

# THE HISTORICAL FORMATION OF THE STATE IN LATIN AMERICA: Some Theoretical and Methodological Guidelines for Its Study\*

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This work will sketch some methodological and theoretical guidelines for studying the historical process by which national states were formed in Latin America. It is a suggested method for studying this process, not a rigorous interpretation of it. Such an interpretation would be difficult without first having studied in depth the experiences of several nations from which to infer and generalize a pattern of historical development. Studies of this sort have been undertaken recently, so I will confine myself here to a discussion of certain conceptual elements and a research strategy that may prove useful in the work that lies ahead.<sup>1</sup> Several hypotheses on the process of state formation will be advanced to illustrate the perspective from which I propose to undertake its study.

## STATE, NATION, NATIONAL STATE: SOME DEFINITIONS

The study of the origin and nature of the state has been a traditional theme in political philosophy, history, ethnology, and cultural anthropology. Much of the debate in the two last-mentioned fields has concerned the question of whether or not the state is a universal principle of social organization, whether societies without states are possible, and whether or not the origin of the state is associated with the formation of nations, social classes, markets, etc.<sup>2</sup> However, if we wish to identify the social determinants in the process of state formation, we must ask at what level of development are the other elements of social organization (i.e., existence of a nation, diffusion of relations of production and eco-

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conomic exchange, predominant ideological conceptions, degree of crystallization of social classes) with which this process is interrelated.

The rise of the state is linked historically with different stages in the development of these associated social phenomena; at the same time, the very process of the formation of the state tends to change profoundly the social conditions that prevailed at its origin. In other words, as a state comes into existence, a dynamic process of social creation takes place in which other social entities and actors come into existence and acquire their own distinct character. How do historical circumstances intertwine to create these social entities? What rationality, design, or—at the other extreme—chance combination of variables determines certain constituent traits and not others? What is the functional relationship (in terms of “historical necessity”) or logic (in terms of mere structural consistency) among the traits exhibited during the historical development of these different subjects, entities, and phenomena?

The historical specification implied in these questions requires prior agreement on the meaning given to the analytic categories being used—a task that bristles with difficulties. One of them is that, if we intend to reconstruct analytically the process of social evolution that accompanies the formation of the state, we tend to work with concepts that already presume the full development of the attributes and components that define those concepts. In other words, we try to trace an evolutionary process using categories that describe a finished historical product (e.g., nation, capitalism). A second difficulty is that the concepts used to analyze these processes are not mutually exclusive; on the contrary, they each assume the others as components of their very definition. Thus “nation” implies, among other things, the coordination of exchange—the existence of a “market”; “market,” in turn, implies “relations of production,” which refer to the formation of “social classes,” leading to a “system of domination.” The latter evokes the notion of “state,” linked—in the dual sense of territorial domain and ideological referent—to the idea of “nation.”

However, the process of state formation cannot be understood without also exploring the emergence of other phenomena—phenomena that are not only part of the process, but that are, in their own formation as historical realities, partly determined by that process. It should also be understood that the dynamic of this social construction does not follow a regular pattern in the sense that its components necessarily develop similar proportions, sequences, or preconditions. On the contrary, the process may include long periods of stasis, sudden jumps, hypertrophy of some of its components, or contradictory development of others, which tend to negate and transform the nature of the whole.

Breaking this down still further, the concern here is not with the state as an abstraction, but with one of its specific forms—the national

state;<sup>3</sup> more concretely, the study of the formation of the state viewed as a process that presumes the existence, or parallel development, of an independent nation.<sup>4</sup> This introduces the additional complication of establishing under what circumstances it is possible to consider that the fusion of the two elements that define this category—state and nation—has occurred. As in the case of the state, the existence of a nation is the result of a process, not of a formal constituting act. This adds to the difficulty of pointing not only to a precise moment when their respective existences may be asserted, but also that in which nation and state exist as one entity.

On the one hand, in an ideal-abstract sense, the state is a social relationship, a political medium through which a system of social domination is articulated. On the other, its concrete manifestation is an interdependent group of institutions that form the apparatus in which the power and resources of political domination are concentrated.<sup>5</sup> This dual character of the state is paralleled in the concept of nation: despite the ambiguities and discrepancies that still surround its definition,<sup>6</sup> it can be said that in the idea of nationhood there is a blending of material and ideal elements. The former are linked to the development of interests that result from the differentiation and integration of economic activity within a defined territory; in the “classical” European experience, this implied the formation of a market and a national bourgeoisie—i.e., a capitalist system of production. The ideal elements imply the diffusion of symbols, values, and feelings of belonging to a community unique in its traditions, ethnic background, language, and other integrating factors that form a collective identity, a common personality expressed in the process of historical development.<sup>7</sup>

This twofold foundation of nationality does not imply that the rise of institutions and values has been simultaneous, or that their development has been symmetrical. In fact, it is likely that the uneven rate at which they took root and remained in force may explain partially the diverse rhythms and patterns that are observed historically in the formation of the modern nation-state.<sup>8</sup> Thus, the conditions for the establishment of state domination may have differed according to the relative balance of the material and ideal components as the nation-building process evolved. For example, it seems certain that, in a good number of the European experiences, the development of a territorially bound market economy largely preceded the development of a “community of sentiment” (*Gemeinschaft*) based on the self-consciousness of a shared destiny, of a common *nationality*. On the other hand, the Latin American wars of independence helped to spread this national feeling before a national market had developed fully. This distinction, as we will see, is not trivial.

A widespread opinion holds that the flowering of the European

nations came after the formation of strong states;<sup>9</sup> without doubt, this statement refers more to the ideal than to the material component of nationality. Having defined the state as a mechanism for the articulation of social relations, it is difficult to think of relations more needy of articulation and protection than those implied in a fully developed market economy; that is, in a capitalist system of production. The existence of the state presupposes, therefore, the presence of material conditions that make possible the expansion and integration of the economic space (markets) and the mobilization of social agents in the sense of instituting increasingly complex relations of production and exchange through the control and use of means of domination. This suggests that the formation of a capitalist economy and of a national state are aspects of a single process—albeit chronologically and spatially distinct. It also implies that, as this economy-in-formation delimits a territorial domain, differentiates productive structures, and makes class interests more homogeneous, these material foundations of nationhood combine to give the state its national character.

In this, the Latin American experience does not differ from the “classical” European pattern; that is, the appearance of material conditions that make the formation of a national market possible are a necessary condition for the formation of a national state. But beyond this resemblance, the history of Latin America poses questions whose answers might help explain the specificity of its states. What is the character of the states that emerged from the process of national emancipation? Of what significance were the bureaucratic apparatuses inherited from colonial times, and in what sense could they be considered as the institutional embodiment of the state? What class of economic order or modes of production were overcome to institute others, more congruent with the establishment of a national state? What was the prevailing pattern of social relationships. What crucial issues did the state confront and how did their resolution affect its own process of formation?

Several of these questions will be discussed below. To summarize what has been said up to now: the formation of a national state is the result of the converging, although not univocal, process of the establishment of a nation and a system of domination. Historically, nation-building has entailed—at the material level—the rise and development within its territory of diversified interests that generate capitalist social relations, and at the ideal level, the creation of symbols and values that—to use O’Donnell’s appropriate image—throw an arc of solidarities over the various and antagonistic interests of civil society. This arc of solidarities provides both the main integrating element of the opposing forces produced by the material development of society itself as well as the main element differentiating it from other national units. In turn, the construction of the system of domination that we call the state assumes

the creation of a structure capable of articulating and reproducing the network of social relationships established within the domain delimited, materially and symbolically, by the nation.

*Social Determinants of the Formation of the State*

The state is not, therefore, spontaneously generated, nor is it created, in the sense that "someone" formalizes its existence through some sort of ritual. The existence of the state results from a formative process through which it gradually acquires a set of attributes that, in any given historical moment, shows a distinct level of development. Perhaps it would be more appropriate to speak of "stateness" to refer to the degree in which a system of social domination has acquired this set of properties—expressed in the capacity to articulate and reproduce social relations—which defines the existence of a state.<sup>10</sup>

For Nettl, these properties include both the material capacities to control, extract, and allocate societal resources with regard to a given population and territory and the symbolic capacities to evoke, create, and impose collective identities and loyalties among the citizens or inhabitants of a nation. The uneven development of these different capacities makes it possible to distinguish and characterize states according to the level and type of "stateness" achieved. Conceptually, it would therefore be necessary to determine what these different capacities consist of, to break down the properties that confer "stateness" on the state. Once these properties are characterized, the study of the process of state formation would consist of the empirical identification of their presence and how they were acquired, which amounts to relating the formative process to various social determinants.

