Organizing the Argentine Republic:

Political Practices, Economic Change, and State Formation

in Buenos Aires and Argentina, 1820-1880

Dissertation in Progress

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Chapter One

State Formation in Latin America:

Theoretical and Historiographic Approaches

Introduction

This dissertation focuses on the Argentine case in

order to examine the interplay of material, political and

cultural change that enabled the emergence of stable

independent states in Latin America following the collapse

of Spanish and Portuguese rule in the early nineteenth

century. It is hoped that this investigation will shed

light more generally on political change in the aftermath of

empire. Post-imperial eras have historically been marked by

violent, multipolar processes of state formation wherein

local powerholders seek to expand their domains at one

another's expense, formerly suppressed ethnic groups or

neglected regions assert claims to nationhood, and once-

excluded foreign powers seek new privileges and

prerogatives. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the

conflicts between and within the new states that have

emerged in its former sphere have posed these problems anew, and not only for social scientists.

In much of post-Independence Latin America, initial attempts to establish large polities co-extensive with the great territorial divisions of the colonial empires foundered:[1] Gran Colombia (the erstwhile Viceroyalty of Nueva Granada) broke up into Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru; the Peru-Bolivia Confederation (a revival of the pre-1776 Viceroyalty of Peru) was stillborn; the Audiencia de Guatemala gave rise to a transitory Central American federation and then spawned five small states (Costa Rica, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala); and the Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata quickly fragmented into Paraguay, Bolivia, Uruguay, and a dozen or more nominally Argentine province-states.

Like Central America, the Plata remained a maelstrom of political and social conflict for decades following the collapse of the Iberian empires. Wars, civil wars, and lesser clashes pitted cities against countryside, capitals against provinces, would-be statemakers against each other, and regional states against European powers. The situation

in the Plata following Independence in some ways calls to
mind Renaissance Italy, with a dozen and a half province-
states forming ephemeral alliances and waging war upon their
neighbors. Like their Italian analogues, these
sovereignties originated as urban centers with an imperial
legacy and were surrounded by hinterlands that they
dominated and from which they extracted wealth. (Chiaramonte
1991a-c; Chittolini 1989)

   This dissertation will trace the emergence in the Plata
region of a federally centralized Argentine national state
between 1810 and 1862, with the aim of specifying the
various constraining and enabling factors, both economic and
political, that were conducive to such an outcome. The
investigation culminates in a focus upon (1) the important
shift by key political elites in the Argentine provinces
after mid-century away from militaristic ways of gaining and
wielding political power toward parliamentary, public-sphere
oriented practices, and (2) the changes in the global and
regional political economy that catalyzed and constrained
this shift in political "repertoires."[2]

As a project concerned with state formation in a Latin American context, this dissertation is informed by and in dialogue with several rather disparate historiographic and social-science literatures. European-derived explications of state formation provide definitions, an organizing framework and a global context. Scholarly solidarity and inspiration are drawn from recent efforts by historians of Latin America to discard the goggles of dependency theory and take a fresh look at how new states and social formations emerged after Independence. The trend in international political economy known as staple theory suggests ways of linking economic and political change in export-dependent regions. And the notion of repertoires of political practices is borrowed from work by Charles Tilly, Sidney Tarrow and others on collective action and social movements.

Europe-derived approaches and Latin American cases

Scholars seeking to explicate Latin American state-formation have -- implicitly or explicitly -- found models, inspiration, or targets in studies concerned mainly with European cases. While this dissertation too is informed by

certain Europe-derived approaches and will probe their
applicability in a Latin American framework, it will
contribute in the first instance to filling a large gap in
our knowledge of state formation generally -- that is, the
nearly two centuries of state-building that has unfolded in
Latin America since Independence. Efforts to generalize
European-derived theories to the contemporary "third world"
have tended to slight this lengthy and varied Latin American
experience. The literature on political development and
modernization of the 1960s and 1970s, for example, largely
neglected Latin America's post-colonial experience in the
early to mid-nineteenth century while failing to
differentiate the region's more recent "nation building"
problems from those of Asia and Africa, whose distinct
colonial and post-colonial histories were situated quite
differently in world-historical time.[3]

Even so, it is important to note the Europe-centered
approaches that inform this dissertation. First of all, the
definitions that shape the questions to be investigated:
Following Charles Tilly, "states" are to be considered
"coercion-wielding organizations that are distinct from

households and kinship groups and exercise clear priority in some respects over all other organizations within substantial territories," and "national states" those which govern "multiple contiguous regions and their cities by means of centralized, differentiated, and autonomous structures." (Tilly 1990: 1-2) Throughout the dissertation, the analytic focus will be largely upon statemaking as the consolidation of institutions of coercion and repression, the dominant aspects under which the process unfolded in the Río de la Plata after Independence. State formation in this region took a markedly "coercion-intensive" path, as statemakers and challengers were preoccupied with maintaining a monopoly of armed force within a claimed territory. (Tilly 1990: 137-43) Resources were principally devoted to constructing the "despotic" powers of the state, as against its "infrastructural" powers, which remained rudimentary. (For the distinction between despotic and infrastructural power, see Mann 1986a.)

