

BLOOD AND DEBT

War and the Nation-State in Latin America

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The Latin American Puzzle

The specter of Leviathan haunts contemporary images of Latin America.¹ A large, unwieldy and all-powerful state, it is said, determines the future of citizens and dictates the thrust of their lives.

In the neoliberal paradigm, there has long been an insistence that overreliance on the state trapped Latin America in political and economic mayhem and that the best solution to the continent's myriad problems would be the removal of this institutional dead-

1. In the book I focus on eleven cases: Mexico and the ten republics below the isthmus. Except for some occasional comparative comments, I have ignored Central America and the Caribbean. My reasons for doing so were partly driven by geographical reality and partly by the limitations of any scholarly enterprise. Conversations with colleagues have convinced me that Central America represents important exceptions to my arguments. I felt, however, that this region was geopolitically separate, and its inclusion not only would have made the task of this book too daunting, but also would have unnecessarily complicated a narrative already containing significant twists and turns.

weight. For the past two decades, the dominant policy mantra has been “getting the state back out.” Once free from the omniscient gaze and monopolistic power of the Leviathan, current wisdom goes, Latin American civil societies and their markets will flower into peaceful, prosperous democracies.

But where is this Leviathan? Where is the institution capable of frustrating and oppressing so many? Is it possible that the Latin American state is capable of so dominating its citizens’ lives? Despite a great deal of discussion of a “state-centered matrix,”² we still know surprisingly little about the ability of the state in Latin America to do anything.³ And what we do know points in the opposite direction of the familiar neoliberal beliefs.

What is this institutional creature supposed to look like? Far too many pages have been written in defining this concept to necessitate a long discussion here of its various interpretations and epistemologies.⁴ In this book, the state is defined as the permanent institutional core of political authority on which regimes rest and depend. It is permanent in that its general contours and capacities remain constant despite changes in governments. It is institutionalized in that a degree of autonomy from any social sector is assumed. Its authority is widely accepted within society over and above debate regarding specific policies. While the nature of its agency may be problematic, it does possess enough coherence to be considered an actor within the development of a society. That is, even if we may not speak of the state “wanting” or “thinking,” we can identify actions and functions associated with it. On the most basic level, the functions of a state include the provision and administration of public goods and the control of both internal and external violence.

How has the Latin American state performed, according to our definition? The results have generally been less than exemplary. Latin American states have regularly failed to establish their institutional autonomy; their scale and scope remain a part of daily political debate; and their legitimacy is often called into question. We consistently also find that the Latin Ameri-

2. Cavarozzi, “Beyond Transitions to Democracy.”

3. A promising exception is recent work by Peter Evans linking characteristics of state bureaucracies to economic outcomes (Evans and Rauch, “Bureaucracy and Growth.” See also D. Smith, Solinger, and Topik, *States and Sovereignty in the Global Economy*).

4. For general discussions, see Barkey and Parikh, “Comparative Perspectives on the State” and literature cited therein. See also Michael Mann’s introductory essay “The Autonomous Power of the State,” in his *States, War, and Capitalism*. For more recent works in particular fields, see below.

can state has not had the required institutional capacity to perform even a limited set of tasks.⁵

While noting some significant exceptions (for example, Chile and Costa Rica), authors of every report describe a generic failure to provide the basic social services associated with a modern state. Whether one is speaking of health, education, housing, or transportation and communications infrastructures, Latin American states have performed quite badly, even taking into account the resource constraints under which most of these countries operate.⁶ The distribution of goods and services across classes, races, genders, and regions is so distorted on most of the continent as to contradict any notion of a political and social collective. For example, whereas the wealthy may obtain the best-quality health care at private institutions, public hospitals in Latin America are notorious even by the standards of their global counterparts. A chasm divides the living conditions of those in the cities and those in the countryside. The vast majority of the rural population does not have access to safe drinking water or sanitation.⁷ The relevant states have been largely unable to deal with the subsequent massive urban immigration of the past fifty years, producing public-health nightmares in almost every large Latin American city. A casual walk through any *favela*, *barrio*, *colonia popular*, or *villa miseria* horrifies visitors and leads to both engineering and psychological avoidance mechanisms. Even education,

5. Despite the importance of this concept to political sociology, it remains largely understudied. My use of the term focuses on the ability of the relevant political authority to enforce its wishes and implement policies. Perhaps the most extreme manifestation of state authority is as described by James Scott, in *Seeing Like a State*. For a general discussion, see Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States*; Evans, Rueschemeyer, and Skocpol, *Bringing the State Back In*; Migdal, Kohli, and Shue, *State Power and Social Forces*; and Callaghy, *The State-Society Struggle*. For Latin America, see Geddes, *Politician's Dilemma*, esp. 15-19; Canak, "The Peripheral State Debate"; Huber Stephens and Stephens, *Democratic Socialism in Jamaica*; Huber, "Assessments of State Strength"; Fishlow, "The Latin American State"; Faletto, "The Specificity of the Latin American State"; Sikkink, "Las capacidades y la autonomía del estado en Brasil y la Argentina"; and Berensztein, "Rebuilding State Capacity in Contemporary Latin America." For historical accounts of the Latin American state, see Oszlak, "The Historical Formation of the State"; Whitehead, "State Organization in Latin America Since 1930"; Coronil, *The Magical State*.

6. Even those with a great deal of wealth have failed to generate anything more than a dramaturgical patina of institutionalized authority and services. See Coronil, *Magical State*. Latin America has of course performed better than Africa. But, it would be stretching the definition of the state to include many of the countries in Africa. In Latin America we have the more puzzling situation whereby states are not stillborn and endure for many years, performing at least the minimum needed for existence, but fail to develop substantial administrative and political capacity.

7. United Nations, Statistics Division.

which was touted as a relative success story for several decades, has left more than a quarter of the population illiterate in many Latin American countries. In most recent times, we have seen even the basic educational infrastructure begin to deteriorate, with the state equally unable to preserve the quality of the leading national universities.

Major cities boast impressive highways and public transport systems today, but all are overused and severely overcrowded. Outside urban centers, travel can be difficult and dangerous. In addition, the telephone remains a luxury in almost all Latin American societies, because of a spotty communications infrastructure outside the main centers.⁸ Latin America was an early leader in the cell phone boom, not because of technological sophistication, but because of the absence of adequate public telecommunications.⁹ Rather than the market for such electronic toys being hampered by a dominating state, the service vacuum created opportunities.

If the state is supposed to provide the basic foundation that allows for the physical integration of society, the Latin American state has fallen short. It has also failed to create a notion of citizenship, crucial to integrating community.¹⁰ An important function of any modern state has been the "compulsory cooperation" it requires of its subjects as it recognizes their common citizenship.¹¹ This includes forging basic social equality and collective identity. With the possible exception of the countries of the Southern Cone, no society in Latin America has been integrated to the point that all sectors of the population inherently recognize their common links through the nation.

In one possible area, the Latin American state appears to have exercised considerable authority. Much of the imagery of the overwhelming Leviathan comes from the economic roles the state has assumed. It should first be noted that the actual economic influence of the state has been at times exaggerated and its role in more developed countries minimized. Nevertheless, the liberal state of the nineteenth century played a significant role in the development of the export economy. After 1930, the state was involved in

8. Uruguay boasts the highest level of phone penetration, with 209 lines per one thousand people, while Peru has only 60 per thousand (University of Texas, LANIC, "Trends in Latin American Networking").

9. Subsequently, the continent lags far behind in use of the Internet (University of Texas, LANIC, "Trends in Latin American Networking").

10. Pinheiro, "Democracies Without Citizenship"; Vilas, "Inequality and the Dismantling of Citizenship in Latin America."