This is the procedure proposed by Schmitter et al. in a recent work.<sup>11</sup> To establish the specificity of the process of state formation in Latin America, as opposed to the more well-known European experience, these authors begin by distinguishing, as attributes of the state, its capacity to (1) externalize its power; (2) institutionalize its authority; (3) differentiate its control; and (4) internalize a collective identity. The first quality is linked to the recognition of a sovereign entity, within a system of interstate relations, whose integrity is guaranteed by similar entities already in existence. The second implies the imposition of a power structure capable of exercising a monopoly over the organized means of coercion. The third is the emergence of functionally differentiated public institutions that are relatively autonomous with respect to civil society and have (a) a recognized capacity to extract, on a regular basis resources from society; (b) a certain degree of professionalization of their functionaries; and (c) a certain measure of centralized control over their multifarious activities. The fourth quality consists of the ability

of the state to generate symbols that reinforce feelings of belonging and social cohesiveness—the ideal components of nationality that therefore assure ideological support for the system of domination.

Seen separately, these attributes of “stateness” permit us to begin to distinguish, comparatively, the historical moments and circumstances in which they were acquired in the various national experiences; to detect causal connections with other social processes. Observed together, these attributes suggest different phases or stages in the process of state formation. For example, it is evident that the great majority of Latin American countries acquired—as the first attribute of their condition as national states—formal external recognition of their sovereignty. An outcome of the struggles for national emancipation, this recognition, however, preceded the institutionalization of a state power acknowledged within the national territory itself. This peculiar pattern, which in some cases persisted for several decades, contributed to the creation of the ambiguous image of a national state established in a society that failed to acknowledge fully its institutional presence.

If the formation of the state is a gradual process of acquiring the attributes of political domination over the national territory—attributes that imply the ability to articulate and reproduce certain patterns of social relations—what factors create the conditions under which such attributes are acquired? This leads us to ask what are the social determinants of state formation? The previous treatment of this subject usually has been plagued by superficial and mechanistic interpretations. In this respect, it seems advisable to disregard those who, from deterministic positions (e.g., the “inevitable development of capitalism”), have claimed to see in the origin and evolution of the state in Latin America the answer to a “historical necessity”; or others whose voluntaristic standpoint assigns to certain actors (e.g., “the hand of imperialism,” or certain “providential agents” such as the Argentine *Generación del 80*, the Mexican and Guatemalan *Científicos*, or the Costa Rican *Olimpo*) the ability to change the course of historical processes. This is not to ignore the influence that factors such as positivism, liberalism, economic dependency, and the diffusion of capitalist relations of production have had on the characteristics that were adopted by the state. The real theoretical problem lies in discovering those condensations of social phenomena that, historically, may be linked causally to the process of acquisition and consolidation of the attributes of that state.

Even a fully developed capitalist economy is not the result of a linear process. The retarding effects of precapitalist forms, the possibility of effective insertion into the world market, the changing flows of foreign investments, and the diversification of production because of changes in international demand are factors that, at different times and with different intensity, affected national economic development. There-

fore, instead of emphasizing the capitalist character of these economies, it may be more appropriate to refer to systems of surplus accumulation,<sup>12</sup> whose vigor—given their insertion into a capitalist market on a worldwide scale—allowed the consolidation of both a dominant class and a relatively stable source of fiscal revenue that made these new states viable. Even where these conditions were reached more or less fully with the diffusion of capitalist relations of production, it cannot be concluded that such relations of production were necessary for the realization of those conditions. It would be debatable for example, to classify the Peruvian economy during the guano-exporting boom as capitalist, in spite of the creation of a dominant class and a state whose capacity to mobilize resources went unmatched for decades.<sup>13</sup>

These circumstances suggest the need to observe the relationship between economy and politics by distinguishing those phases in which the characteristics of a mode of production and a system of domination were being defined. These phases would be associated with varying degrees of "stateness," relating as much to the type of attributes as to the degree in which they were actually acquired. In the above-mentioned work, Schmitter et al. propose three "models" (or "images"), clearly linked to different phases of historical development, for conceptualizing the relationship between the economic and political dimensions of the process of state formation. Since these models take into account the voluminous sociopolitical and historical Latin American literature that deals with this theme, it is worth examining them briefly in order to introduce into the discussion some unresolved theoretical and methodological problems.

The first model, imprecisely called "mercantilism," emphasizes the cultural legacy that Spain and Portugal supposedly left to their former colonies and that remained after independence. This legacy—composed of cultural "codes" and ideological "prisms" that manifest themselves in the social traits of personalism, nepotism, ritualism, anticapitalist values, and so on—is the source of practices and ideals opposed to economic modernization. The transition from the colonial state to the state of the independence period does not eliminate local traditions nor the influence of typical colonial institutions such as the Church, the municipal governments, the artisans' and merchants' guilds, the educational patterns, or old administrative practices. This cultural baggage is associated, then, with the survival not only of a traditional and backward economic order, but also with significant remains of the colonial administration.<sup>14</sup>

The second model, "liberalism," stresses the demands made by the entry of the Latin American economies into the capitalist world market at the beginning of the second half of the nineteenth century, and its consequences for the process of state formation. The opening of

new possibilities for economic expansion, the increasing homogeneity of a dominant class aware of the historical opportunity offered by a full incorporation into the international market, and the financial, technical, and regulatory requirements of the new form of economic organization of production influenced decidedly the range of functions that the Latin American states came to assume and gave specific characteristics to their consolidation. That is to say, this model shows a clear correlation between the rising export economic order and the attributes of the state that was being formed as this dependent relationship was strengthened. But the implied relationship turns out to be too mechanical: the state appears to embody, readily and passively, ingredients of "stateness" linked to the "tasks" demanded by the network of relations established with the "new imperial master"; an excessively teleological vision.

The third model, called "interventionism," recognizes the "external" stimuli involved in the dependent relationship, but gives special relevance to the processes derived from certain "expansive" (or "parthenogenetic") qualities of the state itself and to those processes resulting from the interactions of state and society. This model deals with the internal processes of an increasingly bureaucratized institutional apparatus, a more complex society, and a state characterized by greater interaction with society. Naturally, this third focus places the process of state formation at the time of its definitive consolidation (circa 1890). From this moment, it observes that the "internal" processes of the state and those processes resulting from a much more diversified network of interaction with civil society tended to reinforce its autonomy, institutional weight, extractive capacity, and involvement with increasingly differentiated social actors. To use a different image, this greater complexity of interaction between state and society tended to "filter"—in various directions and with uneven results—the "external" stimuli of the activity of the state units.

It is evident that these are not alternative but rather complementary models. There is no doubt that the colonial legacy, the dependent relationship established in the period of the export boom, and the internal dynamics of the national state all explain, partially but concurrently, a good many of the characteristics that the states of the region were acquiring. In part, these models differ in centering their attention on different stages in the process of acquiring the attributes of "stateness." But, more importantly, they differ in suggesting that empirical investigation should concentrate on essentially different phenomena, actors, and social issues. I believe that herein lies their principal limitation. The determining factors that they indicate do not correspond to distinct stages of state formation, even though they undoubtedly are important and have different repercussions at each stage. For this reason, it is necessary to go beyond a mere listing of factors and to establish in what



ways the variables identified by each model influenced the process of state formation and in what ways they were modified by circumstances (e.g., economic, geographic, demographic, cultural) specific to each society.

*The Institutional Apparatus of the State*

The state has been referred to here in its dual character as a mechanism for the articulation of social relations and as an institutional apparatus. However, for analytical purposes, it is necessary to differentiate the two, since one refers to an abstract social relationship and the other to concrete actors (e.g., bureaucratic organizations). From a historical perspective, the formation of both spheres suffered important discontinuities and disjunctures. In other words, the apparent correspondence between them (as the result of one being the materialization of the other) expresses an ideal relationship that in fact was often altered by the relative autonomy of the state as apparatus vis-à-vis the state as social relation. The development of state institutions is only one of the attributes of "stateness"; nothing permits us to assert a priori that its acquisition should be simultaneous, or even congruent, with the acquisition of other attributes. Therefore, the realization of the state as a social relationship, which can be associated rather with the imposition of a certain structure of power relations and ideological control, is distinguishable analytically from the process of formation of an institutional apparatus.

