

Bringing War Back In

Bringing War Back In provides a new theory connecting war and state formation that incorporates the contingency of warfare and the effects of war outcomes in the long run. The book demonstrates that international wars in nineteenth-century Latin America triggered state-building, that the outcomes of those wars affected the legitimacy and continuity of such efforts, and that the relative capacity of states in this region today continues to reflect those distant processes. Combining comparative historical analysis with cutting edge social science methods, the book provides a comprehensive picture of state formation in nineteenth-century Latin America that is compelling for readers across disciplines, breathes new life into bellicist approaches to state formation, and offers a novel framework to explain variation in state capacity across the world.

LUIS L. SCHENONI is an Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science at University College London. His work on war and the state has been published, among others, by the American Journal of Political Science, the British Journal of Political Science, and International Security.

This is the most ambitious work on state formation to date. Schenoni's classical bellicist theory offers a refined universal model where state formation follows the rhythm of victories and defeats. He demonstrates that war made the state in Latin America as well.

– Victoria Hui (University of Notre Dame)

Hands down the best social science work I have read in some time. Theoretically ambitious and consequential, empirically savvy and persuasive, substantively rich and razor-sharp. A must-read for students of war and state-building and for everyone looking for exemplary social science.

– Stathis Kalyvas (University of Oxford)

“The disillusionment with democracy and the incidence of populism in Latin America today is tied to the weakness of state institutions there. This book provides a new and powerful explanation for how the continent ended up like this. The theory had broad implications for the world we are living in today.”

– James Robinson (University of Chicago) 2024 Nobel Prize in Economics

“This is a deep and brilliant analysis of the role of war in state building, not just in Latin America, but with wider implications for bellicist theory. Schenoni's focus on outcomes is a great innovation and provides critical insights into the links between military and political development. A very important and timely contribution.”

– Miguel Centeno (Princeton University)

“Schenoni draws on his mastery of comparative sociological analysis to examine how war outcomes shaped state formation in the region. Schenoni's study adds a valuable chapter to our knowledge of these dynamics in the modern world. His immense knowledge of Latin American history alone makes this a wonderful read.”

– Sidney Tarrow (Cornell University)

“Just when you thought there was little more to say about war and state building, along comes Bringing War Back In. Schenoni has written a truly impressive book that offers a host of insights on that important subject, and shows in great deal how war helped make the state in Latin America, a region where one might think that argument does not apply.”

– John J. Mearsheimer (University of Chicago)

“Schenoni goes beyond Tilly to Hintze and Weber, excavating classical bellicist theory to argue and demonstrate that it's war victory, not war preparation, that best explains state-building – and not simply because losers go extinct. In his empirical battle to revitalize bellicist theory in Latin America, Schenoni emerges similarly victorious.”

– Dan Slater (University of Michigan)

“Schenoni’s book is outstanding. Against most of the conventional wisdom, he shows that Latin America had many wars and often highly violent and consequential ones in the 19th century. Schenoni refines Tilly’s classic work by arguing that it is just the victors of intercountry war, not the losers, who embark on successful state building. The book is an exemplary model of multi-methods research.”

– Scott Mainwaring (University of Notre Dame)

Bringing War Back In

Victory, Defeat, and the State in Nineteenth-Century Latin America

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CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press & Assessment
 978-1-009-44215-2 — Bringing War Back In
 Luis L. Schenoni
 Frontmatter
[More Information](#)



CAMBRIDGE
 UNIVERSITY PRESS

Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom
 One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
 477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
 314-321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi – 110025, India
 103 Penang Road, #05-06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment, a department of the University of Cambridge.

We share the University's mission to contribute to society through the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781009442138

DOI: 10.1017/9781009442145

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When citing this work, please include a reference to the DOI 10.1017/9781009442145

First published 2024

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

NAMES: Schenoni, Luis L., author.

TITLE: Bringing war back in : victory, defeat, and the state in nineteenth-century Latin America / Luis L. Schenoni.

OTHER TITLES: Victory, defeat, and the state in nineteenth-century Latin America

DESCRIPTION: [New York] : Cambridge University Press, [2024] | Includes bibliographical references and index.

IDENTIFIERS: LCCN 2023053962 (print) | LCCN 2023053963 (ebook) | ISBN 9781009442138 (hardback) | ISBN 9781009442152 (paperback) | ISBN 9781009442145 (ebook)

SUBJECTS: LCSH: Latin America—Politics and government—1830-1948. | Politics and war—Latin America—History—19th century. | Nation-building—Latin America—History—19th century. | Latin America—History, Military—19th century.

CLASSIFICATION: LCC F1413 .S345 2024 (print) | LCC F1413 (ebook) |

DDC 980.03/4—dc23/eng/20240215

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2023053962>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2023053963>

ISBN 978-1-009-44213-8 Hardback

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War is father of all, and king of all. He renders some gods, others men; he makes some slaves, others free.

Heraclitus

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Preface

As a Latin American with a penchant for history, I always wanted to write a book that could summarize the conclusions of my considerable pondering about the region's past in a few brushstrokes. As a political scientist with Weberian influences, I tried to do so while contributing to our understanding of how war affects political development from the unique perspective that Latin America provides. *Bringing War Back In* is the result of these converging ambitions.