What are the principal historical forces that have shaped the formation of national states? Perry Anderson and others have held that state formation in early modern Europe

was driven by class struggle and the development of
capitalism: As landholding nobles found themselves squeezed
by peasant resistance and increasingly beholden to a rising
urban merchant class, the "parcellized sovereignty" long
exercised locally was "displaced upward" to the absolutist
state in such a way as to reinforce landlord class
domination. (Anderson 1974: 17-24, 39-42) But while class
structure and changes therein could be said to provide one
of the "fields of power" within which early modern
statemakers operated, Richard Lachmann has directed
attention to conflict among "elites," defined as groups of
rulers "who inhabit a distinct organizational apparatus"
(e.g., the clergy, corporate organizations of landlords, the
monarchic apparatus, merchant guilds). The capacities
thereof "cannot be predicted from the relations of
production" but rather are

> . . . determined primarily by the structure
> of interelite relations. Elite conflict is the
> primary threat to elite capacities. Yet, the
> interests each elite seeks to defend are grounded
> in their relations with the producing classes.
> (Lachmann 1990: 401, 408)

This approach could be helpful in sorting out and theorizing
state formation in post-Independence Latin America,

especially inasmuch as the problem is typically one of the formation or recomposition of stable governing elites out of dominant classes thrown into crisis by the collapse of the Spanish empire.[4]

Spatial variation in the pace and character of state formation and in regime type is important to both European and Latin American experiences. Michael Mann has explained the early emergence of constitutional regimes in sea-girt states such as England and Holland in terms of their reliance upon naval power and access to large and stable sources of wealth. Land-based powers such as Russia and Prussia, on the other hand, required the mass mobilization of standing armies and thus tended to develop authoritarian regimes. (Mann 1986b: 456, 475-79) Building upon Barrington Moore's insights, Anderson sees the East/West divide in European regime-types as determined by the differential outcomes of struggles among peasants, landlords, and bourgeoisies: Eastern landlords confronted a weak bourgeoisie and proved able to subjugate both towns and peasantries, but Western landlords were forced into a stalemate that entailed ceding a range of prerogatives to

the urban bourgeoisie and tolerating greater freedom for

rural labor. (Anderson 1974: 428-431) But Mann challenges

such class-based analyses of regime type and stresses the

autonomy of the state: by the seventeenth century,

> . . . class relations in all countries had
> become focused at the level of the state partly as
> a by-product of geopolitical relations. ... When
> states' main original functions were warlike, it
> makes more sense to explain their variety in terms
> of war than in terms of derivative functions like
> class regulation. (Mann 1986b: 478)

Charles Tilly blends these counterposed approaches by

analyzing variations in state formation according to the

specific mix of capital and coercion that prevailed in each

region. While he agrees with Mann that rulers everywhere

sought to maximize their warmaking capacities,

> . . . each one did so under the highly
> variable conditions set by the combination of
> coercion and capital that prevailed in his own
> territory. Alternative combinations meant
> different class configurations, different
> potential allies and enemies, different organiza-
> tional residues of state activity, different forms
> of resistance to state activity, different
> strategies for the extraction of resources, and
> therefore different levels of efficiency in
> resource extraction. . . . [T]he great
> distinctions separated coercion-intensive,
> capital-intensive, and capitalized-coercion
> trajectories of state formation. (Tilly 1990: 137)

Statemaking and warmaking

Tilly points to three ways in which warfare drove state expansion in Europe:

> . . . because wartime increases in state power give officials new capacity to extract resources, take on new activities, and defend themselves against cost-cutting; because wars either cause or reveal new problems that call for state attention; and because the wartime accumulation of debt places new burdens on the state. (Tilly 1990: 89)

Contrary to Tocqueville's (1984: 85-86) classical assertion that nations successful in war are condemned to "despotism," Tilly holds that "the more expensive and demanding war became, the more [rulers] had to bargain for its wherewithal. . . . Bargaining ranged from co-optation with privilege to massive armed repression, but it left behind compacts between sovereigns and rulers." (Tilly 1990: 188)

The multipolar nature of European state-formation has been stressed by Tilly, Anderson, Theda Skocpol and others. Indeed, interaction among multiple states was constitutive of the state-formation process; over time, an international system of states emerged and in turn placed new constraints

on national-level processes of state formation. (Anderson

1974: 37; Tilly 1990: 164ff.; Skocpol 1979: 21-24) As

Zolberg has put it:

> . . . the internal transformations that took
> place in each state in the process of formation
> helped to bring about the emergence of an
> interstate system of which these states were the
> component parts. This system developed its own
> particular dynamism whose repercussions may be
> regarded as specific variables having retroactive
> effects upon each unit of the whole. This cycle
> of exchanges occurred also in the reverse sense,
> with internal mutations leading to changes in the
> international pattern, thus modifying the variable
> formed by the international pattern in relation to
> its component units. (Zolberg 1980: 713-714)

Zolberg too stresses the centrality of warfare to the

rise of absolutist states in Europe. Conversely, however,

states whose geopolitical situation kept them relative

immune to strategic threats provided fertile ground for the

emergence of "a regime type in which society overshadows the

state." (Zolberg 1987: 57) This of course resonates with

Tocqueville's observations regarding the relative

"statelessness" of the early United States, which had "no

great wars to fear":

> Placed in the centre of an immense continent
> . . . the Union is almost as much insulated from
> the world as if all its frontiers were girt by the

> ocean. . . . [T]he powers of Europe . . . are too distant to be formidable.
>
> The great advantage of the United States does not, then, consist in a Federal Constitution which allows them to carry on great wars, but in a geographical position which renders such wars extremely improbable. (Tocqueville 1984: 86-87)

With regard to Latin America, historically and geographically specific investigations asking questions such as "To what extent did warfare shape state formation?" will reveal a dialectic of isolation and interaction in each case. In general, war and preparation for war fueled state formation in the subcontinent, both before and after Independence, to a degree that often goes unremarked in scholarly treatments. If in the initial centuries of conquest and colonization the Iberian powers were able to maintain their rule without large standing armies, by the mid-1700s global contention with France and Britain was spurring Portugal and Spain to reform their empires and strengthen the colonial state apparatus at the expense of local *criollo* elites. (Brading 1987: 122ff.) The war-driven Bourbon and Pombaline reforms were "aimed at increasing the relative autonomy of the state: its freedom from, and

authority over, the societies it governed." (Andrews 1985: 110)

State and war in the Southern Cone

Preparations for an expected war against the Portuguese in 1776 led the Spanish crown to create and fortify a new viceroyalty centered on Buenos Aires and encompassing the rich silver-mining districts of Upper Peru. Major war was averted, but "the result was a dramatic shift in the geo-political balance of the continent." (Brading 1987: 125) The new Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata, "created on the basis of immediate and transitory needs of a military type, persisted without undergoing any changes in its territorial expanse; it now had different aims and permanent features." (Céspedes del Castillo 1947: 115; see also Gil Munilla 1949)

Buenos Aires was rapidly transformed from peripheral backwater to viceregal capital. Preservation of its prerogatives within and territorial claims to the vast zone now encompassed by the viceroyalty's administrative boundaries would repeatedly provide grounds or pretexts for warfare in the post-Independence decades -- in the 1810s against the Spanish in Upper Peru, in the 1820s against

Brazil over the *banda oriental* (Uruguay from 1828), in the 1840s against Uruguay, and in the 1860s against Paraguay.[5] (Escudé 1988; Halperín Donghi 1975; Rock 1987; Seckinger 1984).

As a bulwark against Buenos Aires's claims, Paraguay's rulers built up a relatively strong central state and military machine in the 1840s and 1850s. (Kolinski 1965) Fearing that Paraguay would offer a rival pole of attraction to interior provinces chafing at Buenos Aires's growing domination, Argentine rulers drew Brazil and Uruguay into a protracted and devastating war against Paraguay in 1865-1870. (McLynn 1979) That conflict, the War of the Triple Alliance, provided a key impetus to the further centralization of the Argentine state: prosecution of the war entailed the suppression of mutinies and rebellions in the interior and the curtailing of provincial autonomy.[6] (Murphy 1988; Oszlak 1980)

The national army forged by the Argentine state in the war against Paraguay was redeployed in the subsequent decade to the interior frontiers to combat the seminomadic indigenous peoples. Those expeditions culminated in 1879-80

in the genocidal "Conquest of the Desert," which eliminated the internal frontier, opened vast new lands to speculation and settlement, facilitated Gen. Julio Antonio Roca's rise to the presidency, and provided substantial new resources for the consolidation of the central state at the expense of provincial autonomy.[7] (Viñas 1982; Martínez Sarasola 1992)

The Chilean state too was shaped through war, in the first instance via a lengthy conflict with the indigenous Araucanians who throughout the colonial period and well into the mid-nineteenth century successfully resisted conquest of their strongholds south of the Bío-Bío River. (Padden 1957; Collier 1987: 306) After independence, Chilean rulers waged war on Bolivia and Peru in 1836-39 and again in 1879-83, and kept their forces continually on alert with respect to Argentine claims to uncolonized zones in the far south and west, a question that gave rise to periodic war fever and diplomatic contention. (Escudé 1988; Burr 1965; Collier 1987) According to Nunn (1976: 10), Chile was involved in warfare during 52 of the 100 years of the nineteenth century. The War of the Pacific in 1879-83 resulted not only in territorial aggrandizement at the expense of Chile's

northern neighbors but also in substantial transformation of the state and political economy:

> In order to . . . prosecute the war over its five years' duration, the state centralized credit and provided subsidies and a high and growing demand for the products of domestic industry, especially armaments, explosives, wagons, and even steel-clad warships. It also imposed new and high protective tariffs. . . .
>
> Consonant with this rapid growth . . . was a renewed consciousness among leading businessmen of the need for state assistance and protection of domestic capital. (Zeitlin 1984: 77-78)

Rouquié contends that Chile's extensive involvement in warfare in the 19th century actually "contributed to keeping the Chilean military out of politics" (Rouquié 1987: 52-53) This suggests parallels to what Tilly terms "the central paradox of European state formation: that the pursuit of war and military capacity, after having created national states as a sort of by-product, led to a civilianization of government and domestic politics." (Tilly 1990: 206)

On the whole, then, Latin America was perhaps more Europe-like than like Tocqueville's United States; even so, the parallels must not be exaggerated. To the extent that states did grow stronger, the process was indeed driven by warfare in important ways, if not always externally against

neighboring states then internally between rival regional power centers or against indigenous peoples.

But the states so shaped remained weak in relation to domestic dominant classes and extracontinental powers. With the debatable exception of Chile's robust war-driven state expansion in the 1870s and 1880s, the resources required remained modest and could be captured largely from customs revenues rather than through bargaining with domestic wealth producers. Latin American states were indeed shaped by warfare, but, more concretely, by the kinds of warfare they had to wage. Inasmuch as few had to confront recurring external threats from superior military powers, the slow and uneven state-formation process they experienced was sheltered by continental isolation in much the same way as was that of the United States.[8]

Nineteenth-century Latin America: Historiography and theory

Reflections on Latin American state formation can be informed and enriched by the recent flourishing of historiography on the post-Independence decades. "Until very recently," Florencia Mallon has commented, scholarship on this period "remained in the hands of traditional

military and political historians" and was a "bastion of

insular history, punctuated by great battles and populated

by great men." (Mallon 1991: 247) For the decades just

after Independence, such accounts typically portrayed

"a nonsensical merry-go-round of armed, opera buffa

executives, frivolous discourse, incoherent policies, fiscal

desperation, and stillborn political institutions."

(Gootenberg 1989: 68) While dependency theory promised a

more theoretically sophisticated approach, its practitioners

for the most part paid scant attention to the post-

Independence interregnum, depicting it as but a chaotic

prelude to the continent's inevitable subjugation to "free-

trade imperialism" or neocolonialism under British and,

later, U.S. domination.[9]

Recent studies by a new generation of historians and

social scientists have begun to re-examine the nineteenth

century in Latin America. Their work considers the economic

and political dynamics of the emerging national states on

their own terms, posing new questions about the forces that

contended for power and about the specific features of the

transition from the loosely organized, caudillo-dominated

states and provinces of the immediate post-Independence

moment to the more centralized liberal republics

consolidated in the second half of the century. Regionalism

and liberalism are at the center of these investigations,

either as problems to be examined or as keys to

explanation.[10]

Inasmuch as "the overthrown Spanish authority had

actively discouraged the development of horizontal economic

and political linkages within colonial society,"

considerable research has focused on "the *criollo* elite's

efforts to forge a class that would be sufficiently unified

and powerful to give political structure and geographical

definition to the new nation states . . . a difficult and

protracted process even where it was successful." (Weaver

1980: 67) To the extent that postcolonial elites were

divided over issues such as church-state relations, trade

policy, constitutional rule, and centralist vs. federalist

forms of governance, this problem is in turn bound up with

explicating the "thorny and protracted transition from

colonialism to liberalism." (Gootenberg 1989: 8)

The "fragmentation of political power" among regionally dominant economic elites in Colombia has been seen by Marco Palacios as a central obstacle to national state-formation. Palacios has noted "the absence of a *hegemonic class* (in the Gramscian sense) able to politically unify the nation and, by representing them, integrate the other fractions of the dominant class." Central to the post-Independence moment is thus the effort by "the dominant class [*clase dominante*] to convert itself into a ruling class [*clase dirigente*]; still more, it had to convert itself into a national ruling class, getting beyond colonial localism." (Palacios 1980: 1664)

Regional schism is likewise central to Maurice Zeitlin's controversial but provocative treatment of the Chilean case.[11] Although a central state was consolidated in Chile earlier than in other Latin American polities, elite contention over control of that state erupted throughout the nineteenth century. Zeitlin analyzes the civil wars of 1850, 1859 and 1891 as conflicts among regionally rooted "class fractions" or "class segments" and, like Palacios, refuses to take for granted their coalescence into a national ruling class. A key research question for

Zeitlin is "Which segments of the bourgeoisie 'actually [make] the laws, [are] at the head of the administration of the state, [have] command of all the organized public authorities' and which segments are excluded from political power?"[12] (Zeitlin 1984: 9, n.9) Following Barrington Moore, Zeitlin sees the country's development path and institutional structure as contingent upon the answer to this question.

