Venezuela and Paraguay.⁸ These two can also be considered “negative cases,” since the argument emerging from the comparison of the three main cases does not seem fully to account for the outcomes we see in Venezuela and Paraguay. Thus, their addition allows for falsification, adjustment, and reconsideration of my major claim. Brief references to state formation in the United States further sharpen the book’s argument, which is fully spelled out in chapter 1.

The existing literature on the political evolution of the three main cases frequently refers to the “Uruguayan riddle,” the “Colombian riddle,” and the “Argentine riddle.” Most scholars have concluded that

these “riddles” constitute “exceptions” to an unspoken rule.⁹ In contrast, the following chapters question the “exceptional” status of these countries and suggest that they follow comparable and recognizable patterns of nation building.

Civil Society, Parties, and the State

As in every discussion of state formation, one must inevitably say a few words about the concept of civil society. Unlike state-centric theories, such as the one offered by Skocpol (1979), the cases examined in this book point to the weight of social forces. Although institutions are not merely a mirror of these forces, the analysis suggests that social forces strongly shaped the state and were key agents in consolidating different types of regimes.¹⁰ This should not come as a surprise, given that at early stages of state building, movements, cliques, and political organizations are usually very influential; even institutionalists such as Terry Moe (1990:236) have acknowledged that these forces cannot be eliminated. Although state growth in most of Latin America during the 1940s and 1950s somewhat blurred the relevance of civil society, its downsizing in the 1980s and 1990s has again revealed the active role civil society can play in changing government institutions.

Is “civil society” the same as the “political system”? This question is reminiscent of the critique of predominant state-centered approaches offered by modernization theory.¹¹ Yet the theory did not entirely resolve the problem of overlapping definitions of civil society and political system. It eliminated the rigidity of state-centered theory but made the political system identical to civil society, thus embracing virtually every single manifestation of collective action and “interest articulation.”¹² In an effort to avoid similar problems, I adopt here the term “polity formation” to refer to the process by which the state, the army, movements, and political parties developed into an orderly body of institutional practices and regulations. Although still problematic, this conceptualization allows for the incorporation of party activity and the institutionalization of the military as independent factors of state formation. Therefore, whereas this book focuses on state building, unlike interesting work on the formation of bureaucracies and their evolution, it does not necessarily dwell on the construction of state agencies or examine

in detail their rationale and objectives.¹³ Instead, it focuses on the interaction among parties, movements, the state, and the military.

A distinctive feature of the Americas is that parties and movements became state makers even to the point of becoming synonymous with the state. For example, in Colombia and Uruguay, we find a situation similar to Richard Bensel's (1990:3–4) portrayal of periods of “unmediated party rule” in the United States, when the state and a political party were virtually one and the same. Venerable work on North American parties, such as that by William Nisbet Chambers (1969), has long stressed the identification of parties with government. It is not surprising that Samuel Huntington (1968, 1991) strongly argues that political parties played the most important role in the creation of modern political systems. While the cases examined here confirm the crucial role of parties as state makers, however, they do not support Huntington's claim that party politics is a clear sign of modernity.¹⁴ Less modern Uruguay and Colombia created party systems, but more European and modern Argentina did not.

The definition of political parties I adopt here follows the well-known tradition of Robert Michels (1949), in which the degree of party organization is directly proportional to the development of a party hierarchy that can secure the allegiance of the rank and file. Parties differ from other groups seeking political power in terms of four familiar criteria: (1) regular connections between party leaders at the center and local cadres and activists in the localities; (2) coordinated efforts to win popular support in order to gain influence and control of public policy; (3) a durable base of mass support, either by active militancy or by voting; and (4) a set of consciously shared beliefs or perspectives. As we shall see, this last trait is problematic for our main cases because at several points in their history, shared beliefs united members of different parties and at the same time were not enough to unite factions within the same party. Nevertheless, I retain this characteristic because party members themselves used it as a criterion to define membership.

Periods and Cases

The current analysis starts at the critical juncture marked by the wars of independence (circa 1810), includes their confusing aftermath (from

the 1830s to the 1860s), and ends with the consolidation of these states in the 1880s and 1890s. In some cases, the analysis extends into the first decade of the twentieth century. To assume the notion of “critical juncture” means to establish analytical boundaries to separate “periods.”¹⁵

Following Arthur Stinchcombe (1968:120–22), this book assumes that established patterns reproduce themselves without the repetition of the original cause, and that once a set of institutions is established, power holders will attempt to perpetuate them because—among other things—this represents the least expensive option in terms of social and political costs.