Although every attempt to synthesize the political history of entire regions in a single theoretical narrative is bound to fail, such simplifications are both inevitable and necessary. Paraphrasing my compatriot Jorge Luis Borges, it would be useless to draw a map of Latin America that reproduced the region in its exact size and shape. The key to social scientific knowledge is our ability to draw abstract yet informative conceptual maps that encapsulate the most important features of history, allowing others to navigate its vastness.

Bringing War Back In intends to draw such a simplified map of Latin American history. In doing so it unveils a pattern neglected by most: a pattern that shows that war made the Latin American state as we know it.

The goal of this book is illustrated by the cover. Wassily Kandinsky's *Sea Battle*, like history, is difficult to decipher even after a long examination. Only when the observer is pointed to the masts, the sails, and the cannon blasts, does the image fall into place. I hope this work will have a similar effect on my readers, most of whom have already been exposed to Latin American history: that once the role played by war is revealed, they will be unable to unsee it.

The handful of social science methods I use in *Bringing War Back In* uncover only a few patterns and colors of history. Overall I paint a rather abstract

picture of how war made the state in Latin America. A lot is missing. A lot is only sketched out. The merits of this fragmentary picture are to be decided, ultimately, by its capacity to provide a new framework and new ways of thinking about the problem of the state, both in Latin America and beyond.

Acknowledgments

As most other books, *Bringing War Back In* is the product of a long and exciting intellectual journey, which I started as a doctoral student at the University of Notre Dame, continued as a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Konstanz, and finished as a faculty member at University College London. Along the way, countless people offered their support, guidance, and encouragement, and I could easily devote as many words as this book contains to thank them.

Leading to a book there is always a serendipitous discovery. In my case it took place during a superb graduate course on the state taught by Victoria Tin-bor Hui. A student of Charles Tilly herself, and having shown how war made the state in historical China, Victoria challenged me to apply this theory to my own region back in the spring of 2017. The main ideas in this book emerged back then – albeit in very raw form – and benefited from three workshops at Notre Dame’s Political Science Department, as well as two generous grants by the Kellogg Institute. Among my esteemed colleagues on the Ph.D. program, Juan Albarracín, Omar Coronel, Laura Gamboa, Benjamín García Holgado, Camilo Nieto-Matiz, Ana Petrova, Natan Skigin, Lucía Tiscornia, and Jake Turner offered outstanding support. Ted Beatty, Michael Coppedge, Eugene Gholz, Jeffrey Harden, Scott Mainwaring, Virginia Oliveros, Victoria Paniagua, Joe Parent, Luis Schiumerini, Jazmin Sierra, and Guillermo Trejo are among the faculty members and visiting scholars who generously offered constructive criticism.

Eventually the project became my dissertation, and my committee members played a prominent role in its development. Michael Desch, the most bellicist of them all, was a great source of encouragement and wisdom. James Mahoney provided many of the intellectual foundations on which this book rests and a very high bar to measure my work against. Aníbal Pérez Liñán played a critical role in integrating the conceptual and methodological components of this book

and offered the valuable view of someone who, like myself, was born into Latin America and its history. To Victoria – who ended up on my committee as well – I owe the initial intellectual spark and the intuitions that guided my research. It is fitting that she carries the name of the state-making goddess inspiring this book. Finally, to my Ph.D. advisor, Gary Goertz, I owe a most special debt of gratitude for his dedicated mentorship and earnest friendship and for challenging me to produce an ambitious multi-method dissertation.

At some point the ideas in this book grew legs and ventured beyond the confines of the Notre Dame campus. I presented the argument at the Comparative Historical Social Science Conference at Northwestern University and the Institute for Qualitative and Multi-Method Research at Syracuse University in 2018, where Andrés Mejía Acosta, Nicolás Albertoni, Rodrigo Barrenechea, Robert Braun, Laura García, and Emilio Lehouq provided feedback that helped me prepare a first round of fieldwork at the National Archives in College Park. In early 2019 I continued the archival work at the British National Archives at Kew Gardens, thanks to Raúl Aldaz's hospitality.

In parallel, I started a series of travels to archives in Latin America. In a 2018 visit to the Catholic University of Chile, I was kindly hosted by Francisco Urdinez and benefited from conversations with him and Joaquín Fernandois, María Huidobro, Nicole Jenne, Sabine Kurtenbach, Detlef Nolte, José Frank Ragas, Carsten-Andreas Schulz, Elvira Lopez Taverne, and Pablo Whipple. In a 2019 visit to the University of São Paulo and the Getúlio Vargas Foundation, I was welcomed by Matias Spektor and Pedro Feliú and received valuable insights from them and from Eduardo Mello, Umberto Mignozzetti, Amancio Oliveira, Janina Onuki, Oliver Stuenkel, and Paula Vedoveli. Later in that same year, I gave talks at the Monterrey Institute of Technology and the Center for Research and Teaching in Economics (CIDE), where Gabriel Aguilera López, Juan Carlos Cobián, Ignacio Irazuzta, Pablo Kalamantovitz, Gerardo Maldonado, and Lorena Ruano provided encouraging comments.