11. Mann, "Autonomous Power of the State," 23.

everything from trade to industrial policy. There is no denying that Mexico in the late 1930s and Brazil in the late 1960s had many of the traits associated with so-called developmentalist states. Yet even in those countries where state intervention has been most condemned and where its capacity has been greatest, the ability of the Latin American state to impose its will on a population has been severely limited.¹² The state provided employment for some and protection for others, but it generally failed to force the people it supposedly governed to change their behavior.¹³ The bloated public payroll was plagued by corruption and inefficiency, while industry, protected and nationalized, produced shoddy goods. The ability of the state to be generous grew, but not its capacity to be demanding. The resultant state was large but ineffective.

Consider the manner in which the Latin American state has met its fiduciary responsibilities, such as the issuance and governance of a national currency, and the prudent management of national accounts. Once again, the outcome has been an almost unmitigated disaster. Inflation has come to be so associated with the continent that it may even be called a Latin American disease. Over the past thirty years, countries such as Bolivia saw such mind-boggling inflation (11,749 percent in 1985 alone) as to make the notion of a currency meaningless. A million 1979 Argentine pesos would have been literally worthless by 1997. Even such countries as Chile, which were standard exceptions to this kind of problem, have experienced almost perpetual annual double-digit inflation.¹⁴ Over the past decade, several countries have considered surrendering their effective power to issue currency by either establishing parity with the U.S. dollar or making it legal tender.¹⁵

12. Evans, "Predatory, Developmental, and Other Apparatuses"; P. Smith, "The Rise and Fall of the Developmental State," 51-73. The clearest example of failure may be precisely in those cases where attempts were made to create a variant of East Asian authoritarian developmentalism. In an earlier book I described Carlos Salinas's quasi-Leninist technocratic revolution. Note that even this project could not prevent an outbreak of guerrilla war, could not protect basic institutions from the inroads of the drug mafia, could not count on a police force, and certainly could not protect its currency.

13. Some have seen the rise of the informal economy over the past decades as an indication of the suffocating embrace of an all-powerful state-economic apparatus. Yet is not such a huge economic sector free from taxes and regulations an indication of the state's inability to impose its own standards? The percentage of workers not covered by social security or public-health plans does not reflect a wide movement to escape from the grasp of the state, but rather the inability of the state to hold the population in its grip.

14. Data from Committee on Latin American Studies, University of California, Los Angeles, SALA, Table 3322.

15. The almost universal problem of capital flight is another indication of the relatively weak capacity of the Latin American state to control basic economic functions.

Not coincidentally, budgets have consistently been off balance. The Latin American government that is able to pay its own way is rare indeed. The same may be said for many governments worldwide during the past fifty years, but the fiscal fragility of the Latin American state has been extreme. These states have usually had to seek funds outside their own economies, thereby threatening their national autonomy. Moreover, the repayment of these loans has created yet another burden, since it often forces the country to push aside domestic considerations in a frantic search for convertible currency. It may be only a slight exaggeration to describe the fiscal operations of some states as mere transfers of national wealth to international lenders.

The failure of states to pay their own way is also indicative of their constrained capacity to tax their population. Despite their rapacious reputations, Latin American states have historically taxed a much smaller share of their national wealth than other, richer countries. While comparisons of fiscal systems are difficult because of differing definitions, measures, and fiscal jurisdiction, overall trends are indicative. On average, Latin American countries tax their economies at roughly one-third the level of those in the G7.¹⁶ By this measure, then, the Latin American state is far from being a rapacious Leviathan. It would be more accurate to call it a fiscal dwarf.

Political failures have been even more obvious. Much attention has been focused on authoritarianism, less on the actual obedience of orders. The state's capacity to maintain monopoly over the use of violence or territoriality has also always been suspect.¹⁷ With a couple of exceptions, few national capitals could be said to have ruled the hinterlands of the nineteenth or even early twentieth century. Even today, Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia still lack the ability to control the Sierra; Mexico continues to fight rebels in at least two provinces; Brazil cannot enforce federal policies on regions; and Colombia is quickly disintegrating.

With regard to the maintenance of social or civil order, citizens living in any major Latin American city increasingly find themselves victims to crime

16. The average for Latin America is 13.3 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) (median is 12.8 percent). For the G7 (Group of Seven [industrialized nations]) it is 36.8 percent (identical median) (Committee, *SALA*, Tables 3119, 3120 for 1993-1996; OECD, *Revenue Statistics*, 64). Even if we take government expenditure as a percentage of the national economy, the most elaborate state apparatus on the continent pales next to the significance of most OECD states. See also ECLAC, *The Fiscal Covenant*, esp. 65-87.

17. Whitehead, "State Organization."

and are turning to some form of privatized protection.¹⁸ For the rich, these services may be provided by the booming security industry. For the very poor this may involve reluctant membership in gangs or participation in crude protection rackets. For those in the middle class, security may be nothing more than ownership of one of the increasingly available guns or simply the avoidance of any unnecessary exposure in the public arena. In some cities, where the safety of even the most powerful political figures is not assured, daily life has assumed an almost predatory quality. Nowhere, again with the possible exception of Chile, can one rely on the state to provide a reasonable assurance of protection.

Once a crime has been committed, it is equally difficult for the average citizen to take refuge in the justice system. Although scholars have paid little attention to this important aspect of Latin American life, the legal system in those countries is in tatters.¹⁹ Prisoners (except the most privileged) often disappear into the morass of an administrative apparatus that cannot track their whereabouts, much less ensure a prompt trial. Victims of crime rarely bother to report assaults. Depending on the country, business disputes require a third party other than the state to intervene in and manage conflicts and to propose and enforce resolutions. In battles over property, the state's capacity to serve as an even potentially neutral arbiter is highly questionable. The legitimacy of the official judiciary and the level of trust in its capacity to search for legal truths and objective justice are both quite low.

What about the popular conception, then, of the Latin American state as a bloody tyrant? A number of Latin American states have perpetrated their share of mass murder: the Matanza of El Salvador, the anti-Mayan campaign of Guatemala, and the "Dirty War" of Argentina are some examples. Although these were brutal occurrences that brought suffering and death to thousands, even the worst Latin American cases pale in comparison with happenings in much of the rest of the world.²⁰ In the following several chapters, I demonstrate that taken in context, political violence in Latin America

18. Londoño and Guerrero, "Violencia en América Latina"; ECLAC, "Public Insecurity on the Rise"; Colburn, "Crime in Latin America"; University of Texas, Austin, Department of Sociology, "Rising Violence and the Criminal Justice Response in Latin America."

19. Guillermo O'Donnell has been in the lead with some of the recent concern with the weakness of the judiciary system. See, for example, "The Judiciary and the Rule of Law" and "The State, Democratization, and Some Conceptual Problems." See also Mahon, "Reforms in the Administration of Justice in Latin America."

20. Compare data on Latin America, for example, with the findings detailed in Rummel, *Death by Government*.

has been relatively muted. The state has not been actively responsible for many deaths, relatively speaking. In fact, it has been the *absence* of a state that has been largely responsible for deaths among the greater population.²¹

Many of the deaths produced by political violence have resulted from the inability of the state to impose its authority in a definitive and permanent manner. The hot spots of politically inspired violence in contemporary Latin America, for example, Colombia, are the results not of a Leviathanesque effort to impose new social orders or to dispose of particular populations, but of the persistence of rival claimants to legitimate authority. In other cases, Mexico and again Colombia being the most prominent examples, they are about the inability (or unwillingness) of the central state to impose a rule of law over an international business. The upsurge in crime in nearly every Latin American capital over the past twenty years has come not from officially sanctioned actions, but from rogue police and criminals who feel free to terrorize an increasingly desperate population.