In the latter approaches and in the dependency literature generally,[13] political factions are analyzed in a relatively unproblematic fashion as the bearers of elite economic interests based on discrete structural or spatial positions within the economy. Such a treatment was challenged early on by Frank Safford, who stressed the interpenetration within elites of urban merchants and rural landowners:

> A member of the upper class active in politics was
> likely to be at once a landowner, lawyer,
> merchant, educator, littérateur, government
> employee, and, on occasion, military officer.
> Even in those cases where an individual can be
> assigned to a "major" function, the members of his
> immediate family, all with the same political
> affiliation, are likely to have encompassed most
> of the upper-class vocations. It is therefore
> very difficult to distinguish among individuals or

> families in the elite in terms of economic
> function. (Safford 1974: 87-88)

Safford advocated a more nuanced approach focusing on "social location"; political attitudes were seen to vary according to an individual's access to a range of power structures -- the Church hierarchy, government bureaucracies, privileged economic groups. This in turn would depend on "formative factors such as family position, family relations, and access to education." Approaching the Colombian case in this fashion, Safford suggested, might demonstrate that members of the conservative coalition "had in common various sorts of central location" while liberals "were those who began their careers at a distance from these nodes." (Safford 1974: 102, 108)

Along similar lines to Safford's critique of class analysis, recent works on post-Independence politics and society have centered on family networks and clientelism.[14] In his study of elections and power in imperial Brazil, Richard Graham sees patronage -- "both the act of filling government positions and the protection of humble clients" -- as providing "the major link between society and state." (Graham 1990: 2, 272) The local patron's leadership

was tested and displayed in elections, which functioned

principally as "theater":[15]

> The family and the household formed the bedrock of
> a socially articulated structure of power, and the
> local leader and his following worked to extend
> that grid of dependence. In a predominantly rural
> society, a large landowner expected to receive the
> loyalty of his free workers, of nearby small
> farmers, and of village merchants, demonstrated
> through their support in many ways, not least at
> the polls. (Graham 1990: 2-3)

Political parties, then, did not mainly represent

distinct economic interests but rather were "vehicles for

gaining and dispensing patronage": "In every locality, if

there were 'ins' there must be 'outs,' and the essential

question . . . revolved around who would get the official

posts." (Graham 1990: 181, 270)[16] In a similar vein,

Eduardo Saguier has begun to document how nepotism and

patronage remained the principal mechanisms through which

elite families wielded power in the interior provinces of

Argentina down to the end of the nineteenth century.[17]

(Saguier 1990; Saguier 1991: 8-9) More generally, Sharon

Kettering has suggested that such "patron-broker-client

relationships" typically perform "the critical function of

political linkage in a state with a weak central

government"; she proposes that clientelism be understood "as a method of regional-national integration" and as "a stage in the process of state formation in traditional societies." (Kettering 1988: 425, 433, 446)

Global change, local history

While studies of family networks and clientelism shed important light on the texture of politics in post-Independence Latin America and are useful antidotes to the overly structural and deterministic accounts that typify the dependency literature, they tend to shift attention away from the changing global and regional economic and geopolitical contexts in which families, patrons, clients and state elites acted. In doing so they gloss over the ways the strategies and practices of these actors were constrained and shaped by the evolving "world system" in which their polities were enmeshed, by their moment in "world historical time." Following Sidney Mintz and Eric Wolf, William Roseberry has termed such contexts and constraints "fields of power"; attention thereto, he suggests, is the appropriate means of capturing "the conjunction of local and global histories . . . the

internalization of the external." (Roseberry 1991: 375-76)

Likewise, Allan Pred has stressed that "it is through their

intersection with the locally peculiar, the locally

sedimented and contingent, the locally configured context,

that more global structuring processes are given their form

and become perpetuated or transformed." (Pred 1990: 19) Due

attention must be paid to both poles of this interaction:

rather than fall back on the schemas of dependency theory,

accounts are needed that "provide a deeper historical

perspective to approaches emphasizing interaction between

external relationships and internal struggles in the making

of post-colonial Latin America."[18] (Monsma 1991: 798-99)

Export staples and the state

For export-dependent regions such as Latin America,

more specific ways of linking the economic and the

political, the external and the internal, have been offered

by practitioners of "staple theory."[19] These approaches

have shed further light on the ways global economic change

affects the character, pace of emergence, and variation of

political organization in new states. Explanations for

state configurations are sought in the different kinds of

export staples produced in the state's environment: If we "look behind such staples as sugarcane, coffee, rice, or tobacco," we may be able to "identify some general characteristics of these products that influence and condition the kind of development experienced by the countries specializing in them." (Hirschman 1981: 84) In particular, "the linkage constellations characteristic of a given staple not only spell out certain likely patterns of development (or stagnation) but also, through these patterns, influence the social order and political regime of countries where the staple is economically important." (Hirschman 1986: 72) From this starting point, Guillermo O'Donnell has suggested that "some quite powerful hypotheses" could be derived "about the reciprocal impacts of such products with the formation and expansion of the state apparatus." (O'Donnell 1980: 724)