The above considerations were aimed at a more precise determination of the meaning of the formative process of a national state—of which the development of an institutional apparatus is its most visible characteristic—and at an examination of various phenomena that are supposedly determining factors in this process. However, it should be indicated—for it is not obvious—in what sense I refer to the institutional apparatus of the state and how I seek to link its development to other social phenomena that can help to explain it. Certainly, it is not an easy task. The term, or its imprecise equivalents,<sup>15</sup> refers vaguely to a heterogeneous and interdependent group of "public" organizations that, considering the general goals that group them together and the boundary that "separates" them from civil society, form a unit that lends itself to discrete analysis. But neither this theoretical unit nor its analytic differentiation from civil society has clear empirical correlates. The institutions that compose the state apparatus are notoriously different in terms of autonomy, functions, size, clientele, jurisdiction, and resources, which makes it difficult to attribute generic traits to the whole. On the other hand, the clear-cut boundary that much of the literature has tended to establish between the "private" and the "public" domain must be re-examined in the light of a reality that shows diverse and subtle forms of

interaction between civil and state actors, in which the character of the formally established relationships withers away.<sup>16</sup>

Institutionally, therefore, the state apparatus manifests itself as a multifaceted and complex social actor, in the sense that its various units and arenas of decision and action express a diffuse and, at times, ambiguous presence in the network of social relations. The common denominator of its diversified behavior, the homogenizing element of its heterogeneous presence, is the legitimate invocation of the authority of the state that, in its institutional form, claims to embody the general interest of society.

Despite the unresolved ambiguities, and maybe to sustain them, this way of conceptualizing the state apparatus may supply some keys to understanding its internal dynamic and the web of relationships that, historically, it establishes with civil society. Precisely the two elements that present the greatest ambiguity—i.e., the relative internal incoherence and the relative lack of external differentiation—allow its sphere of competence and action to be conceived of as an arena of negotiation and conflict in which socially crucial issues are settled. The historical process whereby these issues are defined, raised, and solved gives way to contradictory relationships between civil society and the state that increase the heterogeneity of the institutional apparatus of the state and blur the boundaries between the two spheres.<sup>17</sup>

The preceding interpretation suggests that the origin, expansion, differentiation, and increasing specialization of state institutions reflect attempts to resolve the growing number of issues raised by the development of a society characterized by internal contradictions. As O'Donnell says:

... just as the individual "itemizes" problems, attending to them "one at a time," and separating them *ceteris paribus* from dimensions alien to the rudimentary causal scheme that he uses, so the growth and differentiation of state institutions are the collective *ceteris paribus* of issues and crises. By the same token, the creation of instances of cooperation and control are always suboptimal attempts to counteract some of the negative consequences of institutional dispersion that ensues. This fragmentation is consonant with the fragmentation of society. In this sense, the map—the distribution and density—of the state institutions in each historical case is the map of the sutures that the underlying contradictions have scratched on the surface of the conflictive areas.<sup>18</sup>

Throughout this process, state institutions tend to appropriate spheres and matters of action created as a result of the very process of social differentiation, which is developing along its own parallel course. In other words, in the expansion of the state apparatus, "civil" interests are incorporated into the objectives of the state's activity, which invests them with a legitimacy derived from their being presented to society as in the "general interest." Moreover, this process carries with it the appropriation of the resources that will further consolidate the bases of

state domination and will project, in concrete institutions and decisions, its material presence. Therefore, the expansion of the state apparatus derives in part from the increasing involvement of its institutions in conflictual areas or “issues” of society, towards which—supported by the domination of resources—they adopt positions that exhibit varying degrees of coercion or consent. Such acts of involvement assume the state is a party to the corresponding debate or sphere of action, implying recognition of its power (1) to invoke a superior interest, which transcends those of the other parties involved, and (2) to extract the resources that will make possible its attempts to resolve the issues raised.

The degree of consensus or coercion implicit in these acts of appropriation depends on the particular combination of the intervening social forces. But in any case, they are always invested with some form of legitimacy derived from the role that the state plays as the articulator of social relations, as the guarantor of a social order that its activity tends to perpetuate. “No taxation without representation,” the classic formula of American liberal democracy, makes the extractive capacity of the state dependent, precisely, on the recognition of certain rules of the political game that insure representation—and eventual conversion into “general interest”—of the “common” interests of civil society. Which interests are represented and satisfied depends obviously on the nature of the social issues, the existence of which sustains, and the resolution of which influences, the particular structure of domination imposed on the respective society.<sup>19</sup> As the principal articulator of this structure of domination and as the main arena for deciding the content and the forms of resolution of the issues, the apparatus of the state tends to express the contradictions lying beneath the social order that it tries to institutionalize. Therefore, an analysis of the historical evolution of state institutions is inseparable from an analysis of the social issues that demand its intervention by means of policies or “position taking.” The metamorphosis of the state apparatus thus adjusts itself to the rhythms and modalities that the resolution of such issues take.<sup>20</sup>

### *Social Issues and Attributes of “Stateness”*

The principal advantage of studying publicly debated issues is that these force the state to take a stand, thus making its material existence readily apparent. Issues give rise to decisions and responses by the state that can either take the form of obtaining or disposing of resources, imposing sanctions, producing symbols, or building institutions, all of which are objective manifestations of its presence in the web of social relations. How, then, can one discern those issues whose examination—given their significance and analytic range—will illuminate the process of state formation? What level of aggregation will permit us to devise a useful

concept and make it operational for research? If the process of state formation is a process of acquiring the attributes of "stateness," we should examine the issues linked with the attainment of those attributes. In other words, I propose to concentrate attention on the social processes that developed around the raising and settling of issues that not only had the national state as a central actor but also in which the involvement of the state contributed to its own formative process or changed profoundly some of its attributes.

This proposal involves a partial methodological answer to the questions, but some additional complexities and arguments should be introduced. The proposal postulates a relationship of reciprocal determination between the acquisition of certain attributes of "stateness" and the resolution of certain social issues. Therefore, the obvious analytic procedure would be to specify the attributes and issues, establish theoretically their causal connections, and verify empirically the circumstances and modes in which this relationship is manifested. Although this procedure does not seem to present any problems, the properties that confer "stateness" on the state and the social issues that arise and are solved are never linked, historically, in neatly distinguishable dyads; they relate in a dynamic and antagonistic manner. The separate treatment of issues and attributes that is given below is an almost inevitable analytic resort; however, capturing the complexity and explanatory richness of the relationship also will require an interpretation—rudimentary though it might be—of the reciprocal interplay between the issues examined and the attributes acquired.<sup>21</sup>

As an illustration of this abstract proposal, the allocation of resources to strengthen the repressive apparatus of the new national states in Latin America tended, in many cases, to diminish their institutional viability (in that this compromised the performance of other, necessary, functions); but to the degree that this strengthening of the repressive apparatus resulted in increased legitimization of a central power, with effective territorial control and a conspicuous capacity to create a stable order, it increased, in the long run, the possibility of allocating resources to support the process of capitalist accumulation.

Going deeper into this peculiar relationship among the issues that the state must face in its formative stage has several advantages. First, it allows us to appreciate the impact and repercussions that certain decisions or policies on one issue have on other issues. If the set of issues examined covers adequately the spectrum of basic factors that condition state action, then the dynamic process through which the state attempts to deal with them, simultaneously, should explain a good deal of its formative process.

A second advantage of this perspective stems from its capacity to overcome typical "functionalist"<sup>22</sup> explanations in which the state ap-

pears to perform various tasks or activities that either result “naturally” from its condition of being a capitalist state (the position taken by a large segment of the Marxist literature on the state) or correspond to some idea of historical necessity based on unavoidably teleological arguments. In my opinion, a concept that is more sensitive to the alternatives faced by the protagonists of historical events is to conceive of state action as part of a social process resulting from the appearance, development, and resolution of issues that society (and the state) considers crucial to the reproduction of the evolving social order. Indeed, those “functions,” typically inferred through post-hoc reasoning, are not compartmentalized activities of the state but rather the protean product of a social, and at the same time intrabureaucratic, struggle.

Third, this perspective makes it easy to incorporate the changes produced in certain parameters (e.g., external demand, availability and inflow of foreign capital, technological innovations), and to observe not only their effects on the process of resolving each issue, but also their effects on the more encompassing historical process. If we take into account the accelerated changes in these parameters, especially during the second half of the nineteenth century, we can see the advantage of relating them to the various issues and their respective linkages.