It is also critical to take a look at the motivations for the political violence that has occurred in Latin America. The global holocausts of the past century have been associated with three different forms of political exclusion. The first and most common type defined identity through territory and elevated residence in a particular region to the secular religion of nationalism. A related second form defined identity through ethnicity, sometimes associated with a territory, as in the preceding type, other times with only sections of one or more formal states. A third motivating factor has been ideology, often combined, implicitly or explicitly, with one of the identity claims described above. All these identities claimed the right to impose "the ultimate sacrifice" on their populations. What is peculiar to Latin America is that political violence has rarely been associated with the emotional intensity associated with the first two types, and even the third has not brought about the kind of mass mobilization witnessed in Europe. Again, this is not to deny moments of extreme political violence, but to emphasize that these have been epiphenomenal. We have no evidence of systematic intense violence legitimated by the standard political rubrics.²²

21. If we wish to include the victims of state inaction, the number of premature deaths caused by the absence of basic services has to be at least partly set at the door of political authority. Consider the case of Brazil, widely considered the most unequal industrial society in the world. While the rich and influential of São Paulo avoid traffic snarls by commuting by helicopter, the very poorest have life expectancies that may be decades shorter than the lucky few. Given the existence of great wealth at least potentially available to the state, its failure to appropriate it and redistribute it to prevent some suffering may be judged as criminal as the actual order of violence.

22. Perhaps the most interesting Latin American exception may be found in the Cold War.

Finally, we must discuss the instances of externally oriented violence. This is perhaps the most puzzling aspect of the Latin American state, because there have been very few international wars involving these in almost two centuries of independence. That is, since the early nineteenth century, the continent has been relatively free of major international conflict. Even if we include civil wars, Latin America has enjoyed relative peace. Outside the cases of Paraguay, Mexico, and Colombia, no country has suffered a large number of deaths during *conventional* warfare.²³

Worldwide, Latin America stands out for the general absence of organized slaughter. Southeast and South Asia, the Middle East, and most of all, Europe have had much bloodier historical experiences. Although the United States has been generally peaceful within its own borders, it has participated in some of the bloodiest contests outside them. Scandinavia, following its bellicose early history, has been peaceful for almost three hundred years, but has also been exceptional in a variety of other ways that make a comparison with Latin America difficult. Africa has been relatively free of international conflict, but ~~most of its countries have enjoyed~~ barely thirty years of independence, in contrast to Latin America's one and a half centuries.²⁴

Nowhere is the general peace of the continent more clearly seen than on a map. Examine a map of Latin America in 1840 and the general borders and country configurations look surprisingly like today's. While early units such as Gran Colombia, the Central American Republic, and the Peruvian-Bolivian Confederation have vanished, no politically recognized state has disappeared through conquest. In almost two hundred years of independent political history, Latin America has yet to lose a Poland, a Burgundy, a Saxony, or a Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. In fact, the contemporary states and boundaries resemble quite closely those of the Spanish colonial administration of the eighteenth century.

Academic study of Latin America reflects this lack of war experience.

Consider that notwithstanding its clear authoritarian character, the Cuban regime has never engaged in the mass killing of many other communist countries. Moreover, even the Central American wars of the 1970s and 1980s, while extremely bloody, pale next to the organized slaughter of equivalent struggles in other parts of the world.

23. The Central American wars of the 1970s and 1980s represent another exception, but I am uncertain about where guerrilla wars would fit into the classic models analyzed in the literature on state and war. The recent events along the Peruvian-Ecuadorian frontier and the tensions between Venezuela and Colombia do not represent a break in the pattern of peace, given the relatively small amounts of violence and time involved. See Chapter 2 for more details on numbers of wars.

24. On the African case, see Jackson and Rosberg, "Why Africa's Weak States Persist"; Herbst, *States and Power in Africa*.

Whether measured by bibliographic entries, attention devoted in disciplinary meetings, or space allotted in such works as the *Cambridge Encyclopedia* or the *Cambridge History*, war has warranted little attention.²⁵ The Latin American state, therefore, appears to have acted in a very different manner from that of other states. Simply put, we cannot make a case for the significance or strength of the Latin American state on the basis of its performance as a protector of territory, since the potential to demonstrate such a capability has been limited. If anything, as I will argue in the coming pages, this international inaction may be the best indicator of the state's fragility.

In summary, using Weber's original language when referring to the state, one cannot speak of states *dominating* their societies. While generalizations are always dangerous, we may classify most of the Latin American states, even well into the twentieth century, as *highly despotic, yet infrastructurally weak*. They are "despotic" in the ability of state elites to undertake decisions without routine negotiation with civil society. They are weak in the institutional capacity of the state, or its ability to actually implement decisions.²⁶ Despite its reputation for autocracy and repression, the Latin American state has been far less able to impose itself on its societies than its European counterparts. In reality, the Latin American state cannot be called a Leviathan, or the oppressive equalizer of neoliberal myth, or even the overwhelming centralizer of black legends of Iberian culturalism. What has characterized the Latin American state is not its concentration of power, but the very dilution of power.²⁷

As with any multicasé generalization, we can place the capacities of the various Latin American states on a spectrum. If we exclude Central America and the Caribbean, we recognize three different general types.²⁸ On one end of the spectrum we find countries where the state as an institution has succeeded in establishing some administrative norms and where there is relative institutional capacity. The most obvious end point for our spectrum is

25. An important recent exception is López-Alves, *State Formation and Democracy in Latin America, 1810-1900*.

26. Mann, *Sources of Social Power*, vol. 2.

27. Gurr, Jagers, and Moore, in "Transformation of the Western State," note "the pervasive failure of most Latin American societies to establish coherent, institutionalized political systems of either democratic or autocratic type. . . . When coherent autocracies have been established in Latin America, their institutions usually were too weak to outlast the founding elite" (94).

28. I am borrowing much of this classification from Whitehead, "State Organization," but it follows the standard opinion in the field.

Chile, followed by Uruguay and Argentina. On the other end are those countries where the viability of the state remains in question; Bolivia and Peru are examples of failure in administration and institutionalization, whereas Colombia represents the collapse of authority. In the middle are the two largest Latin American states, Mexico and Brazil.²⁹ Inside each set of countries we need to take into account regional variation, with state authority concentrated around certain geographical zones and often practically disappearing in less accessible frontiers.³⁰ The analytical task in this book is to explain both the generic Latin American pattern and its variations.

Latin America thus represents a double empirical puzzle. On the one hand, some of the states have only minimally developed. On the other, we have an equally interesting exception to standard international behavior, in that these countries have mostly avoided large-scale war. A region that has managed to escape both war and the formation of a strong state for the past hundred years calls for analysis and promises important lessons for the development of contemporary political life. The Latin American puzzle also offers a perfect opportunity to explore the relationship between military conflict and subsequent political development in state formation.

Where Do States Come From?

How do we explain the relative lack of development of the Latin American state? How do we account for the variation that does exist on the continent? What is the relationship between the existence of this limited state and the level and forms of political violence observed in the region? After reviewing some possible theoretical answers for the particular development of the Latin American state, I focus on a relatively recent emphasis on what we may call *bellicist*, or war-centered, accounts of the rise of nation states.³¹

Over the past century, social science has produced myriad theories accounting for the development of the state. While this is not the place for an exhaustive review, an outline of the major theories and their application to Latin America will be useful.

29. Borrowing Charles Ragin's language, we may speak of the first group having fuzzy membership in the set of states of $<.5$; those in the middle may have membership of $.5$; and those with most developed states may have somewhere around $.75$ (Ragin, *Fuzzy-Set Social Science*).

30. Indeed, it is often difficult to distinguish between "state" and unofficial authorities. See Nugent, "State and Shadow State in Northern Peru."