Argentina was a frequent destination throughout the project. I visited my hometown, Buenos Aires, every year from 2019 to 2022, and each year I presented a different chapter at either Torcuato Di Tella University or the University of San Andrés. There I received insightful comments from Victoria Baratta, Juan Battaleme, Ariel Coremberg, Jennifer Cyr, Sebastián Etchemendy, Germán Feierherd, Carlos Freytes, Jorge Garzón, Carlos Gervasoni, Marcelo Leiras, Ignacio Mamone, Oscar Oszlak, Francisco Santibañez, Andrés Schipani, Hayley Stevenson, and Javier Zelaznik, among many others.

Clearly, being in frequent contact with Latin American scholars was key to ponder on their views, and spending time in libraries across the region was necessary to properly represent the rich historiography of these countries. Yet a series of presentations at the Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung, the University of Oxford, and Salamanca University provided opportunities to cross the pond as well. In those occasions great feedback from David Doyle, Agustín Ferraro, Ezequiel González Ocantos, Macartan Humphreys, Naomi

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Ichino, Frederike Louise Kelle, Francisco Sánchez, Mariano Torcal, and Michael Zürn convinced me that *Bringing War Back In* had to engage with the European conversation as well.

The postdoc I started in 2020 at the University of Konstanz provided just this opportunity and a unique chance to reengage the scholarship of Otto Hintze, Max Weber, and their contemporaries. There I received support from a Young Scholar grant for the development of this book. Lorenz Ade, Carsten Heine, Camila Montero, Gabriel Schroeder, and Hannes Zehnle helped greatly with data collection during those years, and Leslie Fischer was essential for a review of the scholarship of those classical bellicist theorists.

As I worked on classical bellicist theory, I also presented my work at the German Institute for Global and Area Studies – where I received valuable feedback from Belén Gonzalez, Felix Haass, Desiree Reder, Adam Scharpf, Christian von Soest, and Eric Stollenwerk – and the London School of Economics, the University of Oxford, and Cambridge University. My gratitude goes to Chris Alden, Toby Dodge, Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni, Anna Getmansky, Francesca Lessa, Giovanni Mantilla, Eduardo Posada Carbó, Diego Sanchez Ancochea, Jason Sharman, Karen Smith, and Peter Trubowitz for their insights.

Eventually I joined the Department of Political Science at University College London (UCL), where my colleagues Rod Abouharb, Kristin Bakke, Inken von Borzyskowski, Zeynep Bulutgil, Nils Metternich, Neil Mitchell, Katerina Tertychnaya, and Manuel Vogt saved this book from intellectual fatigue with their fresh insights and camaraderie. They were the third stroke of luck that I needed to wrap up the project. At UCL I also benefited from a British Academy grant, two departmental grants, and the work of my research assistants, Pablo Torres and Carolina Zacatto. In this final phase I presented these ideas at the Institut Barcelona d'Estudis Internacionals, Université Laval, the University of California in San Diego, and Radboud University. Among others, Andrea Bianculli, Erik Gartzke, Matthew Singer, Matthias Vom Hau, and Nina Wiesehomeier offered valuable feedback on those occasions.

Several chapters and analyses that now form part of the book were presented at multiple meetings, including those of the American Political Science Association (APSA) and the Latin American Studies Association (LASA) between 2019 and 2023, as well as at the 2021 Midwest Political Science Association (MPSA) meeting. Juan Pablo Balán, Lars-Erik Cederman, Rafael Ch, Sebastián Mazzuca, Karl Müller-Crepon, Victoria Murillo, Oriol Sabaté, Juan Pablo Scarfi, Jan Teorell, and Alex Weisiger offered valuable feedback. Esteban Alfaro Salas, Nicolas Beckmann, Manuel Cabal, Miguel Centeno, Paul Diehl, Douglas Lemke, Tom Long, Camilo López Burian, Andrés Malamud, Victor Mijares, Andrew Owsiak, Hillel Soifer, Nicolás Somma, and Arturo Valenzuela, among others, also contributed significantly to the development of the book through email exchanges and conversations. In this regard, I would like to thank Raúl Madrid especially. After many conversations throughout

the years, Raúl and I have collaborated in building a Latin American Revolts Dataset (LARD), which we are now expanding with Guillermo Kreiman and Paola Galano Toro and could be partly incorporated into the empirics of this final manuscript. At the last stages the book also benefited greatly from the input of my commissioning editor, Rachel Blaifeder, and the copyediting of Catherine Dunn.

To conclude, I would like to thank my family. My parents, Graciela and Luis Eduardo, always encouraged me to pursue my vocation and provided unwavering support throughout this journey. Together with my younger brother and best friend, Mariano, they were a sturdy anchor in the midst of raging storms. Although they would have preferred to have me around for the Sunday *asado*, they selflessly encouraged my adventures and dreams every step of the way. This book is dedicated to them.