I join others in suggesting that the wars of independence and their aftermath provide a critical juncture that started out an innovative period of institution building. For the most part, the study of this period has remained the domain of historians,¹⁶ including some who have placed these cases in comparative perspective.¹⁷ Among social scientists, however, only a handful have compared institution-building experiences during the postindependence period.¹⁸ Most have contended that the years between 1870 and 1914 were the most relevant, searching that period for the key to explain the political or economic trajectory of these states.¹⁹ These years have become the favorite testing ground for theories stressing the impact of the world economy and export expansion on power centralization.²⁰ This book instead suggests that earlier events in a “premodern” period, established the institutional design that was consolidated in the later part of the nineteenth century, molded state expansion, and helped to explain the formation of the so-called “oligarchic states” of the early twentieth century and their radical transformations after the 1930s. In a sense, this study contributes to the explanation of what Collier and Collier (1991) in their study of critical junctures have called the “incorporation period.”²¹

Why compare Uruguay, Colombia, and Argentina? The rationale takes to heart the suggestion of the small-*n* comparative approach: in-depth case analysis renders better comparative results. In other words, purely deductive explanations based on a set of well-known assumptions and brief historical sketches create inaccurate descriptions and lead to incorrect conclusions. The result is poor theorizing and scarce counterintuitive propositions. On the first page of a delightful piece on the “miracle” of European development, Michael Mann (1988a:5)

states that “there are two main types of explanation: the comparative and the historical.” In this book, no major contradiction arises between these two “types.” Further, the following chapters suggest that a marriage between comparative and historical explanations offers a most promising avenue to comparative inquiry.

Table 0.1 depicts the salient characteristics of the three main cases and outlines their institutional and regime differences, presenting the comparative puzzle that this book attempts to solve. Basically, whereas the differences between Argentina and Uruguay were institutional, the gap that separated Uruguay and Colombia was fundamentally structural and cultural. To reduce variables, I have taken a slightly unorthodox route and juxtaposed two classic methods guiding comparative analysis. On one hand, Arend Lijphart (1975) and Arthur Stinchcombe (1978) have advocated the selection of a few extremely well matched cases, or a method of “deep analogy.” On the other hand, Adam Przeworski and Henry Teune (1970) have pointed to the advantages of a “most different” system design, where cases must be as diverse as possible but present specific and fairly analogous developments that the analyst wishes to explore. Each follows one of the two well-known options that John Stuart Mill opened to comparative research, the method of difference and the method of agreement.

Uruguay, Colombia, and Argentina provide an opportunity to pair cases following *both* these methods. Whereas overall similarities between Argentina and Uruguay make them an ideal comparison in terms of the “deep analogy” system design, Uruguay and Colombia present more-than-suitable grounds for an application of the “most different” system design. The simple diagram in figure 0.1 illustrates this point. At both ends of the diagram, Argentina and Colombia display alternatives that would otherwise be difficult to pair. I am able to draw comparative conclusions by contrasting them using Uruguay as, so to speak, a nexus case, and making this country a central comparative instance. Given the relative scarcity of available data on rural insurrections in Colombia during the nineteenth century, I am compelled at times in chapter 3 to draw more from the logic of this comparison than from actual hard figures on rural unrest and their effects on political leaders.