31. I borrow the term *bellicist* from Gorski, "Birth of the Leviathan."

In the United States, the most popular account of the state sees it as an arena in which the various members of a community can express their preferences and use previously agreed-upon rules to arrive at a collective decision. This decision, even if it does not satisfy all, represents some optimal distribution of public inclinations. Not coincidentally, the state in this model is something of a market for politics. Like a market, the state has no preferences or inclinations; it is merely an empty vessel that a population may use as it sees fit.

In this view, the most important characteristic of a society is its capacity to participate in the series of deliberations that define the state and to obey the resultant directives. Following the market analogy, this has been expressed as a form of social capital, wherein a state will reflect the collective skills and attributes embodied in its citizenry.³² The state arises from the cumulative experience of a population's self-government as it grows and requires more and more coordination. As applied to Latin America, this general perspective has generated two very different discussions. In the first, the Latin American state is interpreted as overpowering, centralizing, and coercive, these traits seen as rooted in the Iberian culture brought back by the Spaniards.³³ A very different and less developed view implicitly borrows the notion of "strong societies/weak states" from Migdal and analyzes the manner in which political compromises with social groups disable the state.³⁴

While the analysis of the state as a kind of a collective market has enjoyed an intellectual boom of late, it is the degree of autonomy that a state possesses that has most divided contemporary social scientists.³⁵ That is, to what extent does the state remain independent of the society that it is attempting to integrate and control? From a classic Weberian perspective, the state serves as both impartial police officer and honest clerk.³⁶ Weber held that the function of the state is to create the conditions under which the various relations between members of a society can develop. Specifically,

32. Putnam with Leonardi and Nanetti, *Making Democracy Work*.

33. Véliz, *The Centralist Tradition of Latin America*; Morse, "The Heritage of Latin America"; Wiarda, *Politics and Social Change in Latin America*.

34. The culprits may be either elites creating repressive protectors of privilege or populist groups creating morasses of clientalism. See, for example, Malloy, *Authoritarianism and Corporatism in Latin America*; Collier and Collier, *Shaping the Political Arena*.

35. For a discussion on Latin America, see Stepan, *The State and Society*; Hamilton, *The Limits of State Autonomy*; and Wajzman, *Reversal of Development in Argentina*.

36. The property-rights literature is a related approach; see North and Thomas, *Rise of the Western World* and North, *Institutions, Institutional Change, and Economic Performance*.

the state creates the institutional foundations required by a market economy and a legal bureaucratized order, through domination or the imposition of its control over violence. The perspectives and preferences of the population are in this sense irrelevant. The state exists above and beyond the reach of its citizens; it must or it would not be able to fulfill its functions. Marxists might agree that the state fulfills these necessary roles, but they challenge the notion that it does so neutrally; a capitalist society can only produce a capitalist state. Whether because of structural determinacy or instrumental controls, the state serves the long-term interests of the dominant class. Whatever their arguments, both Weber and Marx adopt a Hobbesian or conflict perspective. The state is needed to cap a set of social, economic, and political struggles.³⁷

All the views discussed here emphasize the domestic conditions for the rise of states and determine its autonomy vis-à-vis national actors. A very different set of academic perspectives emphasizes the existence of states within a larger global environment. The most famously associated with Latin America is dependency theory, whose various incarnations share some critical common assumptions about the state in ex-colonial societies. Dependency theory contends that ex-colonial societies can never hope to develop states that will fulfill all the tasks needed to govern and run a country. This results from the understood centrality of external economic relations to these countries, the stunted development of national elites, the overwhelming influence of global powers, and these states' marginal position within a global economy. It also says that postcolonial states will never be impartial arenas, for they were constructed from afar and must constantly look to external actors for approbation and support. In this model, their economies do not require the kind of integration that the Weberian state is meant to provide, nor do their elites provide their acquiescence to political domination, as their external allies are much more powerful and reliable. The result is a dependent state, never fulfilling its own destiny.³⁸

During the past few decades, numerous variations on these perspectives have been applied to Latin America. Authors have attempted to document how the state has served the interests of a particular fraction of the domestic elite, how it has served to defend multinational interests, and how it has

37. For a general discussion, see Whitehead, "State Organization"; Oszlak, "The Historical Formation of the State." For a rare explicit application of Weber's theories, see Uricoechea, *The Patrimonial Foundations of the Brazilian Bureaucratic State*.

38. The classic source is Cardoso and Faletto, *Dependency and Development in Latin America*. See also Gereffi and Fonda, "Regional Paths of Development."

suppressed one popular movement or another. Academics have devoted considerable energy to determining who has used state power, how, and for whom. Yet the particular development of the institution of political power has hardly been examined.

To a large extent, students of Latin America have assumed that the state was there to be used; that the tool was available for manipulation. Revolutions have been a much more popular topic than the construction of the states against which they were directed. Consider the number of volumes on the Mexican and Cuban Revolutions and then reflect on the relative scarcity of books on the Cuban Republic and the Porfiriato. With our fascination for how the walls came tumbling down, we have paid scant attention to the rise of buildings, accepting the existence of Latin American states without asking how powerful they really were. Much like the Wizard of Oz, these states seemed all-powerful and full of bombast and smoke. But we have neglected to look for the man behind the curtain.

The study of Latin America has thus reflected a general trend in political sociology; sociologists and their kin have been much more interested in the breakdown of states than in their development.³⁹ What is startling is that even in analyzing the collapse of states we assume their prior existence. Consider, for example, political sociology's three main conditions for revolution: fiscal strain, elite conflict, and popular revolt.⁴⁰ Only the first, fiscal strain, examines the capacity of the state to resist opposition and revolt. But still, the focus of research is on how the apparatus of the already established state became so enfeebled. A related tradition in historical sociology has followed Barrington Moore and sought to explain the forms of rule and social alliances under which the state operates. Once again, however, the administrative capacity of the state is taken for granted.⁴¹

This paradigm simply does not work for Latin America. The minimalist state is not a product of neoliberalism or of the debt crisis. States in Latin America have never developed the institutional strength of their western European (or even, in some cases, East Asian) counterparts. Latin American

39. Peruse a graduate student reading list and note the balance between themes. Some of this may be attributed to the still-relative intellectual influence of Marx over Weber in the academy. The latter has even been drafted to explain state collapse, one of the few themes he did not address exhaustively.

40. Collins, *Macrohistory*.

41. Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*; Rueschmeyer, Huber Stephens, and Stephens, *Capitalist Development and Democracy*. A noteworthy exception in that she closely links revolution and state capacity is Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions*.

state power has always been shallow and contested. The interesting and more insightful question is why.

One source for theoretical guidance is the revival of macrohistorical accounts over the past forty years. From McNeill, in *The Rise of the West*, to Poggi, Moore, Giddens, Mann, van Creveld, Finer, Skocpol, and Tilly, authors have offered a view of the past five hundred years (and often longer) from the veritable mountaintop.⁴² As historical narratives, their works are marvelous pieces of scholarship, but they leave little indication of a pattern that can be applied to the Latin American situation. The number of variables and patterns and the complexity of the process make it nearly impossible to apply their work to a non-European case.⁴³

Part of this "return to history" has, however, generated yet another, perhaps more useful, internationalist perspective on the rise of the state. Rather than emphasizing the roles state institutions play in the development of a society, this perspective focuses on the most basic of political functions, the defense from violence. In this view, states are mechanisms for defending territories from external threats.⁴⁴ Geoffrey Best put it most succinctly: "Human society politically organized, becomes a state; and states distinguish themselves from other states, to put it bluntly, by their abilities to fight or protect themselves from one another."⁴⁵ Seen this way, states are above all fighters of wars, and their development has to be understood within the broader context of geopolitical conflict and competition. That is, war partly determines all aspects of states, from their authority structures, administrative capacities, and legitimacy to their levels of inclusion. Each of these in turn helps determine how states fight.