Fourth, this perspective makes us aware of the nonlinear character of the process of state formation. This entails the possibility of detecting phases and cycles in the process; that is, those points at which the relative “weights” of the issues and their effects upon each other varied significantly. In other words, to assert that certain issues were on the agenda and involved the state in their resolution does not imply that the issue-solving process followed a fixed pattern. Quite to the contrary: the rhythm and intensity of the state’s involvement probably varied with the significance of each issue at the historical moment under consideration.

Finally, if the issues studied reveal networks of social relations in which the action of the state moves seriatim toward the solution of different problems, it should be possible to connect them empirically with various indicators for which information can be easily obtained and systematized: state policies, responses of various social actors, the establishment of institutions, changes in the extraction and allocation of resources, changes in patterns of bureaucratic behavior, and so on. It hardly needs to be said that a history of the formation of the state apparatus is, precisely, a history of the changes produced in this type of variable and in its relationship to a set of determining factors. In my proposal, the latter would be identifiable in the process of the rise, development, and resolution of the most relevant issues that the state in Latin America had to face during its formative stage.

In so far as possible, the temptation should be avoided to cate-

gorize the historical changes in the institutional apparatus of the state as a function of the issues chosen. If we take, for example, the issues of "order" and "progress"—on which more will be said below—it would be easy to associate the intervention of the state in the problem-solving process with the relative development of the institutions centrally involved in that process: that is, the ministries of war were certainly the principal institutional mechanism for imposing "order"; and the ministries of the interior, public works, or their equivalents, the ones most directly connected with "progress."<sup>23</sup> But it would not be correct to infer that, over time, each of these institutions was as important to, or associated exclusively with, the resolution of those issues. The temptation is greater to the extent that statistics on expenses, personnel, and organizations would make it possible to "measure" the relative weight, the intensity of attention, given to each issue at different times. However, there are at least two objections to such a procedure: first, it does not take into account the multidimensionality of most manifestations of the presence and activity of the state; although these tend to be identified with fixed functions or outcomes, their effects on other issues obscure any clearcut association. Second, it does not take into consideration the fact that the issues themselves may change, both in form and in content, as positions on them evolve; thus the direction of the institutional changes related to them also change.<sup>24</sup> For example, the order derived from the visible repressive capacity of the state is not the same as that which arises from the recognition of its role in the institutionalization and regulation of capitalist relations of production.

Now that the justifications for this proposed perspective have been advanced, I will proceed to deal separately with certain issues common to the Latin American historical experience that I deem central to understanding the process of formation of their states. Given the speculative character and essentially methodological intention of this essay, I shall not attempt a global interpretation that would show the relationship between the different issues and the acquisition, on the part of the institutional apparatus of the state, of its fundamental attributes. Such an interpretation should, rather, be the epilogue to a concerted effort of comparative research, based on an in-depth analysis of various national experiences.<sup>25</sup>

#### EMANCIPATION, ORGANIZATION, AND NATIONAL STATES IN LATIN AMERICA

In dealing with the concrete level of the historical process, we return to a problem that was dealt with previously from a more abstract point of view: the difficulty of pinpointing a moment from which one can affirm the existence, however embryonic, of a national state. Although our analytic referent presumes the independence of the nation, would it be

possible to consider the precarious systems of domination established during the first years of independence as national states?<sup>26</sup> Certainly, the process of emancipation is a common starting point for the national experience in Latin America, but the rupture with the imperial power did not mean the automatic replacement of the colonial state by a national state.<sup>27</sup> This is partly due to the fact that, at their start, the majority of the emancipation movements were municipal in character, generally limited to the localities in which colonial authorities resided. As they were able to raise support, they were extended gradually until they acquired a national character.<sup>28</sup> The weak state apparatuses of the independence period were formed by a small number of local administrative and judicial institutions.<sup>29</sup> Political organs (*juntas*, *triumviratos*, *directorios*) were superimposed on this primitive apparatus to replace the colonial system of domination and establish a center of power around which to form a national state. These attempts were not always successful and often led to long periods of regional disputes and struggles between political factions in which the existence of the state was based, in fact, on only one of its attributes: external recognition of its political sovereignty.

In many instances, the failure was due to limited territorial integration, resulting from precarious internal communication and aggravated by the interruption of the links with the old metropolis. The political integration of the colonies with the metropolitan center—which the process of emancipation interrupted—had been a necessary condition for its economic exploitation.<sup>30</sup> With independence, the trends toward regional autonomy were reinforced by the weakening of the former dynamic circuits of the colonial economy (i.e., those that provided precious metals) and the growing isolation that made the development and integration of new economic circuits difficult.<sup>31</sup> The independence period was thus characterized by secessionist tendencies that dismembered the viceroyalties and drastically changed the political map of Latin America. Under such circumstances—as Furtado points out—the structuring of the new states was conditioned by two factors: the lack of a real interdependence among the landowners, who would unite with one another or submit to one of their number only for the purposes of the power struggle; and the action of the urban bourgeoisie, which maintained contact with the outside world and explored all possibilities for the expansion of international trade, which segments of the rural sector would begin to join. Thus, to the extent that possibilities for one or another line of exports arose, the urban group tended to consolidate itself at the same time as it became integrated with some rural subgroup, thus creating conditions for the structuring of an effective power system.<sup>32</sup>

Without doubt, the effectiveness of the power system—or, rather, the concrete possibility of forming a state—depended fundamentally on

the degree of articulation achieved between the rural and urban interests, which in turn was related to the existing conditions for the economic integration of the territory. The early consolidation of the national state in what are today Chile and Costa Rica can thus be explained by the relative regional homogeneity of their respective central valleys, which were practically the only centers of organized forms of social life. The development in these same countries of a lively and diversified economy and the adjustment of the more traditional local groups to new productive possibilities contributed to a rapid strengthening of the centralized power of the state, avoiding the anarchy and centrifugal *caudillismo* that the majority of the countries in Latin America experienced.

In the case of Brazil, the bureaucratic and military apparatus of the crown, inherited from the empire, was the social agent that contributed to the constitution of a national order, giving substance to a state whose roots in the productive sectors were weak.<sup>33</sup> The alliance of this bureaucratic-military stratum with the rising *paulista* bourgeois coffee-growers, the support of the República Velha, permitted the creation of a relatively stable system of domination, even though the survival of strong regional powers demanded balancing mechanisms and policies of compromise that gave the oligarchical regime some peculiar characteristics. In other countries, where territorial extent created difficulties for interregional articulation (e.g., Peru, Mexico, Bolivia), control of mining, predominant since the colonial epoch, generally provided a base of power from which to control the national state and effectively eliminate all contesting forces. Naturally, this did not always lead to either an effective national integration or the formation of a state with such a character. In Mexico, such conditions began to exist with the Porfiriato, after a half century of more or less frustrated attempts, while in Peru the very existence of a nation and a national state is still a topic for discussion.<sup>34</sup> In Brazil, many still maintain that we can speak of a truly national state only since the 1930s.

These historical references, by their very brevity, show that any attempt at a more refined interpretation must incorporate variables such as the degree of diversification of the productive system, in terms of the persistence of single-crop economies, successive substitutions of exports, etc.; the existence of enclaves or the national control of the principal productive sector; the continuity of the colonial bureaucratic apparatus or the ex-novo creation of an institutional apparatus; and the weight of local powers, with their respective economic interests, as opposed to the possibilities for the concentration and centralization of power.

As a broad generalization, we could at least agree that the actual possibility for the creation of a more integrated and complex economy, plus—in some cases—the preservation of certain colonial institutions as instruments for political control, amalgamated society and the incipient



system of domination into a national state. This should explain why, in cases like Argentina and Colombia, the precariousness of the regional economies, their territorial extent, the difficulties of communication and transportation, the dismantling of the colonial bureaucratic apparatus, and the prolonged civil struggles that reflected the lack of predominance of one region or sector of the society over others delayed this process of amalgamation for many years. The extended period of civil war in the Latin American experience, which lasted from independence until a definitive national organization was achieved, can thus be seen as that stage in which were being overcome the underlying contradictions in the articulation of the three components that would make up the national state—economy, nation, and system of domination. Regional economy versus open economy, local versus national sphere of social relations, and local systems of domination versus a centralization of power into a system of domination on a national level constituted the terms of the contradictions that the profound changes in the international economy at the middle of the century helped to resolve.