Comparisons following this rationale show the limits of some of the

Table 0.1. The Three Major Cases, circa 1800–1900

	Argentina	Uruguay	Colombia
ECONOMY	Pastoralist	Pastoralist	Coffee dominant
Use of labor	Extensive in agriculture	Extensive in agriculture	Intensive in agriculture
Labor relations	Ranching predominant, wage labor and European indentured labor	Ranching predominant, primarily wage labor	Various: slavery, sharecropping, and wage labor
Level of development	Higher ^a	Lower	Lower
Grain sector	Larger	Smaller	Minimal
Peasantry	Small to minimal	Minimal	Larger
Mining enclave	Not present	Not present	Present
Economies nationally owned	Yes	Yes	Yes
POPULATION			
European immigration	High	High	Low
Ethnicity	Predominantly white Europeans in urban centers. Also large numbers of them in the countryside. Smaller indigenous population.	Predominantly white Europeans in urban centers. Large numbers of them in countryside. Smaller indigenous population.	Not as many Europeans. Large Creole population by time of state expansion. Larger indigenous population.
TYPE OF POLITY	Weaker parties and no party system	Strong parties and party system	Strong parties and party system
Colonial state strength	Weaker	Weaker	Stronger
Military intervention	Frequent	Scarce	Scarce
State corporalist tendency	Pluralism with more corporatist practices	Pluralism with less corporatist practices	Pluralism with less corporatist practices
Nature of professional military	Stronger	Weaker	Weaker
Rural labor	Less mobilized	Highly mobilized	Highly mobilized

^a This applies mainly to the province of Buenos Aires.

most popular theories of state formation and regime outcomes often applied to Latin America. Let us start with the first pair shown in figure 0.1, Uruguay and Argentina.²² Geographic, structural, and cultural similarities make Argentina and Uruguay as comparable as cases can be. First, Uruguay and the province of Buenos Aires shared much

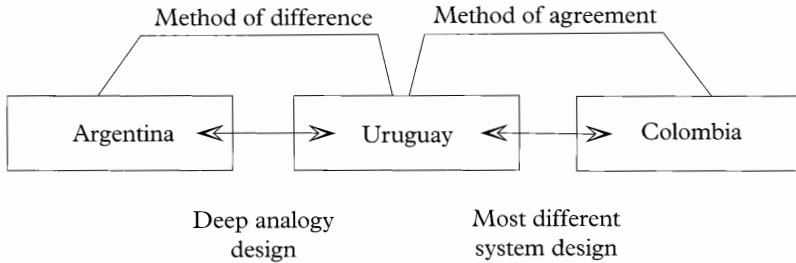


Figure 0.1. Methods of Agreement and Difference

geographically. Their capitals at Buenos Aires and Montevideo operated ports on opposite banks of the River Plate and enjoyed a privileged situation that led to a virtual monopoly of maritime trade. Second, they shared much structurally. Both countries were part of the so-called informal British empire and depended on the same markets. They largely exported the same products (with the only exception being wheat, which Argentina exported and Uruguay did not) and borrowed from roughly the same international sources of financing. Both cities grew as forward linkages of livestock production. Both countries used labor extensively in cattle and sheep raising, and in both, wage labor and similar forms of tenancy became predominant in the rural areas. The differences were in the pace, rather than in the type, of economic development.

Third, in terms of their cultural makeup, Uruguay and the province of Buenos Aires also were very much alike. Both were lands of recent settlement that received large numbers of European immigrants from the same countries roughly at the same time. One can argue that the notion of nationality that emerged in these countries responded to similar cultural constructs, and that—borrowing Benedict R. Anderson’s (1983) conceptualization—both Creole and non-Creole “imagined” that they belonged to very similar “communities.”²³ Therefore, geography, structure, and culture do not suffice to explain the different paths of state making taken by these two countries.

Surely there were differences in size and pace of development that could provide an explanation for the political differences separating Argentina and Uruguay. After all, by most accounts, Uruguay until the

late 1830s was just another rebellious province struggling to establish independence from growing Buenos Aires. Indeed, Uruguay's loss of territory in 1815 was Argentina's gain, with differences in size leading to distinct relations between capital cities and hinterland. Yet although the following chapters indicate that size and the pace of development were important factors shaping state making, they do not fully explain the differences we observe between these two countries. It is the addition of Colombia to the comparison of Uruguay and Argentina that makes this point the most apparent.

Whereas in terms of their economies, trade patterns, culture, and geography, Argentina and Uruguay provide a strong "deep analogy" comparison, the Colombia-Uruguay pair offers an ideal "most different systems" exercise. As table 0.1 shows, the two countries developed similar institutions of government but differed in virtually everything else. In Colombia, as in Uruguay, competition between two parties shaped the polity. By about the late 1880s, these two parties had established mechanisms of cooperation under civilian hegemony. Both the Uruguayan and Colombian militaries lost political space vis-à-vis the political elite, and the institutions almost had to reconstruct themselves at the end of the century. In both cases, generals acted as partisans, ruling in the name of their parties and paying close attention to their political constituencies. In these two countries, the state confronted serious obstacles to the centralization of authority and remained for the most part weak during the period under consideration.