The bellicist perspective represents a potentially rich guide for analyzing the Latin American state. First, more than most theories of state formation, it provides a straightforward historical model that can be abstracted and applied to different locales. The occurrence of war is a relatively clear-cut historical phenomenon that can be dated and from which one can measure

42. McNeill, *The Rise of the West*; Poggi, *The Development of the Modern State*; Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*; Giddens, *The Nation-State and Violence*; Mann, *Sources of Social Power*, vols. 1 and 2; Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions*; Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States*; Van Creveld, *Rise and Decline of the State*; Finer, *The History of Government from the Earliest Times*.

43. More problematically, when students and readers do visualize more generic patterns, they tend to forget that these "metanarratives" are still based on a limited set of cases. See Senteno and López-Alves, *The Other Mirror*.

44. For relevant works, see discussion in Chapter 3.

45. G. Best, introduction to M. S. Anderson, *War and Society in Europe*, 8.

institutional effects. Bellicist theory also emphasizes a series of discrete aspects of state formation that can be at least relatively adequately measured and compared. Second, while much of the recent emphasis has been on the institutional development of the state, for example, growth of bureaucracies, related discussion of the effect of war might be found in the literature on nationalism and democracy. The analysis of the consequences of war can thus encompass a wide range of political institutions and major aspects of the nation-state. Third, the study of war allows us to explicitly analyze the international environment's contribution to state development.

Bellicist theory therefore permits us to explore the two puzzles I earlier identified as unique to Latin America. Through it, we can ask about why violence occurs only with certain organizational forms on the continent and is very rare as a geopolitical event, and we can analyze the moments of violence and determine the consequences for the relevant states so as to gauge the possible costs of peace. In turn, Latin America may provide new empirical insights with which to analyze the dynamics between war and state building. The relative absence of wars and the fragility of state formations can serve as a useful counterfactual to the European experience, on which most of our theoretical assumptions rest.

This book is a comparative history of the experience and consequences of war in Latin America. It is an unusual historical puzzle: why have the dogs of war rarely barked in Latin America? It is not that Latin Americans have not tried to kill one another—they have—but that they have generally not attempted to organize their societies with such a goal in mind. These countries have existed with comparatively low levels of militarization.⁴⁶ To better understand why this matters, we can look at explanations of violence from both the micro and the macro level.⁴⁷ The micro level explores the psychosocial traits and conditions that help explain the barbarity observed in war. It asks a simple yet profound question: how can human beings treat one another this way? On the macro level, a very different question assumes the barbarity, but goes further to analyze the different organizational forms in which it occurs. Latin America does not look very different from Europe from the micro-oriented perspective. However, the reasons for which people

46. "Civil society organizing itself for production of violence [and the] mobilization of resources, material and human, for potential use in warfare" (G. Best, "The Militarization of European Society, 1870–1914," 13). The important exception here is Paraguay under López that will serve for intracontinental comparison.

47. The emphasis on the organizational aspect of violence was suggested in a wonderful seminar led by Kai Erikson during the spring of 2000 at Princeton University.

have killed and the manner in which they have been organized are completely different and extremely illuminating. This difference in development is a focal point of this book.

An analysis of the "long peace" in Latin America makes several valuable contributions to the literature. By studying the dog that did not bark we can better understand the conditions that lead to war. For instance, this book calls into question the often implicit assumption that political violence is organized along territorial lines. Latin America's political violence has occurred largely *within* rather than *between* states. In this volume, I attempt to explain why and to analyze the consequences of this difference.

The forms of violence seen on the continent illustrate one of the key differences between the new postcolonial states and those established before the nineteenth century: For example, the presence of external powers influenced outcomes and helped to ensure (impose?) peace. These external police may have prevented much bloodshed, but they may also have locked regions into political equilibriums unsuited for further institutional development. There is more than a grain of social Darwinism in the warcentric account of state development. What then of a geopolitical ecosystem where adaptation did not necessarily lead to differential success? In light of increased pressures for international intervention in domestic struggles, the answers to this question have clear contemporary importance. The types of violence observed in Latin America are relevant in a world where the "major-theater war" classically seen in Europe may no longer be so relevant, where states may not be the only military actors, and where outcomes may not be decisive.

Further, this book contributes to the scholarship on the still somewhat neglected political history of nineteenth-century Latin America and specifically on the development of state institutions.⁴⁸ Why did central authority establish control over the means of violence in Europe, but generally fail in Latin America? The analysis also sheds light on the dynamics of domestic conflicts following independence. Through the prism of war we may also improve our understanding not only of the Latin American state, but also of nationalism and democracy on the continent. The puzzle remains of how Latin American countries have managed to avoid the establishment of order, effective and efficient systems of production, and equitable distribution. Such a magnificent display of institutional failure deserves further attention; and the role of war in it has been understudied.

48. Two significant and recent additions (from radically different perspectives) are López-Covarrubias, *State Formation and Democracy in Latin America* and Adelman, *Republic of Capital*.

Finally, this book is a challenge to a long tradition in historical sociology that has privileged a small number of cases and often generalized a European phenomenon into a universal social fact.⁴⁹ For example, Michael Mann can confidently say that the relationship between revolutions and geopolitical pressures is “as consistent a relationship as we find in macrosociology.”⁵⁰ Yet no such correlation exists in Latin America. The English and French “bourgeois” revolutions have been treated as theoretical models, while the Mexican and Bolivian counterparts are not. The rise of Prussia and its bureaucracy merits attention, but not the solidification of the Chilean state. We can all date Waterloo, but few can do so for the equally decisive battle of Ayacucho. By asking why Latin America is different, I hope to motivate others to ask whether Europe is the true exception.⁵¹ This book is a challenge to assumptions and an encouragement to others to look outside the “usual suspects” for historical paradigms.

The inclusion of more cases might even go a long way toward clarifying the recently heated fight between various practitioners of historical sociology.⁵² I hope to offer a challenge to the “implicit claims for essential, invariant universals” that Charles Tilly asserts have become too predominant in the field.⁵³ By introducing a largely new set of cases to a long-standing debate, I hope to demonstrate that contingency, contextuality, and relationality play too important a role in historical developments to allow for all-encompassing general laws, and certainly when these are based on faulty samples. The book follows what Tilly has called the variation-finding approach to “huge comparisons”⁵⁴ and thus favors variability over universals.

First, I have sought to differentiate the region we call Latin America from other parts of the world. I disagree with those who argue against treating the continent as a unit. Certainly from the point of view of geopolitics, it makes a great deal of sense; but these countries have shared critical outcomes as well as heritages and social structures. These commonalities will allow us to study the region as a possible counterfactual to theories of state

49. For another wonderful refutation of European universality of state formation, see Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats*. For a broader discussion of this theme, see Centeno and López-Alves, *Other Mirror*.

50. Mann, *Sources of Social Power*, vol. 2, 225.

51. In terms of state development, the “idiosyncrasy” of the European experience has already been noted by Finer in *History of Government*, 5.

52. For a concise and useful critique (with suggestions for a resolution), see Western, “Bayesian Thinking About Macrosociology.”

53. Tilly, “To Explain Political Processes,” 1597.

54. Tilly, *Big Structures, Large Processes, Huge Comparisons*.

development arising from the European experience. Second, within the region I have sought to find variation from a general pattern. In this way, I am thus also borrowing from two different approaches defined by Tilly. At times, I will claim some level of universality for the region, while at others I will emphasize the very individual characteristics of the relevant countries and descend into the historical details. My dual objective is to generate a better explanation of Latin American reality and to produce a better understanding of the roots of successful state authority. I see this as the ultimate purpose of the Weberian tradition in sociology: to use individual data to regard and analyze the distinctiveness of each case while employing theoretical tools to explain that difference.