#### *Central Issues in the Formative Stage of the State*

About the middle of the last century, profound social transformations took place in Europe as the continent experienced a veritable era of nationalism. The integration of markets in larger territorial areas had in good part been the result of new possibilities for condensing around a center the power necessary to forge new national identities. There was, simultaneously, the spread of the industrial revolution, the revolution in transportation, and a continually increasing demand for raw materials, as much to feed the productive process of a growing capitalist economy as to satisfy the consumer needs of an increasingly urban population.

The consequences of these processes on the development of the economies and societies of Latin America have been studied extensively.<sup>35</sup> The extraordinary expansion of world trade and the availability and internationalization of capital flows opened new opportunities for investment in, and diversification of, productive and intermediary activity in Latin America. Also well known is the close correlation among the growth of external demand, the great migrations that gave some of the new nations an abundant work force, the investments in infrastructure, and the boom in exports. All these processes were linked with the contagious optimism regarding "indefinite progress," which the North American and European experiences generated in the region.

What is less well known is the role that the new national states played in these transformations; under what conditions, and using what mechanisms, did they face and attempt to solve their manifold challenges? It is certain that the existence of these states was not divorced

from conditions in the international context that modified the extent and quality of the potential opportunities for economic activity in the region. Even when new opportunities for capitalist development mobilized economic actors and produced adjustments and dislocations in the traditional productive activities, such mobilization quickly met with objective limits. Initiatives were handicapped by small, isolated markets, generally sparse population, poor transportation, monetary anarchy, lack of a financial market, and vast territories under the control of Indians or local caudillos. For the dominant economic sectors, which found in the opening of foreign trade increasing grounds for the consolidation of their interests, overcoming such obstacles became synonymous with the institution of a stable order and the promotion of activities destined to favor the process of accumulation. "Order and progress," the classic formula of the positivist creed, thus epitomized the central concerns of an epoch, that in which capitalist relations of production began to permeate Latin America. The guarantee of the expansion and reproduction of these relations could not rest on the same social forces that engendered them. The cellular domination<sup>36</sup> exercised in the domain of production proved to be insufficient in the face of the increasing "nationalization" and internationalization of economic life. For the dominant sectors of that time, the national state appeared as the only institution capable of mobilizing resources and creating conditions necessary to overcome the prevailing disorder and backwardness. Resolution of these issues called for consolidation of the "domination pact" of the incipient bourgeoisie and reinforcement of the precarious institutional apparatus of the national state.

What did the institution of "order" signify? One of the most noticeable aspects of this historical stage was the multiple and simultaneous manifestations of "disorder" that the state had to face. On the one hand there were the many instances of armed confrontations, which in different countries occurred as uprisings of local caudillos, *campesino* rebellions, Indian raids, secessionist attempts, and other forms of opposition to the claim of concentrating and centralizing power under a given scheme of domination. On the other hand, tradition conspired against the centralization by the state of certain instruments of social control: civil registers, the educational system, uniform commercial practices, etc. Subnational divisions (states, provinces, departments) continued to have their own armed forces, coin their own money, establish internal customs, and administer justice based on varying constitutional and legal norms. Imposing order implied making transactions predictable, and standardizing behavior across the administrative units of the national territory.

Thus "order" appeared, paradoxically, as a drastic modification of the traditional frame of social relations. It did not imply the return to a

normal pattern of community life but rather the imposition of a different one, more congruent with the development of a broader web of relations of production and social domination. Consequently, during the first stage of the independence period, the efforts of the incipient states were directed toward the elimination of all traces of opposition and to extending their authority to all parts of the territory over which they claimed sovereignty. The repeated and manifest capacity to exercise control and impose effective and legitimate rule over territories and peoples, in the name of a higher interest materially and ideologically based on the new pattern of social relations, is what precisely defined the national character of these states. This capacity was threatened by the conflict with regional interests, with local traditions of administration, with the exercise of power by local bosses, and with unstable federative projects. Hence, at this early stage, the new states made their presence felt mainly as instruments for repression and social control, which was reflected in the increasing preponderance of institutions designed for the consolidation and legitimization of central power (e.g., formation and maintenance of militia, opening and improvement of means of communication, development of legal institutions, and mechanisms for social regulation).

It is clear, then, that the issue of "order," raised and endorsed by dominant sectors of society that were at the same time defining their role in the new structure of social relations, captured the attention and resources of the national state from the moment of its formation. To "solve" it was a necessary condition for the survival and consolidation of the state. Moreover, it constituted a basic premise for the establishment of stable forms of social relations, in harmony with the opportunities and expectations that were emerging with the slow but growing integration of the Latin American economies into the world market. Therefore, the issue of "progress" arose as the natural corollary of "order."<sup>37</sup> The formula that combined them indicated an order of precedence that assumed the character of a necessary condition for the full realization of both terms: order and progress; but first order, then progress.<sup>38</sup>

However, the coexistence of these issues in the Latin American societies of the second half of the past century posed not a few contradictions from the viewpoint of state institutions. A state capable of imposing order and promoting progress, almost by definition, was a state that had acquired the capacity to institutionalize its authority, differentiate its control, and internalize a collective identity. This entailed a degree of "presence" at these diverse levels that the new states were too precarious to institutionalize. Assignment of their limited resources to "order," on the enforcement of which their legitimacy tended to be based, reduced their capacity to facilitate "progress," thus impairing their institutional viability. But, on the other hand, the effective imposi-

tion of order created material conditions for progress, freed resources for its promotion, increased the extractive capacity and viability of the state, and tended to legitimize its role as a fundamental agent of the development of capitalist social relations. In the course of a process in which the values of the terms in this equation shifted, the state became the axis around which new forms of political and economic domination were consolidated. This active role in issue resolution became the means by which states acquired "stateness." This is the meaning of the symbiotic growth of state and society as the separate elements of a unitary and new capitalist social order.

Of course, the patterns differed from country to country, both in the development of capitalism and in the expansion and differentiation of state apparatuses. The factors that contributed to build a particular system of state institutions were closely associated with the dominant type of economic production, the form of participation in the new international markets, and the networks of social relations resulting from them. In general, the states that emerged from the process of internationalization of the economy proved to have a weak extractive capacity and a strong dependence on external financing, which—added to their roles in the formation of a domestic market, the legal consolidation and organization of land-ownership, the encouragement to produce raw materials and manufactured goods with low technological requirements, and the channelling of resources toward the primary export, mercantile, and financial sectors—reinforced the characteristics of a system of production and a social order subordinated to the centers of world capitalism.

Partly, although not solely, depending on the nature of the staples that constituted the basis for participation in the international market, relations of production and trade were being established that influenced the forms of state intervention. Its activity and resources were directed toward the creation of conditions that favored the expansion of an export and mercantile economy. In their turn, these activities reinforced and modified a system of economic exploitation that gave a specific character to the social structure and to the mode of capitalist development being formed. During the final third of the century, important elements of infrastructure—roads, bridges, railroads, ports, postal and telegraphic systems—were completed, especially in those countries whose production (farming or mining) required a severe reduction in the costs of transportation to be competitive. Along with the economic expansion came a marked increase in the value and sale of land, in the volume of imports, and in financial operations. This gave rise to new intermediary activities (in commerce, banking, transportation, etc.), which, in their turn, required more sophisticated legislation and the regulation of transactions.

The action of the state turned out to be crucial for the realization

of these changes. Through direct investment, official credit, legislation, and the creation of administrative units in charge of the production of goods, regulations, and services, the state could offer security to individuals, property, and transactions; create the necessary conditions for the establishment of an internal market; extend the benefits of education and health, and help settle the country; and provide means of extra-economic coercion to ensure the employment of an often scarce labor force.

These observations suggest that the Latin American states, in their formative stage, developed successively their apparatuses of repression, regulation, and accumulation of basic social capital. Their institutional crystallization—in the form of legislation, public organizations, administrative mechanisms, and patterns of resource allocation—reflected the various means by which the state attempted to resolve the issues of “order” and “progress.” But all this called for financial resources; that is to say, the state had to develop simultaneously an extractive capacity and an apparatus of collection and financial administration that ensured its own reproduction, so as to consolidate its power, legitimize itself, and continue to sustain conditions of economic expansion.