How different were the contexts in which these similar institutions grew and developed? Patterns of urbanization and the characteristics of social life and culture in cities, important variables in accounting for party formation and activity, differed greatly in Colombia and Uruguay. Uruguay developed only one major urban center: the "Europhile" city-port of Montevideo, whose demographic growth placed the country among the most urbanized societies of the time. No urban center among the many that emerged in Colombia shared these characteristics. Moreover, rates of urbanization in Colombia remained rather humble, with most of the population living in the rural areas. In Uruguay, the predominance of Montevideo contributed to a sharp urban-rural cleavage that characterized party competition and political struggles well into the twentieth century. No cleavage of such intensity

developed in Colombia, where small and medium urban centers engaged in various trade circuits, preventing one city from dominating linkages with the international economy.

Therefore, Uruguay and Colombia followed similar patterns of state building in very different geographic, demographic, and physical contexts. Table 0.1 shows that Colombia, unlike Uruguay, was home to several ecosystems and rural economies that, at times, did not even connect with one another commercially, much less socially. As a result, Colombia created complex systems of labor relations virtually unknown in Uruguay. The rural workforce in Colombia ranged from wage laborers and slaves in mining or agriculture to cowboys, sharecroppers, peasants, farmers, or tenants of various kinds. These countries were culturally very different as well. Explanations of the cultural and organizational influence of European immigrants on party building, largely stressed by the scholarly literature on Uruguay, have problems in Colombia, where the number of European foreigners who established residence in the main cities remained scattered and small. Although they could be found in sizable numbers in Bogotá and the Antioquia region, Europeans' cultural importance and social influence in Colombia cannot be compared to that in Uruguay. In addition, Colombia was the site of a rich ethnic and cultural *mélange* that differed greatly from the more homogeneous ethnic and cultural landscape of Uruguay.

In terms of the pace of power centralization in relation to geography, culture, and territorial size, these three cases, along with Venezuela and Paraguay, lead us to question commonly accepted assumptions. In Colombia, the process of power centralization was slow, and scholars have traditionally argued that a major reason was the cultural diversity and rough geography.²⁴ In Uruguay, thus, one may reasonably predict that state makers in this small, rather homogeneous area, dominated by a single urban center, would face fewer problems when centralizing power. Yet Uruguay experienced a delayed process of state building. This puzzling correlation between size and state formation is confirmed by Argentina, the largest of the three and the one that, under Juan Manuel de Rosas, centralized power first.²⁵

In addition to delving more deeply into the central argument, chapter 1 briefly contrasts the breakdown of colonial rule in Latin America

and its postindependence experience with Europe, China, and the Ottoman Empire. Chapters 2, 3, and 4 provide case studies of Uruguay, Colombia, and Argentina. To facilitate comparisons, I have organized the presentation of the cases by variable so that individual cases can be read directly into the book's overall argument. Each chapter starts with a review of current theories about the case and a synopsis of the argument advanced in that chapter. Although some comparative work is available on nineteenth-century Colombia and Argentina, chapter 2 offers one of the very few discussions of polity formation in Uruguay and, to my knowledge, the only comparative treatment of the case. Chapter 5 discusses Paraguay and Venezuela. Throughout the book, the reader will also find tangential references to other instances of state formation in Latin America and succinct references to the United States that are meant only to clarify and illustrate. In particular, the process of nation building in America provides an opportunity to elaborate on the importance of industrialization and larger domestic markets in state making.²⁶ It also suggests the advantages of redirecting the inquiry to include comparisons involving all of the Americas, a direction long neglected by comparative literature.

1

The Argument:

War, Politics, and the Rural Poor

Once a development path is set on a particular course, the network externalities, the learning process of organizations, and the historically derived subjective modeling of the issues reinforce the course.—DOUGLASS C. NORTH, *Institutions, Institutional Change, and Economic Performance*

Before delving into the book's main thesis in detail, we must place Latin America in a broader context of state making. Good reviews of literature on the state do exist, and it would be redundant to repeat them here.¹ Literature on Europe, Asia, and the Middle East has correctly defined state formation as the process by which state makers overcome entrenched opposition from their populations and subdue regional political bosses.² The challenge from a comparative perspective is to explain differences in the timing of the centralization of power, to spell out the conditions under which state makers succeed or fail, and to detect the rationale behind more democratic or authoritarian outcomes.