For Argentina in the 1820s, Karl Monsma has held that "regional dominant classes producing export staples [cowhides and salted beef] had little to gain from the construction of central states with sovereignty over larger territories," and "attempts to build central states could

directly threaten such classes if their economic positions
depended on privileged access to political power." While
cautioning that these conclusions "cannot be directly
generalized," Monsma suggests that "a focus on interaction
between staple-exporting dominant classes and statemaking
political elites may prove fruitful for studies of
peripheral state formation in a wide variety of times and
places." At the same time, "such a focus requires
recognition . . . that state elites are actors who must be
studied in their own right, and that the goals and actions
of state elites cannot simply be inferred from putative
'needs' of either national economies or the world-system as
a whole." (Monsma 1989: 32)

Nor, it must be added, can particular state
configurations be inferred simply from the nature of the
export staple. As Hirschman cautions, "there is no
necessary one-to-one relationship between a staple and 'its'
sociopolitical regime." (Hirschman 1986: 73) Indeed:

> . . . the same staple, its characteristics,
> and mode of production, may unexpectedly lend
> strength to two totally different social
> arrangements and political regimes. . . .

> [The point is] not that a staple will
> determine the sociopolitical environment but that
> each time it will imprint certain patterns of its
> own on whatever environment happens to be around
> and that it is possible and worthwhile to study
> the imprinting process. (Hirschman 1981: 96)

One model for studying the relationship between staple production and state formation in Latin America is to be found in recent studies on the political economy of coffee. This is truly a "history of diversity," evincing "remarkable variation in social, economic, and political structures and processes among coffee-producing regions." (Roseberry 1991: 352-53) Still, the timing of development, structure of trade, and ecological, transport, labor and capital requirements were uniform enough to permit controlled comparisons taking into account the specific historical and geographical contexts in which coffee economies took hold. Héctor Lindo-Fuentes has used Central American cases to point out important affinities between coffee production and statebuilding (the converse case, perhaps, to Monsma's findings correlating state weakness with cattle-raising). Coffee requires long-term investment (and thus security of landholding and a developed credit structure), a large

seasonal labor force, and low-cost transportation for a
bulky product. In Guatemala, El Salvador and Costa Rica
these translated into statebuilding: the regularization of
private titles to land, the organization of banks and
mortgage credit, underwriting of railroad construction, and
so on. The relative retardation of state formation in
Nicaragua and Honduras is attributed to the greater weight
of staples with fewer statebuilding linkages -- cattle,
mining, forest products, bananas. (Lindo-Fuentes 1991)

Political repertoires and opportunity structures

Besides linkages to change in state structures, I would
suggest that shifts in the mix of export staples in a given
region can also alter the constraints on political actors
themselves. Sidney Tarrow has defined the "political
opportunity structure" as the "set of constraints and
opportunities that encourage or discourage [political
action] and lead it towards certain forms rather than
others." (Tarrow 1989: 33; see also Tilly 1992b) Charles
Tilly has stressed that political "repertoires," or sets of
routine ways of acting politically, respond more generally
to "the organization of their social settings"; thus long-

term change in forms of action can be attributed not only to "the internal history of struggle," but also "to transformations of the polity, to alterations of social structure and culture outside the state, and to their interaction." (Tilly 1992b: 9)

Since first using the metaphor in 1977, Charles Tilly has repeatedly refined the notion of a "repertoire" of contention or of collective action. In his most recent formulation, "repertoire"

> . . . identifies a limited set of routines that are learned, shared, and acted out through a relatively deliberate process of choice. Repertoires are learned cultural creations, but they do not descend from abstract philosophy or take shape as a result of political propaganda; they emerge from struggle. . . . At any particular point in history, however, [people] learn only a rather small number of alternative ways to act collectively. (Tilly 1992a: 8-9)

Adopting a "strong" version of the metaphor implies for Tilly that

> a) social relations, meanings, and actions cluster together in known, recurrent patterns and
>   b) many possible contentious actions never occur because the potential participants lack the requisite knowledge, memory, and social connections. (Tilly 1992a: 10)

Repertoires are historically constructed, the residues of

past action. Tilly hypothesizes that

> . . . the prior history of contention
> strongly constrains the choices of action
> currently available, in partial independence of
> the identities and interests that participants
> bring to the action. (Tilly 1992a: 11)

Glossing a somewhat earlier Tilly formulation Arthur

Stinchcombe has explained that a repertoire is "the set of

things that a group knows how to do."