I do not intend this book to play any explicit part in the ongoing debate regarding "historicism versus theory-centrism" or "induction versus deduction."⁵⁵ I have always considered myself something of an epistemological naïf and have frankly wondered about the utility of sociologists engaging in practices perhaps best left to philosophers. I concur with Jack Goldstone that much of the debate comes down to whether one wishes to emphasize initial conditions versus general laws.⁵⁶ I just do not see a reason why we cannot do both. Tales well told should entice an audience with a good story while teaching it a general moral.

There is little question that we may speak of a probabilistic connection between war and state development. My central aim here is to explore and refine this relationship and to analyze how the very different conditions existing in Latin America altered this causal connection. The process of researching and writing this volume has taught me the value of an ongoing and often dialectical interaction between the theory and history. We cannot rely purely on the simple telling of stories. Without the bellicist model, it would be difficult to make sense of the chaos of the cases I have analyzed. Yet without that empirical trail, it would be impossible to go beyond mere theoretical propositions. I have come to understand the story of war and nation-states in Latin America by thinking of it as a series of spiral causalities.⁵⁷ We can identify patterns of causes leading from moment A to moment B, and these are often repeated. The pattern, however, is highly dependent on what came before and the conditions at the moment we wish to examine.

55. See "Symposium on Historical Sociology and Rational Choice Theory."

56. Goldstone, "Initial Conditions, General Laws, Path Dependence," 832.

57. I deliberately avoid using the term *path dependence* so not to engage in that particular debate. For an excellent summary of the argument, see Mahoney, "Path Dependence in Historical Sociology."

The trail from our starting point in the eighteenth century to the early twentieth is neither a straight line nor a random disbursement of events. The relevant actions and structures are causally related to each other in what appears to be a circular fashion. We can use the chronology of history to disentangle these knots, but also need to accept the inherent circularity and interaction; in any historical narrative, causal orders are often reversed and interact in feedback loops. Tracing those loops and discovering the general outlines of their curves should be the major tasks of macrohistorical scholarship.⁵⁸

If nothing else, such efforts will allow us to put to rest futile doctrinaire battles about the relative importance of states versus societies in the determination of political development. As I document, it is the empirical interaction of states, as institutions and agents, and societies, as environments and structures, that helps produce the particular Latin American pattern.⁵⁹ As in the case of the Ottoman Empire, for example, we cannot speak of a victorious or dominant state or civil society, but can describe the historical creation of a series of compromises that helped define the contemporary condition of the continent.⁶⁰

In general, the lesson to be drawn from this book is that while war may have played a significant role in the development of some European states, its explanatory power wanes on crossing the Atlantic. The particular conditions that defined the process of state creation on the continent precluded the type and consequences of state-making war. Students of peripheral regions in Europe where violence produced results similar to those found in Latin America, for example, the Balkans and Iberia, may have something to learn from these cases. I hope that students of macrohistorical processes will take away the arguably more important lesson that our overreliance on a limited set of cases has encouraged and permitted the formulation of model-like propositions that obscure more-complex historical realities.

Limited War and Limited States

What was the relationship between war and state making in Latin America? Latin America has largely fought what I call *limited* war. To understand

58. Michael Mann notes that "the problem seems to be that for centralized functions to be converted into exploitation, organizational resources are necessary that only actually appeared with the emergence of civilized, stratified, state societies—which is a circular process" ("Autonomous Power of the State," 21).

59. For an extended discussion of a "state in society" approach, see Migdal, Kohli, and Shue, *State Power and Social Forces*.

60. Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats*, 231–32.

what I mean by this, first consider a definition of contemporary *total war*. This form of conflict may be said to have begun with the military revolution of the seventeenth century, to have achieved new levels of destruction and social consequences with the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, to have developed into their modern counterparts beginning with the Crimean and U.S. Civil Wars, and to have culminated in the two world wars.⁶¹ Total wars may be characterized by (a) increasing lethality of the battlefield; (b) the expansion of the killing zone to include not only hundreds of miles of frontlines, but also civilian targets; (c) association with a form of moral or ideological crusade that contributes to the demonization of the enemy; (d) the involvement of significant parts of the population either in direct combat or in support roles; and (e) the militarization of society, in which social institutions are increasingly oriented toward military success and judged on their contribution to a war effort.

Such efforts require that states therefore be able to (a) amass and concentrate large amounts of personnel and materiel in a relatively short time, (b) expand their efforts across hundreds if not thousands of miles, (c) prescribe some form of coherent ideological message, (d) convince significant numbers of the population to accept direct military authority over their lives, and (e) transform their societies to be able to meet these challenges.

Limited wars, by contrast, (a) involve short overall duration of conflict with isolated moments of ferocity; (b) are restricted to few and small geographical areas; (c) are between states with shared ideological or cultural profiles and originate in economic or frontier clashes; (d) are fought by either professional mercenary armies, or those made up of a small number of draftees from lower classes; and (e) may be practically ignored by the typical civilian. They do not require dramatic fiscal or personal sacrifices or a strong state to impose these. Most important, they do not require the political or military mobilization of the society except (and not always) in the euphoric initial moments. Because of these limited needs, such conflicts leave little of the historical legacy associated with total wars. The streets are not filled with veterans, the state is not a postbellic Leviathan, and economic wealth is barely touched by fiscal authorities. Life goes on much as before. As I will make clear in the following pages, the limited-war pattern has largely defined the Latin American experience.

61. The progress was not linear. The Thirty Years War resembled a twentieth-century conflict much more than did the dynastic struggles of the eighteenth century. In turn, the origins of World War I may be found in precisely the kind of diplomatic gamesmanship that had been practiced in an earlier era.

Wars are not simply products of states, but may also contribute to the development of different authority structures. My aim in this book is not only to understand the nature of war on the continent, but also to comprehend the consequences of this particular pattern of violence. I wish to emphasize that by this I do not mean to imply that the study of war in and of itself holds all the answers to the puzzle of the Latin American state. War simply offers a prism through which the various experiences may be better analyzed. For example, European success in dominating the world after the fifteenth century may have had a great deal to do with greater proclivity toward war and the resulting political and economic developments.⁶² The national unity of more than one country has been based on the negation of another's identity and has been forged in battle with that enemy. It has been said that war is the parent of the modern nation-state. To a degree, the notion of a state is impossible without war. Moreover, a mass army of conscripts, each able and expected to shoulder arms, bears more than a passing historical and structural affinity to electoral democracy.

What have been the consequences of peace for Latin America? Would bloodshed earlier and in a more decisive fashion have produced a stronger, more cohesive, and more equitable state? Would earlier instability have created a continent with fewer states? Would the class divisions that permeate these societies have survived long conflicts? Has peace cost more than war? These questions are the subject of the second half of this book.

To understand the possible importance of total war in state building, consider some of its effects in detail. These include (a) increased state capacity to extract resources; (b) centralization of power in national capitals and the gradual disappearance of regional loyalties or identities; (c) stronger emotional links between the population and both a set of state institutions and the often abstract notion of a nation that these are meant to represent; and (d) a qualitative shift in the relationship of the individual to these institutions, which may be summarized as the transition from subject to citizen. Total wars seem to produce richer, more powerful states, with more intimate connections to the majority of the populations living within their territories.

None of these characteristics implies a particular type of regime. They describe a degree of relationship between a set of institutions and the populace living under them, not the manner in which the latter participates in

62. Parker, *The Military Revolution*; Howard, *The Causes of War*; Wallerstein, *The Modern World System*.

the Spanish Empire rather than from the internal development of new political forces. As the new Latin American nations appeared in the first third of the nineteenth century, they enjoyed little centralized authority and certainly could not enforce a monopoly on the use of violence. It is important to remember that before wars could serve as stimulus for western European development, the protostates had to establish their military dominance. Thus, when these states required the resources with which to fight the new type of wars, especially following the Peace of Westphalia, they were already equipped with the organizational and political capacity to impose these needs on their societies. This was not the case in any Latin American country with the possible exceptions of Chile and Paraguay prior to the last third of the nineteenth century. (The bellicosity of these two states would indicate at least a correlation between greater state capacity and likelihood of war.) The wars that did occur did not provide an opportunity to establish state power over the society precisely because the wars were "limited" and the new states lacked the organizational and political base from which to do so.

