State and Nation Making in Latin America and Spain

State building as the development of institutional capacity has become a central topic of discussion in twenty-first-century social science. Many studies have shown that public institutions are an important (some would argue the most important) determinant of long-term rates of economic growth. In order to understand the difficulties and pitfalls of state building in the contemporary world, it is necessary to analyze previous efforts to consolidate institutional capacity in conflictive contexts. The present book provides a comprehensive analysis of the process of state and nation building in Latin America and Spain from independence to the 1930s. The book examines how Latin American countries and Spain tried to build modern and efficient state institutions for more than a century – without much success.

The chapters discuss key processes and challenges of state building. To what extent do historical legacies determine the capacity and reach of states? What are the obstacles to and paths toward the effective consolidation of public authority? How can states best design and create the institutions meant to provide the basic services now associated with citizenship? How can we put together notions of community that include diverse groups and cultures within a single identity, while also respecting the integrity of particular traditions? The Spanish and Latin American experience of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was arguably the first regional stage on which those organizational and political dilemmas that still haunt contemporary societies were faced. This book provides an unprecedented perspective on historical developments by closely following their connection to contemporary outcomes of state- and nation-building projects.

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Republics of the Possible

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For Guillermo O'Donnell (1936–2011)

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Preface

This book has been five years in the making. It originated with a sabbatical visit of Miguel A. Centeno to the University of Salamanca, where a years-long conversation with Agustin E. Ferraro began. From the first moment, we wondered why it was that the Latin American and Spanish states received such relatively small amounts of attention in the academic literature. Obviously, the experiences with authoritarian regimes and the transitions to democracy had been exhaustively discussed, but what about the more protean faces of democratic states: post offices, schools, police stations, census campaigns, and others? We came to the conclusion that the field needed an account of how the "state physiology" of these countries was formed, and we saw that many parallels in their historical paths made a comparative project between Spain and the Latin American countries viable and useful.

Whatever one's opinion regarding the depth and breadth of state involvement in daily life, there is no denying that the alternative to the state – the absence of an institutional organization of public life – will be rarely (if ever) a Rousseauian paradise. The Republic can be unjust and even despicable at times, but there seems to be no better alternative to having one. As we make clear in the following pages, we believe that in general, Latin America needs more state rather than less, and that Spain's experience shows that without strong, stable, and efficient public institutions, peace, justice, and the possibility of plenty become unattainable. We need to debate what states can and should do and how they should do it. Philosophical arguments over the issue of whether we need institutionalized political authority at all, however, are a luxury no one in the region can afford.

Our inspiration came essentially from two authors for whom we have great admiration and respect. The first is Eugen Weber. It says something about Weber that he could cover all the topics broached in his book *Peasants into Frenchmen* without the aid of twenty contributors, and that he could do so in much better prose than we could ever aspire to. Guillermo O'Donnell was invited to give the keynote to our first conference, and his work was a constant and fundamental source of inspiration for the whole project. Health problems

made it impossible for him to come and then led to his death as the book was being reviewed. All we can hope is that Guillermo would have liked the result, but we also know that he would have made it better.

We were very lucky to find such an outstanding group of collaborators. Anyone who has ever planned a series of conferences knows how difficult it can be to identify attendees and then count on them to produce solid scholarship and generous discussion. We received some no's to our initial queries, but mostly yeses and were delighted when practically everyone showed up at Princeton in the fall of 2009. By this time, the papers were already well developed and the meeting began to progress as much more of a bottom-up enterprise than we had hoped. The result was a much better conference than we could have imagined and much enthusiasm for a second meeting in Salamanca in 2011. Once again, we were very fortunate in the fact that most authors were able to attend the second conference, and in the quality of the conversations in one of the world's most beautiful cities. The contributors once again demonstrated great patience as we asked for further and further revisions and additions to the chapters and tried to find a publisher for a book that was quite long by today's standards.

It was again our extraordinary good luck to find Lew Bateman at Cambridge University Press. He has been a wonderful editor: supportive and insightful, firm and clear about the work that had to be done. The staff at Cambridge University Press and the associated indexing and copyediting teams have been outstanding, and we could not have asked for more. Many, many thanks to the Biblioteca Nacional de Colombia for permission to reproduce several of the watercolors created by the Chorographic Commission for its fascinating survey of Colombia in the nineteenth century. In preparing the conference at Princeton we had the very able and kind support of Jayne Bialkowski and also lots of help from Rosalia Rivera and Jillian Lenihan Halbe. For the conference in Salamanca we could count on the invaluable assistance of our young colleagues Inés Amézaga and María del Mar Rosón. Rachael Ferguson and Jessica Yiu helped us with the final preparation of the manuscript, and they allowed us to send the manuscript out in a reasonable time and manner and with very few mistakes, typos, and missing references.

Our home institutions have served as wonderful and generous hosts and deserve our heartfelt thanks. Financial support for the project came from Princeton University's Program in Latin American Studies and from the Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies. We particularly wish to thank the director of the program in Latin American Studies, Rubén Gallo, for being always very helpful and very supportive of the project. The Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation provided very generous funding for the meeting in Salamanca.

As always, our families deserve our ever-larger thanks for allowing us the luxury of spending so much time on an era so long ago and a place so far away. Deborah Kaple, Maya Centeno, and Alex Centeno have certainly heard too much about the state and the nineteenth century over the past few years and

have been patient with too many absences and distractions. The connection of Rachel Straus to some of the times and places where the project was carried out made it still more memorable and particularly dear to one of the editors. Sarah Ferraro and Ana Ferraro were extremely patient and supportive while having to bear still more absences from their father.