1.1. Lessons from Europe and the Empires

Perhaps the first and most logical place to go for comparative clues is Europe, which enjoys a wealth of theories on state formation. Some of

the most widely used variables to explain types of states and authoritarian or democratic outcomes include the commercialization of agriculture, the rise of a bourgeoisie, the formation of the working classes and their incorporation into politics, the growth of the industrial sector, the preexistence of medieval forms of "constitutionalism," labor relations under feudalism, and even the pervasive influence of "Roman law" in Western Europe.³ Most of these theories have a structural or, to a lesser extent, an institutional leaning.

Which of these theories best illuminates the paths we observe in Latin America? Some seem of little relevance, for while the dynamics of class alliances were similar, the class actors and the international contexts of state making differed. Latin America lacked an entrenched nobility, confronted very different international pressures, underwent no industrial revolution, formed a rather weak and late industrial bourgeoisie, held no colonies, and experienced colonial rule. To these, one must add differences in demography, culture, and factor endowments. But it is precisely these contrasts that both mark the limits of theories emerging from the European experience and contribute to a sharper picture of state making on both sides of the Atlantic.

Many, including John A. Crow (1992:255–63), have found a strong conceptual linkage between theories of state making in Latin America and Europe in the strong "feudal" character of Latin America.⁴ Crow's application of feudal categories to Latin America remains one of the most convincing; nonetheless, Crow ends up admitting that feudalism in the new world remained very "different" from the European variety. The degree of difference remained quite unyielding, and the concept-traveling unresolved.⁵ Although structurally one could detect some "feudal" features in the new states, politically and institutionally the new nineteenth-century republics did not resemble feudal Europe. Moreover, there was really a world of difference between the accepted notions of the two feudalisms. Those who saw feudalism in Latin America perceived it as a sturdy obstacle to democratic practices. Those who studied feudalism in Europe, however, saw it as a predecessor to the industrial revolution and, for all its dark features, also as a noble precursor of capitalism and democracy.

The chapters on Uruguay, Colombia, and Argentina show that the "feudal" characteristics of rural life that can be detected in these so-

cieties, however defined, are poor predictors of state making. Moreover, culturally, politically, and institutionally, one finds little resemblance between the historical evolution of these Latin American cases and the European varieties of feudalism. In the new world, reasons other than feudalism explained the hardy predominance of some "feudal" features, such as the preponderance of agricultural enterprises with low technology requirements, limited access to credit, poor communications, and frequent wars.⁶

Although ideal for comparing long historical processes, mode-of-production arguments about Latin America are of dubious value when explaining the rise of new states after independence.⁷ If mode-of-production explanations do have some relevance, it is in a sense somewhat similar to Perry Anderson's (1974:421-22) interpretation of the rise of the absolutist state in Europe. He claims that the political, institutional, and juridical transformations that accompanied absolutism were not preceded by substantial reorganization of the feudal mode of production: "Contrary to all structuralist assumptions, there was no self moving mechanism of displacement from . . . [the feudal] to the capitalist mode of production, as contiguous and closed systems." Indeed, Anderson's argument about Europe seems less contentious when applied to Latin America, for although most scholarly literature agrees that in Latin America structural transformations were minimal, an analogous consensus has not been reached regarding Europe.

Comparing Europe and Latin America, we come to the conclusion that although the pace of economic development and differences in factor endowments undoubtedly affect state formation and influence democratic or authoritarian outcomes, to stress these variables alone does not necessarily facilitate the formulation of a more encompassing theory. Factors related to war and conflict resolution, on the other hand, seem to create an easier and more common ground for comparison. All theories suffer from a margin of error, yet when purely structuralist or institutionalist variables make up the theoretical picture without including factors related to conflict resolution and collective action, that margin of error significantly increases. The following chapters, among other things, show how different types of conflict shaped phenomena that most other theories have associated exclusively with structural changes. Conflict and the concomitant collective action de-