Equally important was the domestic social context in which the Latin American republics arose. As in much of the postcolonial world, states preceded nations in Latin America. With limited possible exceptions, we find little evidence of a sense of nationhood paralleling the future state boundaries. While there was a sense of vaguely defined "American-ness," it was generally limited to the miniscule white elite. For the vast majority of the population, belonging to a newly independent state meant very little. While at first some subaltern groups saw the independence movement as a possible avenue for changes in the social and economic status quo, these hopes were dashed by the criollo reaction to early radical claims. By 1820, *American* merely meant the imposition of military duties to complement already heavy fiscal demands. Even such early promises as the abolition of special Indian taxes and tributes were broken.

None of the newly independent states, again with the possible exception of Chile and Paraguay, could easily define the nation that they were supposed to represent. Whether divided by race, caste, class, or a combination of all three, Latin American populations did not possess a common identity. Because the construction of such an identity was so fraught with political conflict, states hesitated to follow the "nation-building" efforts of western European counterparts. The struggle to define the nation and the rights and obligations of citizens consumed most of the nineteenth century in Latin America. And so the region's path was set by wars between and across myr-

fixed social boundaries that ultimately defined the Latin American states, and not by struggles between territorially compact, cohesive political units, as in Europe.

The stunted development of Latin American states and the frailty of their respective nations reflect the key, but too often underemphasized, aspect of the development of the continent's nation-states. The wars of independence produced fragments of empire, but not new states. There was little economic or political logic to the frontiers as institutionalized in the 1820s—they merely were the administrative borders of the empire. The new countries were essentially miniempires with all the weaknesses of such political entities. Oscar Oszlak has captured the situation, describing a "national state established in a society that failed to acknowledge fully its institutional presence."⁶⁵

The final element that is key to understanding the Latin American cases is the geopolitical or international context in which these countries arose. The Latin American region was born entire; the countries were each surrounded at birth by states very similar in immediate history and even social structure. Contrast this with the situation in western Europe, where states preceded one another in a complex chronology, producing forms of both competition and emulation not available in Latin America. Moreover, Latin America as a whole arose as a geopolitical entity in a world where the distribution of power was extremely asymmetrical. The ability of any Latin American country to challenge the geopolitical status quo was limited. Unlike Italy and Germany, for example, these states could not even aspire to play a role in imperial competition. They were born in the third rank of nations (at best) with a low probability of moving up. If we think of these nascent nations as city-states, we understand why they had little opportunity to expand beyond their previously assigned zones of influence.⁶⁶

Although I argue in later chapters against an overreliance on external causes, the Latin American peace is in many ways the ultimate expression

65. Oszlak, "Historical Formation of the State," 5.

66. The fascinating comparison (unfortunately beyond the scope of this book) is, of course, between the United States and Latin America, particularly during the nineteenth century. A good start is made by Langley, in *The Americas in the Age of Revolution, 1750-1850*. The United States was equally split by regions and lacked a common national identity. It also suffered from a civil war, with greater violence than anything seen on the southern continent. International conflicts during the hundred years were also relatively limited. Yet in this instance, the struggles for independence, territorial consolidation, and national unity contributed to the creation of political authority. Many have argued that the United States is a country made by war.

of *dependencia*. The absence of international conflict in part reflects the irrelevance of immediate neighbors for each country's political and economic development. Latin American states often directed their attention not to their immediate borders, but to metropolitan centers half a globe away. These foreign powers-that-be also provided the continent with a hegemonic balance of strength, thus assuring that no individual regional military giant could arise. This avoided the kind of mutually assured-destruction competition responsible for much contemporary warfare. However, it deprived the region of significant geopolitical autonomy.

The weaknesses of the Latin American state restricted the continent to limited wars and long stretches of peace. This in turn deprived the states of a potentially important impetus for development. A close look at the Latin American cases prompts us to rethink the geopolitical competition between the various European countries and the resultant forms of political authority that developed on that continent. It seems that their development was in no sense inevitable; nor did it reflect a universal political trend. Instead, the interaction of particular societies and a particular set of events best explains the differences observed. It is on that interaction that I focus in the rest of the book.

Plan of the Book

In the following chapter I provide a historical introduction to the nature of war on the continent. I then analyze why Latin American warfare developed in the manner in which it did. I propose a historically bound scenario in which class structures, organizational power, and international constraints enveloped the Latin American states in a peaceful embrace. The underdeveloped administrative capacity of the Latin American state, the divisions within the dominant classes, and the control exercised by European powers helped shape both the occasions of war and their subsequent developments. Latin America was relatively peaceful because it did not form sophisticated political institutions capable of managing wars. No states, no wars. Moreover, given this history, the military as an institution appears to have identified the critical national enemy as an internal one. Given the absence of an external enemy, wars were superfluous.

In Chapter 3, I analyze the contribution of war to the centralization and empowerment of the nineteenth-century Latin American state. While wars did provide an opportunity for greater state cohesion in some circum-

stances, for example, Chile in the 1830s, these openings were never used to create the institutional infrastructure needed for further development of state capacity. A critical question is why the wars of independence produced anarchy as opposed to a coherent military authoritarianism. I believe that the answer lies in the relatively limited level of military organization and violence involved in the wars of independence. This is not to deny the destruction that these caused. However, although the wars *weakened* the colonial order, they did not kill it. The armed effort was small enough so as to not require the militarization of society throughout the continent. Certainly in comparison with the equivalent wars in European history, such as the Thirty Years War, the independence conflicts left a much more limited institutional legacy. Postindependence wars also produced ambiguous results.

The Latin American cases force us to ask once again how war actually produces order from chaos. How do state demands for money and obedience lead to greater authority instead of internal war and domestic conflict? M. S. Anderson, for example, indicates that efforts to find the money needed could stimulate discontent that was politically dangerous.⁶⁷ David Kaiser has demonstrated that the demands of war helped weaken European states in the sixteenth century and clearly helped destroy the Spanish economy.⁶⁸ Again, Paul Kennedy has amplified this argument to include the eventual decline of all empires.⁶⁹ Yet some states in some situations are able to pay for the greater armies and the more costly wars. A determined government can and has demanded sacrifices, which it was able to then channel in an efficient manner. Why did the expansion of fiscal power succeed in some cases and not in others?⁷⁰

One part of the explanation may be fear of a greater danger from the outside. This was certainly important in the early stages of the Japanese case.⁷¹ Yet Poland faced equal if not more daunting threats. A society's preexisting class structure helps determine the type of coercive and extractive apparatus built by the state. If the key to the feudal state was the monarch's cooperation with preexisting civil society, then later large sections of the powerful elite were also willing to provide quite high tax revenues, because

⁶⁷ M. S. Anderson, *War and Society in Europe*, 20.

⁶⁸ *Politics and War*.

⁶⁹ Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*.

⁷⁰ An interesting note here is the apparent claim by Michael Mann that representational government may be best able to extract the required resources (*Sources of Social Power*, vol. 2).

⁷¹ Ralston, *Importing the European Army*; Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, 437-40.

they realized that their own interests could be served through a stronger state.⁷² In some cases, potential opponents were bought: "Louis XIV did not control his nobility by keeping them idle at Versailles, but by providing state employment for them."⁷³ In other cases, the state provided a key protection for dominant classes. Capitalism might need militarism, partly because in capitalism "an unusual degree of long distance political regulation backed up by force is required."⁷⁴ Similar class structures, however, produced very different centralizing mechanisms. What worked for the Junkers did not work for the Spanish *hidalgos*.