> The viability of one of the elements of a
> repertoire depends on *what sorts of things work in
> a given social or political structure* . . . and on
> what grievances a given form is appropriate to
> express." (Stinchcombe 1986: 1249; emphasis added)

In the present study, then, I propose to apply the

notion of repertoires not to forms of popular collective

action, but to the ways that elite actors had learned to do

politics, to seize and hold political power. My

contention -- to be elaborated further in Chapter 2 -- is

that a central and heretofore neglected basis of political

conflict in the Río de la Plata in the mid-nineteenth

century (though -- note well -- by no means the sole basis)

was that different sets of actors had learned to practice

different political repertoires. Grounding this conflict in

the changing political-economic context of the Argentine

provinces at mid-century will entail stretching the concept

of "opportunity structure" to take into account not only

specifically political constraints on actors but also and

especially the constraints presented by changes in the

economic sphere. This I will seek to meld the "repertoires"

approach with that of the practitioners of staple theory

considered above.

World time, world system

In their massive comparative analysis of state and

class in twentieth-century Latin America, Ruth Berins

Collier and David Collier placed their cases in "a kind of

transnational historical 'grid'":

> . . . a series of historical episodes
> that occurred at the international level . . .
> the episodes within the grid can collectively
> be thought of as phases in what is sometimes
> referred to as "world historical time."

> Using such a grid makes it possible to

> . . . confront the interaction between a
> *longitudinal* and a *cross-sectional* perspective:
> between the unfolding over time within each
> country of phases of political change, and a
> sequence of international developments that
> influenced all the countries at roughly the same
> chronological time, but often at a different point

in relation to these internal political phases.
(Collier and Collier 1991: 19-20)

State formation in nineteenth-century Latin America can
likewise be analyzed using such a historical grid: how were
the internal processes that gave rise to independent states
constrained and shaped by external factors such as the
Napoleonic Wars, the post-1815 stabilization of European
politics, the diffusion of free-trade liberalism from
Britain in the 1840s, the 1848 revolutions and the rise of
state-seeking nationalism in Europe,[20] the mechanization of
textile production, or innovations in transport and
communications (steam navigation, railroads, the
telegraph)?[21] Such developments served to shape the global
"fields of power" within which Latin American statemakers
and their antagonists weighed alternatives, made choices,
and acted.

An approach of this sort could enable a more nuanced
and locally specified account of the "incorporation" of
Latin American states into the capitalist world-system than
that offered by Immanuel Wallerstein and Terence Hopkins.
While their discussion of this construct suffers from the
same teleological and schematic flaws as Wallerstein's

overall model,[22] the notion of "incorporation" does capture

a number of important facets of statemaking in nineteenth-

century Latin American and thus offers a starting point for

comparative analysis.[23] Incorporation is seen to have

involved a more deep-going process than conquest and

tribute-taking; rather, it was marked by the wholesale

restructuring of economic activities within the zone being

incorporated "so that they conformed with and fully

participated in the ongoing functioning of the capitalist

world-economy." This meant transforming not only the sphere

of production and but also that of governance, through

creation of "state structures that functioned as members of,

and within the rules of, the interstate system." (Hopkins

and Wallerstein 1987: 763-778) States so incorporated had

to provide "certain guarantees about the possibility of

regular flows of commodities, money and persons across

frontiers," and the process entailed "that states which put

limitations on these flows act within the constraint of

certain rules which are enforced in some sense by the

collectivity of member states in the interstate system."

(Wallerstein 1989: 170) Such incorporated states "needed

personnel who were geared into, and part of, the world-system's status-group and class system." (Hopkins and Wallerstein 1987: 778) As subsequent chapters will make clear, all the specified transformations could be observed as post-colonial state formation unfolded in the Río de la Plata.

NOTES

1. With the possible exception of Brazil, whose early consolidation of a state most authorities attribute to the presence of the Portuguese monarchy on American soil after 1808 and the persistence of royal institutions after Independence (e.g., Murilo de Carvalho 1993). For contrary views stressing heterogeneity and regional conflict in early independent Brazil, see Barman 1988 and Graham 1994.

2. For definition and discussion of the concept of a "political repertoire," see pp. 26-28 below.

3. Important exceptions are Hartz 1964 and, much more recently, Rueschemeyer, Stephens and Stephens 1992.

4. See further discussion below, pp. 17-18.

5. In a comparison with Australia, Barrie Dyster has attributed Argentina's economic backwardness relative to the former to the "wasting warfare" of the initial post-Independence decades. Meanwhile, Australia's continental insulation from such conflicts proved a boon to development. (Dyster 1979: 99-103) The comparison could be extended to help explain differences in state formation and regime type in the two nations.