Naturally, the development of this extractive capacity and the formation of a bureaucratic apparatus was in accord with the relative importance of the various existing sources of income in each country and the kinds of mechanisms required for their appropriation. However, based upon the subordinate position of the Latin American countries in the new world capitalist order, it is possible to observe certain common characteristics in the strategies generally adopted to secure viability. The conditions necessary for the functioning of an open economy, whose productive and intermediary activities had to be encouraged without excessively taxing the economic surplus, imposed fairly rigid parameters. Resources derived from ordinary income were often insufficient to overcome the constraints imposed by the extreme vulnerability of a dependent economy that was, therefore, unstable as a regular source of revenue.

The strong expansion of the financial markets in Europe after the midcentury—especially in England—increased extraordinarily the availability of capital eager to find investments more profitable than those available locally.<sup>39</sup> This provided the link necessary to complete the formula for making the state viable. Direct investment in infrastructure and productive activities strongly guaranteed by the state, as well as loans contracted by the state itself, furnished the additional resources necessary to assure the functioning of its institutional apparatus. Once it had set itself up as an active agent of capital accumulation, the state was able to energize the economic circuits and to help increase the social

surplus. In this way, it managed to appropriate a moderate (although increasing) share of this surplus in proportion as economic activity expanded, which allowed it to attend to the service of the public debt. This reaffirmed its capacity to create and guarantee the conditions of such expansion, making possible new loans from abroad. Both conditions assured the reproduction and growth of the state apparatus.

It should be made clear that the allusion to strategies for survival or mechanisms of reproduction is only an attempt to indicate a certain rationality surely present in the calculations of the actors in the historical process, even when the components of that rationality were more frequently the parameters of their options rather than variables that they were able to control. In other words, the viability and reproduction of the state apparatus was never the result of a linear or homeostatic process. To illustrate this point, it is clear that the custom duties on foreign trade, added to the loans contracted periodically, constituted, for decades, the primary—and almost exclusive—resources of the national state. As for public expenditure, an economic-functional analysis would clearly show its multiplying effect on certain types of production (e.g., exportable raw materials) whose expansion was positively correlated with the generation of additional tax revenue. On the basis of these data, the application of an analytic framework of economic, fiscal, and other types of “linkages”—like that suggested by Albert Hirschman<sup>40</sup>—should permit, at a certain level of abstraction, the recreation of an implicit “law of general movement” of the mechanism of state reproduction. However, despite its undeniable utility, the mechanical adoption of this framework runs the risk of falling into fallacies of retrospective determinism; or, at least, of concealing the alternatives in a process of trial and error, advances and retreats, in which learning and continuous adaptation simultaneously resolved the contradictions that arose from the very mechanism of reproduction and generated rigidities and “deviations” that, in the long run, became, themselves, new sources of contradiction. Many of the alleged “dysfunctions” of the state apparatus originate precisely in the attempts to adapt the mechanism of state reproduction. Thus, it is necessary to find out the specificity of this mechanism in the different national experiences.

### *Dominant Issues in the Stage of State Consolidation*

Despite its limitations, the above attempt at generalizing meets two conditions that render it partially valid: (1) it is based on considerations that, from the in-depth examination of a national case,<sup>41</sup> seek to establish similarities and differences with other cases; and (2) it refers to a period in which the degree of complexity of the social structure and the state apparatus was small enough to facilitate the understanding of its

most salient processes and issues. On the other hand, a similar attempt for the period of the consolidation of the state, which covers from the end of the last century to the present day, poses insuperable problems for a work such as this. Therefore, the observations that follow must be considered as illustrations of a mode of analysis rather than an attempt at rigorous historical interpretation.

At the general level at which we have reasoned so far, it is not by chance that "order" and "progress" appear as the central issues in the formative period of the state. In a certain sense, neither the problems of "order" nor those of "progress" have ever been fully resolved. They were resolved only in the strict sense that—with the leading intervention of the state during a crucial historical period—various sources of opposition to the establishment of a capitalist economy were eliminated, the conditions necessary for the development of the relations implied in such an economy were regularized and guaranteed, and resources were allocated for the creation of a material context that would facilitate the process of accumulation. They were not resolved in the broader sense that the reproduction of capitalism as a system meant resorting recurrently to new "interventions"<sup>42</sup> by the state in order to settle other disputed aspects of the same issues, caused by the contradictory development of the system. These issues reemerged, under different labels, in the action and ideology of other social protagonists, but at bottom, they continued to express the persistence of those same two conditions for reproduction of a similar social order.

When, at the beginning of this century, the so-called "social question" began to arise; when, decades later, populist redistributionism weakened the foundations of capital accumulation of the dominant economic sectors; when, more recently, subversive movements menaced the very survival of capitalism as a system, the problem of "order" arose time and again—the need to stabilize the functioning of society, to repress foci of armed opposition, to make economic calculations predictable, to interpose negative limits on the socially destructive consequences of the pattern of reproduction of social capitalist relations itself.<sup>43</sup> In its turn, when the Great Depression required an acceleration in the rhythm of substitute industrialization in Latin America; when, after the postwar boom, the signs of a new crisis encouraged developmentalist formulas that called for the deepening of substitute industrialization; when, at present, the consequences of the transnationalization of capital on the local economies are being debated, it is the question of "progress" that has turned up once again. What is at stake, finally, is the "technical" viability of capitalism, the search for formulas to overcome the profound contradictions generated both by its development on a world scale and within the more limited bounds of the national economies. Security-development, stabilization-normalization, new labels—

among others—for the old problems of how to guarantee and maintain the conditions necessary for the functioning and reproduction of dependent capitalism throughout its historical unfolding.

In this sense, the successive synonyms for “order and progress” would be euphemisms for the conditions that seem necessary for the existence of a social order that sees its continuity threatened by the tensions and antagonisms that it, itself, generates. But their use in political discourse also expresses the recurring problematic character of maintaining such conditions. For this reason, it does not seem unwise to consider them also as the major social issues during the era of the consolidation of national states in Latin America.

Beyond indicating a continuity that expresses the main permanent tensions of the capitalist system, they are too abstract to be used as the axes of social processes in an analysis of concrete historical situations. That is to say, “order” and “progress” are too aggregate as categories, and thus inadequate for illuminating the type of historical process from which might emerge an explanation that links the formation of the state with the formation of other entities or other social phenomena. Their purpose analytically is to give a sense of unity that transcends discrete motivations to subgroups of actions characterizable as parts of a deeper social process. But to avoid crude reductionism and recover the sense of the historical specificity of the different national experiences, empirical investigation requires that those issues be disaggregated for analytic purposes. From this point of view, concrete historical processes would be the particular mode that the development of capitalism assumed in each national case. The analytical and historical disaggregation of such issues, seen now as the axes of processes that involve both the action and resources of different social actors (including the state), should explain the degree to which, and the mechanisms by which, the articulation and reproduction of that social order was possible in each case.

If the state is the principal guarantor and articulator of capitalist relations, the acquisition and consolidation of its attributes should be connected intimately with the vicissitudes of the processes involved in the solution of specific issues, since they would express the concrete forms assumed by the structural tensions of capitalism. The initiative and responses of the state—its policies in the broad sense of positions taken in the face of socially divisive issues—would indicate, in an immediate sense, attempts to resolve the issues and, on another level, renewed attempts to overcome the deeper tensions of the existing social order. But initiatives and responses, in their turn, are a form of generic allusion to the many different modalities of state action, a shorthand way of referring to the various manifestations of its institutional presence, which are expressed in the development of an extractive capacity, in a differentiated organizational structure, in specialized functions, in



systematic trends in the allocation of resources, in certain routine behaviors, and in a given capacity for producing symbols. These are but the attributes of "stateness," acquired or consolidated as a consequence of—but also as a necessary condition for—the processes arising from the solution of existing social issues.

As capitalism did not develop in the same way in all places, so the institutional apparatuses of the state did not evolve along the same pattern. The specificity of these apparatuses was a product and a reflection (and I use the term with full awareness of its risks) of the specificity of the respective capitalist systems. And this, in its turn, was the product of forces loosed by this system of production, appropriation, and domination; of the classes and sectors that emerged from these relations; of their respective resource base; and of their mobilization through alliances and confrontations regarding the problems raised by the internal contradictions within this complex system.