The answer to a successful imposition of authority lies in a conjunction of environmental conditions and domestic political and social structures. The former provide the stimuli, the latter allow a particular state response to that stimulus. In the absence of external threat, the state is deprived of a critical opportunity (but not the only one) to encroach on its society. But war provides no guarantees. For example, despite more than two centuries of unrelieved war, Spain remained dependent on outside income and never developed an adequate domestic fiscal infrastructure. Spain could not survive as a major power because it did not adapt its state-managerial style to the military revolution.⁷⁵ Egypt might serve as a contemporary example of how the presence of war in and of itself does not guarantee the development of a coherent state.

The Latin American cases analyzed in Chapter 3 suggest a better and more precise definition of what these specific conjunctions look like. What were the effects of the limited wars of nineteenth-century Latin America on the fiscal capacity of the state? Simply put, they were almost nonexistent, creating only perpetually bankrupt beggar states. The easy availability of external financing allowed the state the luxury of not coming into conflict with those social sectors that possessed the required resources. Whether through loans or through the sale of a commodity, the Latin American state escaped the need to force itself on society. When such loans were not forthcoming, either the state relied on customs (not requiring an extensive administrative commitment) or its institutions simply ceased to play a major role in society.

In this chapter I also describe how the relative absence of war and the limitations of those that did occur did not provide an opening for political

72. P. Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State*; Hall, *States in History*.

73. Duffy, introduction to Duffy, *The Military Revolution and the State*, 4.

74. Mann, *States, War, and Capitalism*, 136.

75. Porter, *War and the Rise of the State*.

and subsequent fiscal centralization. The Latin American wars were not long or threatening enough to allow national institutions to override class-based interests. The particularistic interests were always able to survive wars and never felt the need to allow a state strong enough to protect and demand. In short, in Latin America, the equivalent of the aristocracy won the Fronde. The closest European model may be Sicily, where one observer has noted that "whenever strong government failed, it was the nobles [who] filled the vacuum of power."⁷⁶ The central comparative lesson here is that it is not war in and of itself that provides the "sinews of the state." Rather, it is war *in conjunction with* an already dominant group within a state apparatus that makes it possible to extract resources from a recalcitrant society.

In Chapters 4 and 5, I move away from a discussion of the state itself and emphasize the development of the nations and citizens over which it rules. While it is obviously risky to generalize about the relationship between citizenship and military service, one could see armies as providing modern nation-states with a relatively disciplined and well-educated population ready and able to work within the new industrial order. But such a population now also has at least immediate access to the means of violence and offers the state a needed resource. This forms the basis for a new political contract. Conscription and mass armies also helped to revolutionize the nature of the violence involved in military conflict. The new types of wars temporarily transformed "wolf packs" into coherent and obedient organizations.⁷⁷ This did not lead to a decline in aggregate levels of killing, but the manner in which it was accomplished had important ramifications for the state.

Wars encourage a different attitude toward the state—one based on collective identity. The link between military conflict and national loyalty is quite well known.⁷⁸ Nothing unites a nation behind a faltering leader like a war; the quickest way to make a nation is to make an army.⁷⁹ A total war can help evade social conflict as well as orienting that same struggle toward external enemies.⁸⁰ In the nineteenth century, some thought it impossible to create a nation without war.⁸¹

76. Mack Smith, cited in Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States*, 142.

77. Howard, *War in European History*.

78. A. Smith, "War and Ethnicity."

79. Porter, *War and the Rise of the State*, 18.

80. In the perhaps apocryphal words of Cecil Rhodes: "If you want to avoid civil war you must become Imperialists."

81. Howard, *Causes of War*. One may add that it is difficult to become imperialists while in the midst of a civil war.

Although there remains considerable debate about the relationship between "nations" defined by common ethnic characteristics and "states" defined by some legal existence, one could argue that for much of the nineteenth century, the state created nationalism and not vice versa.⁸² One mechanism by which it did so was through the army and military activity. Armies and the experience of war helped forge a unified identity that could obscure domestic divisions. Military experience increased the scope of what Mann calls discursive literacy: the set of nationalist assumptions and myths that contribute to the creation of a national identity. Wars may have been the key to the creation of "imagined communities."⁸³ Through the absorption of elements of the newly arising bourgeoisie and petite bourgeoisie, armies may also have encouraged class cohesion during critical periods of early industrialization.⁸⁴ Under these circumstances, armies and war helped transform class societies into armed nations and, according to Palmer, helped break down provincial allegiances and networks and replace them with ones more centered on a national community.⁸⁵

Did armies and war propagate the idea of a nation in Latin America? Did they serve as "institutions of popular education"? In Chapter 4, I analyze the apparently ambiguous findings from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Given the reputation for "nationalism" (often ill defined) of Latin American countries, one sees little evidence of the kind of mass identification evident in Europe or the United States. With some exceptions, wars did not provide the mythology on which so much of modern nationalism depends. Latin America lacks the monuments to "our glorious dead" that are ubiquitous in the landscape of Europe and the United States. Once again, the limited international struggles that occurred could not overcome internal divisions.

In Chapter 5, I pinpoint the manner in which conscription contributed (or detracted from) the process of democratization and the creation of citizenship rights. Was there ever discussion of the benefits of conscription? Were leading elites aware of the possible benefits and costs? Would a mass army have served as the surest protection for democratic citizenship? Why did the Latin American state ignore its own population?

The Latin American states were never strong enough to demand full conscription. Perhaps more important, there was never a perceived need for the

82. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780*.

83. B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

84. G. Best, "Militarization."

85. Palmer, *The Age of Democratic Revolutions*.

kind of social upheaval implied by mass armies. The state did not need the population, as soldiers or even as future workers, and thus could afford to exclude it. The state and dominant elites in almost all countries in the region also appeared to prefer passive populations. A too active or fervent sense of nationhood could actually backfire and create conditions inimical to continued elite domination.

Chapters 4 and 5 lead to an improved understanding of the creation of nations' "imagined communities" and the link between these creations and democratic rights. Through data gleaned from a census of national monuments and through analyses of the social makeup of armies I propose to better define the link between military experience and nationalist sentiment. This process may also illuminate the uniqueness of the European pattern and suggest the obstacles faced by countries attempting to emulate it without the respective historical experience.

The concluding chapter provides a summary of the major findings. I discuss how Latin America as a region is different from the rest of the world and analyze differentiation inside the continent. Interestingly, the findings from the two sets of comparisons serve to confirm each other.

Next Steps

All books have limitations and the writer becomes increasingly aware of them as the manuscript nears completion. I have already noted some of the geographical limits of my coverage. An analysis of Central America might confirm or contradict much of what is said here. I can only hope that scholars of this region will be sufficiently motivated by this book so as to—if nothing else—prove me wrong. I have focused on a particular period of time: although my discussion of the long peace does touch on contemporary events and trends, most of the historical analysis centers on the nineteenth century, because that is when the foundations of the subsequent states were laid. Moreover, in order to analyze the repercussions of war, I had to study a period when these were most relevant. Finally, I have almost exclusively focused on the bellic functions of the state and have largely ignored its role in public welfare. I believe that the former helps explain the latter, but it requires its own investigation. In this volume, I focus exclusively on the warrior state and have very little to say about the capitalist state that emerged from the late nineteenth century or the developmentalist states that were established in the 1930s. If the classic northwest European states were

made by war, they were transformed by the emphasis on public welfare in the 1930s. In the coming years I hope to finish an accompanying volume to this one in which I will compare the construction and limitations of the Latin American welfare state to its European and North American equivalents. If the Latin American state did not fight, it was somewhat more successful in creating new economies and societies. Yet I expect that the legacy of blood and debt was and will continue to be hard to escape.