6. Brazil's involvement in the Paraguayan War also spurred state formation through the professionalization and expansion of the imperial armed forces. Military officers with a modernizing, nationalist outlook subsequently overthrew the monarchy and established a republic in 1889. (Burns 1980)

7. Of course, the forging of the Argentine state around Buenos Aires had long been marked by frontier expansion and intermittent warfare against the indigenous peoples. Miron Burgin has stressed that such expansion "was not primarily a movement of individual pioneers" but rather involved "large scale military operations against the Indians . . . on a scale which no one save the government could undertake with any hope of success." The landholding *estanciero* class

"fully realized the economic implications of the operations against the Indians; they knew also that they were to be the most important beneficiaries of these campaigns." (Burgin 1946: 21, 23-24)

8. It would be worth examining, however, to what extent Mexican state formation in the later nineteenth century was militarily driven as a consequence of wars with the United States in 1846 and Britain, France and Spain in the 1860s.

9. See Gallagher and Robinson 1953; Frank 1972: 29-36; and Stein and Stein 1970: 151-55 ("The English had been the major factor in the destruction of Iberian imperialism; on its ruins they erected the informal imperialism of free trade and investment"). For a critique of the Steins, see Platt 1980. For a critique of Gallagher and Robinson's entire notion of "informal empire," see Thompson 1992.

10. A full discussion of the many new historiographic contributions is beyond the scope of this chapter. On Mexico, see Blázquez Domínguez 1986 and Noriega Elío 1986; on Peru, Gootenberg 1989 and Walker 1992; on Brazil, Graham 1990, Barman 1988 and various works by Emilia Viotti da Costa; and on Central America, Burns 1991, Lindo-Fuentes 1990, and Lauria 1992. Key works on the Río de la Plata include Chiaramonte 1991, 1993 and Whigham 1991. For a recent collection of essays on political economy, see Andrien and Johnson 1994. The best syntheses of earlier scholarship on this period are Halperín-Donghi 1973 and Bushnell and Macaulay 1988.

11. For critiques of Zeitlin's (1984) *The Civil Wars in Chile* challenging both research methodology and substantive conclusions, see Drake 1986, Bauer 1990, Pregger-Román 1991, and Sater 1985.

12. Zeitlin is quoting Marx, *Class Struggles in France*.

13. See, e.g., Bergquist 1986.

14. Beyond these studies dealing specifically with families and politics, family history generally is a burgeoning field in the literature on Latin America. Most work thus far has

been concerned with elite families. For a survey, see Balmori et al. 1984.

While occasionally using the term "network," none of the family studies cited here make use of formal network analysis, though their assertions about the nature of nineteenth-century Latin American politics could be tested and strengthened thereby. For an introduction to network analysis largely free of the often arcane language that clogs much work of this sort, see Knoke 1990. For network analyses of families and politics in other historical contexts, see Padgett and Ansell 1989 and Bearman 1985.

15. Pilar González Bernaldo (1992: Ch.7) has also made use of the notion of "elections as theater" in her massive dissertation on elite sociabilité in early independent Buenos Aires.

16. Complementary to Graham's work is Fernando Uricoechea's neo-Weberian analysis of Brazilian state-formation, which stresses the dynamic tension between an initially weak but determinedly centralizing imperial bureaucracy and the patrimonial power of local notables who controlled military force through the *Guarda Nacional* or militia system. (Uricoechea 1980)

17. A theme richly portrayed in Felix Luna's (1989) historical novel Soy Roca. Lest one think this was a phenomenon peculiar to the nineteenth century, see Carlos Vilas's (1992) account of the key role of elite family networks during and after the Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua.

18. Such a concern has also been at the center of recent debates on the colonial period in Latin America: for an overview framed by a critique of dependency and world-systems theory, see Stern 1988. For a rejoinder, see Wallerstein 1988.

19. The *locus classicus* of staple theory is the work of Harold Innis, who organized his explanations of Canadian economic history around the successive staple products extracted or produced by traders and settlers. (Innis 1956) For an attempt to systematize Innis's ideas into a theory of

economic development, see Watkins 1963. For a critique charging Watkins with an overly optimistic interpretation of Innis, see Bunker 1989.

20. See Tilly 1991b for the distinction between "state-led" and "state-seeking" forms of nationalism.

21. These episodes have been aggregated variously as the "Age of Revolution" (Hobsbawm 1962), the "Great Transformation" (Polanyi 1957), or the "Birth of the Modern" (Johnson 1991). Polanyi's work in particular provides a model for tracing the ways global processes shape internal change. For a discussion, see Zolberg 1987: 63-64.

22. See, e.g., Skocpol 1977; Zeitlin 1984: Ch.5; and Zolberg 1980a.

23. Wallerstein's own view is that the Americas were incorporated into the world-system as early as the seventeenth century. (Wallerstein 1974: 336-38) But even if this is so, the task remains of accounting for the century of social upheaval and state (trans)formation that unfolded from ca.1770 to 1870. The silences in Wallerstein's remarkably atheoretical chapter, "The settler decolonization of the Americas," in *The Modern World-System III* highlight the need for clarification of this point. (Wallerstein 1989: Ch.4)