From this perspective, certain common traits observable in the historical evolution of state apparatuses in Latin America acquire new meaning. One trait is the correspondance between the kind of issue that arose and the kind of institutional mechanism adopted to settle it:<sup>44</sup> social security organizations arose as partial attempts to resolve the so-called social question; the organizations for land expropriation and rural development were customarily created to take care of the needs generated by agrarian reform; and the mechanisms for the regulation of exchange, taxes, tariffs, and credit, created in the 1930s, were attempts to mitigate the local effects of the world crisis. Another common trait, linked with the above, is the growth of the state apparatus via groups of functionally specialized organizations and resources, which partly indicates the ebb and flow of the predominance of given issues. It is not by accident that there are "epochs" in which public service enterprises, intelligence organizations, science and technology institutes, or planning boards are created on a massive scale. These instances show in a particularly clear way the state's role in initiating social concern with certain issues. In the face of such issues, its initiative often takes the form of creating or appropriating new spheres of operation.

A third trait is the conflictive character that the very process of state expansion acquires as a consequence of the fact that its apparatus becomes an arena of negotiation and dispute. Certain social issues force the state into incongruent or contradictory positions, partly because its action is expressed in the creation of multiple units, and partly because these units often tend to have, or represent, opposing interests.<sup>45</sup> One can trace this phenomenon to the "difficulties" in the processes of "policy implementation," to the repeatedly observed institutional "overlaps," and to other, allegedly pathological, manifestations of bureaucratic organization and functioning.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

What follows is a brief recapitulation of some of the points made above, a deeper study of which will be necessary for future research on the formation of national states in Latin America.

1. In its initial stage, this process involved replacing the centralized authority of the colonial state and subordinating the many local powers that burst forth after independence as a result of the centrifugal forces unleashed by the emancipation process.

2. Identification with the struggle for emancipation, a precarious idealistic component of nationalism, was insufficient to produce stable conditions for national integration. The material foundation for the newly created nation began to take shape only with the rise of opportunities for incorporation of the local economies into the world capitalist system and with the consequent development of differentiated and interdependent interests generated by such opportunities.

3. Besides the complex mediations intervening in each national case, the articulation of internal markets and their linking to the international economy were accompanied by the consolidation of power of the class or class alliance that controlled the new circuits of production and circulation of goods on which the export economy was based.

4. But the new forms of economic domination, in whose shadow new social relations were consolidated, required the parallel formation and control of a political system of domination capable of articulating, expanding, and reproducing the new pattern of social relations.

5. This system of domination—the national state—was both a cause and a result of the process of the expansion of capitalism initiated with the export economic boom: a cause in that it created the conditions, furnished the resources, and even promoted the formation of the social agents that favored the process of accumulation; a result in that, through these forms of intervention, its control became differentiated, its authority affirmed, and its attributes defined.

6. The operating laws of this reciprocal formation process can be discerned beginning with the analysis of the social issues that demanded the attention of the main protagonists of that process, both public and private, and thus crystallized the concerns that attracted their resources and actions.

7. The problems relating to “order” and “progress,” which sum up the agenda of socially central issues during the formative period of the state, focused the attention of these actors. The modes whereby these problems were solved defined the nature and significance of the social sectors and state institutions generated by the very process of problem-solving.

8. With the consolidation of the state and the diffusion of capital-

ist relations, "order" and "progress" tended to become permanent tensions in the new pattern of social organization. As they reappeared, broken up into multiple issues, they expressed not only their renewed presence but also the permanence of certain fundamental contradictions of capitalism. By the same token, they defined spheres of state action committed to overcome the most ostensibly destabilizing consequences of that system.

9. Identifying the more differentiated issues in each national experience would help to define an analytic and historical field in which the problem-solving process could be recreated; this would also help identify the fundamental landmarks and specific modes of the process of state formation.

In pointing to certain crucial and permanent tensions that permeate capitalism, to their manifestation through socially divisive issues, and to their close relationship with the acquisition of certain attributes by the state in Latin America, I only intended to suggest a reasonable strategy for analyzing a scarcely explored theme. It was not my purpose to provide a definitive explanation, only some guidelines to begin to study that theme. A number of country studies will be necessary before one may distinguish, beyond historical singularities, those generic elements that can contribute to theoretical reflection on the state in Latin America.

#### NOTES

1. Previous versions of this work were used for reference in the seminars at the Instituto Centroamericano de Administración Pública (ICAP) and various Central American universities for the organization of a comparative project concerning the historical formation of the state in those countries (Tegucigalpa, Honduras, May 1978 and San José, Costa Rica, July 1978).
2. A good essay, in which the various anthropological treatments of the theme are reviewed, is that of Lawrence Krader, *La formación del estado* (Barcelona: Editorial Labor, 1972). The historical perspective has been enriched in recent years with the works of Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World System* (New York: Academic Press, 1974 and 1980); Charles Tilly, ed., *The Formation of the Western European States* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975); and Perry Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State* (London: New Left Review Books, 1975). Also see Robert L. Heilbroner, *La formación de la sociedad económica* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1964).
3. Thus are excluded other historical forms, such as empires, city-states, and various primitive means of exercising domination that are sometimes considered states.
4. Formally, at least, in order to avoid dealing with the problem of whether the "extraterritoriality" of the social logic (or, in other words, the dependent relationship) casts doubt on the "national" character of the state.
5. On the state as a social relationship (and, as such, an abstraction in the concrete) see the suggestive comments of Norbert Lechner, *La crisis del estado en América Latina* (Caracas: El Cid Editor, 1977). Also Guillermo O'Donnell, "Apuntes para una teoría del estado," Document CEDES/G.E. CLACSO/No. 9 (Buenos Aires, 1977). This interpretation differs substantially from the more traditional ideas that tend to identify a state exclusively as a group of institutions. For example Ralph Miliband, *El estado en la sociedad capitalista* (México: Siglo XXI, 1970).

6. As Tilly points out, the concept of "nation" continues to be one of the most controversial items in the political lexicon.
7. See Tom Nairn, "The Modern Janus," *New Left Review* 94 (Nov.-Dec. 1975).
8. For example, Brading argues that the development of Mexican nationalism decreased after independence, due to the instinctive rejection of native patriotism by the new liberal ideologies and their mestizo supporters. The liberals, however, could not get their individualist and Europeanized ideology to engender a cohesive national spirit. See David A. Brading, *Los orígenes de nacionalismo mexicano* (México: SepSetentas, 1973). In the case of Argentina, thirty years after independence was declared, Esteban Echeverría demonstrated dramatically the consequences of territorial isolation, individualism, and localism, asking: "Does there beat, perchance, any feeling of nationalism in the heart of this fourteen-headed giant called the Republic of Argentina?" (*Dogma socialista*, Buenos Aires).
9. See Charles Tilly, "Reflections on the History of European State-Making," in Tilly, *The Formation*, p. 70.
10. As J. P. Nettl suggests in "The State as a Conceptual Variable," *World Politics*, no. 20 (July 1968):559-92. This focus is also implied in the literature on "crisis and sequences" in the formation of the state, some of which has been collected in Tilly, *The Formation*.
11. Phillippe C. Schmitter, John H. Coatsworth, and Joanne Fox Przeworski, "Historical Perspectives on the State, Civil Society, and the Economy in Latin America: Prolegomenon to a Workshop at the University of Chicago, 1976-1977." Mimeographed.
12. Although I recognize the difficulty of the problem. A controversy exists concerning the modes of production in Latin America, some discussions of which are collected in Carlos S. Assadourian et al., *Modos de producción en América Latina* (Córdoba: Ediciones Pasado y Presente, 1973). For a heterodox theory, which emphasizes the feudal character of the dominant mode of production, see Marcello Carmagnani, *Formación y crisis de un sistema feudal* (México: Siglo XXI, 1976).
13. See Julio Cotler, *Clases, estado y nación en el Perú* (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos Ediciones, 1978).
14. As Schmitter et al. indicate, those administrations with a higher grade of bureaucratization, interventionism, and control are found in regions that have reached high levels of economic activity, associated with the extraction and exportation of minerals and agricultural products (Mexico, Peru, and, in a lesser measure, Brazil). We could perhaps suggest that the administrative machinery inherited from colonial times was more significant here, where the state apparatus played a greater role in the colonial economy. On the other hand, in other areas, which were at that time marginal (such as the Río de la Plata), the administrative machinery required by a pastoral, gathering, and only incipiently commercial economy was slight, for which reason its weight in the era of independence must have been comparatively minor. The topic of the colonial inheritance of the new nations has been treated, for the states of the region, by Stanley and Barbara Stein, *The Colonial Heritage of Latin America: Essays on Economic Dependence in Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970). An interesting comparative analysis with relation to Brazil and Colombia can be found in Fernando Uricoechea, "Formación y expansión del estado burocrático-patrimonial en Colombia y Brasil," in Eugene A. Havens et al., eds., *Metodología y desarrollo en las ciencias sociales* (Bogotá: CEDE, Universidad de los Andes, 1977).
15. The almost indiscriminate use of such terms as "state bureaucracy," "state organizations and institutions," "administrative and productive apparatus of the state," "public sector," only reflects the serious epistemological deficiencies that still characterize studies of this subject.
16. In addition to the various types of semi-state (mixed enterprises, "joint ventures," institutes with state and private patronage) and para-state (juntas, special commissions), one should consider various forms of reciprocal penetration on the part of civil and state actors, which range, for example, from the participation of the former in the councils of public organizations to direct control by the state of diverse aspects of the policy of private businesses.
17. For an analysis of these concepts and the suggestion of a research strategy based on

- the study of social issues, see Oscar Oszlak and Guillermo O'Donnell, "Estado y políticas estatales en América Latina: hacia una estrategia de investigación," Doc. CEDES/G.E. CLACSO/No. 4 (Buenos Aires, 1976).
18. Guillermo O'Donnell, "Apuntes."
  19. Those themes linked more directly with the state seen as a social relationship present a series of questions regarding the modes and mechanisms of representation and access to the state (e.g., political regime), consideration of which takes us away from our main object of analysis.
  20. A more extended discussion of these themes can be found in Oscar Oszlak, "Notas críticas para una teoría de la burocracia estatal," Doc. CEDES/G.E. CLACSO/No. 8 (Buenos Aires, 1977).
  21. This work, however, must be postponed until a sufficient number of studies make possible an interpretation less speculative than can be made at the present time.
  22. The quotation marks indicate that we are not necessarily referring to the foci that fall within structural-functionalism, but rather those—including those last-mentioned—that observe the activity of the state in terms of the fulfillment of tasks or functions. For a recent work that takes this viewpoint, see Marcos Kaplan, "El Leviathan criollo: estatismo y sociedad en la América Latina contemporánea," paper presented at the Congreso Latinoamericano de Sociología, Quito, Ecuador, 1977.
  23. A sufficiently mechanistic presentation in this sense is that in James W. Wilkie, *The Mexican Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970).
  24. This point presents the complex problem of the different meanings that a single issue can have for different social actors, which alters not only their respective positions toward the problem, but also the patterns of alliance and conflict that characterize the political system. Consideration of this problem is crucial to the analysis of concrete historical experiences.
  25. For this purpose there is various research, finished, planned, and in progress, that refers to different national cases. In a book that appeared recently, I gather some partial results of these investigations. See my *Ensayos sobre la formación histórica del estado en América Latina* (San José de Costa Rica: EDUCA, 1981).
  26. On the relationship between the independence of the Spanish colonies in Latin America and the beginnings of the process of the universalization of the state, see Henry Lefebvre, *De l'État dans le Monde Moderne* (Paris: Union General d'Éditions, 1976).
  27. I must recognize that the expression "colonial state" can be equivocal. For an interpretation that considers the Spanish empire as a simple extension of the monarchic state, see Arnaldo Córdoba, "Los orígenes del estado en América Latina," *CELA Cuaderno* no. 32 (México: Facultad de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales, 1977).
  28. Concerning the Latin American independence movements and their connection with the problems of national integration and the formation of the state, see Tulio Halperin Donghi, *The Aftermath of Revolution in Latin America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973); Leon Pomer, "Sobre la formación de los estados nacionales en la América Hispano-India," mimeographed. For the development of this theme in relation to specific national cases, see Edelberto Torres Rivas, "En torno a los problemas de la formación del estado: la experiencia centroamericana de 1821–1840," in Oscar Oszlak, *Ensayos*; Tulio Halperin Donghi, *Revolución y guerra* (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 1972; there is an English version published by Cambridge University Press); Fernando Uricoechea, "A Formação do Estado Brasileiro no Século XIX," *Dados*, no. 14 (1977); Julio Cotler, *Clases*; Anna Macias, *Génesis del gobierno constitucional en México: 1808–1820* (México: SepSetentas, 1973); and Carlos M. Vilas, "Notas para el estudio de la formación histórica del estado en la República Dominicana," in Oszlak, *Ensayos*.
  29. The purpose of these institutions—the majority inherited from the colonial period—was to assure supplies to the cities and the security of goods and persons; to provide various health and sanitation services, public works, and customs collections; and to administer justice and the public registry of certain transactions.
  30. See Tulio Halperin Donghi, *Historia contemporánea de América Latina* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1969) and Celso Furtado, *La economía latino-americana desde la conquista ibérica hasta la Revolución Cubana* (Santiago: Editorial Universitaria, 1969).

31. Compare Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Enzo Faletto, *Dependencia y desarrollo en América Latina* (Mexico: Siglo XXI, 1969). For the Argentine experience, see Roberto Cortés Conde and Ezequiel Gallo, *La formación de la Argentina moderna* (Buenos Aires: Paidós, 1967).
32. Furtado, *La economía*, p. 38.
33. Compare Fernando H. Cardoso, *O Estado na América Latina* (Rio de Janeiro: Paz y Terra, 1977). Also by the same author, *Estado y sociedad en América Latina* (Buenos Aires: Nueva Visión, 1972), pp. 236–37. A systematic interpretation of the Brazilian experience can be found in Fernando Uricoechea, *O Minotauro Imperial: A burocratização do estado patrimonial brasileiro* (Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo: Difel, 1978; English version, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980).
34. Cotler, *Clases*.
35. In particular, the already dense *dependencia* literature developed from the pioneering work of Cardoso and Faletto, Sunkel, Dos Santos, Frank, and others. For a recent criticism of this literature, which questions its interpretive value, see D. C. M. Platt, "Dependency in Nineteenth-Century Latin America: An Historian Objects," *LARR* 15, no. 1 (1980):113–30.
36. The concept of cellular domination is developed in Anderson, *Lineages*. As an interesting counterpoise to the concept of state domination, as it relates to an historical Latin-American experience, see Marcello Cavarozzi, "La etapa oligárquica de dominación burguesa en Chile," Documento CEDES/G.E. CLACSO/No. 7 (Buenos Aires: 1977).
37. It is interesting to observe that the conjunction of those problems was not casual but corresponded to a definite stage of historical development. In effect, if "order" as a necessity of social life already appears in the works of Plato, the idea of "progress" has a much more recent origin, which coincides with the beginnings of the industrial revolution and the spread of capitalism. On this point see J. B. Bury, *The Idea of Progress* (New York: Dover Publications, 1932). Also, the classic essay of Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957).
38. As E. Bradford Burns suggests, "Over the course of the century, the elites distilled a philosophical overview which approved European 'progress' in Latin American terms. Politically, they required order to implement it. Economically, they adopted capitalism. . . ." In "Ideology in Nineteenth-Century Latin American Historiography," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 58, no. 3 (August 1978). As we will see shortly, the consolidation of capitalism repeatedly presented, with different names and manifestations, the problems of "order" and "progress," so that these, in a certain manner, tended to become permanent tensions of this mode of social organization.
39. H. S. Ferns, *Gran Bretaña y Argentina en el Siglo XIX* (Buenos Aires: Solar-Hachette, 1968).
40. Albert O. Hirschman, "A Linkage Approach to Development," *Economic Development and Cultural Change* (in Spanish, *El Trimestre Económico*, 1977).
41. I refer to a study in progress on the formation of the Argentine state during the second half of the nineteenth century, the results of which will be published shortly.
42. The quotation marks indicate the ambiguous character of the term, its insufficiency for characterizing the forms of action of the state, and, above all, the false connotation of an answer or reaction that it suggests. As it is not easy to replace in the context of this discussion, I suggest that you at least be aware of its limitations.
43. On this last point, compare O'Donnell, "Apuntes."
44. This is not to imply, by any means, a mechanical relationship, since the nature of the mechanisms used can depend on various factors, from the degree of severity of the problem in question, the sectors affected, and the position of the state in regard to them, to less substantive considerations such as organizational modes, available technology and resources, etc.
45. This is connected to the idea of "bureaucratic rings" suggested by Cardoso in *Estado y sociedad*.