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Edited by Miguel Angel Centeno and Fernando López-Alves:
The Other Mirror: Grand Theory through the Lens of Latin America

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INTRODUCTION

Miguel Angel Centeno and Fernando López-Alves

ACADEMIC LUMPERS and splitters are rarely seen together. The first seek widespread patterns with which to generate a universal model of human behavior, while the second emphasize the concrete specifics of singular empirical realities. While lumpers cavort among the wide areas of relatively thin knowledge, splitters take comfort in the depth and sturdiness of specialization. Only in a Borges story could one imagine a debate about which was a "better beast," the fox or the hedgehog. Yet communication across academic species too often consists of methodological sniping and theoretical disdain. Grand visionaries scoff at bean counters, and archival specialists scorn generalizations.

We believe that without having to compromise their academic principles, lumpers and splitters can learn a great deal from each other. Both as members of our respective disciplines and as students of a particular region, we are especially interested in promoting this dialogue between social science and Latin American studies. Over the past two decades, we have seen the scanty references to Latin America practically disappear from the leading political science and sociology journals. It is also true that the regional and area studies literature rarely addresses the major questions of our disciplines.[1]

We have edited this volume in order to promote a dialogue between our different academic halves. The essays engage in a dialectic between universal theory and specific history. They are meant not as yet another imperial claim to knowledge but as an expansion of the number of empirical cases considered relevant. We are not proposing a "Latin American" theory to supplant a "European" one. Rather, we merely wish to encourage including a greater variety of cases that may produce a better and truly generalizable map of the social world. We offer Latin America as "another mirror" that reflects new variations of classical theoretical themes. We hope the book will spark a wider debate about the origin and utility of historical models in general and also generate more accurate and theoretically rich representations of Latin America in particular.

The chapters in this volume conclude that grand theory, in order to remain such, needs to incorporate narratives and empirical data different from the realities that inspired its original formulation. We believe that theory should be able to adjust to these different realities in flexible ways. After all, by definition, the incorporation of new empirical evidence

constitutes part of what theory is designed to do. We have learned not only that the Latin American experience was different from that of Europe but also that the analysis of that region's reality often differed from the conceptualization used by current grand theoretical formulations focusing on institutions and societal behavior. A central part of a future research agenda must include methods by which we can enrich grand theory without destroying its noble aims. By incorporating Latin America—and other areas outside Europe—we can begin presenting their experiences in the language we customarily speak when making larger comparative generalizations.

Similarly, the study of theoretical classics has taught us the limitations of contemporary efforts to understand Latin America's historical trajectory of political power and economic development.[2] Latin American studies as a field of research needs to recover a middle ground between the detailed analytic narrative and broad speculation on methodology and identity. This middle range seeks to define and test theoretical propositions regarding the various aspects of social, political, and economic life through a comparative framework. It looks for inspiration to a group of authors who have asked larger questions than can be universally established, but whose scope still allows for empirical investigation. What factors help explain differences in economic development? What role does the state play in the economy and the polity? How do states develop the capacity to rule? Whom do these states serve? What kind of obedience and loyalty do they elicit? Similar to many other regional specialties, Latin American studies has tended to concentrate on either international or local issues, with less attention paid to national questions. Our dialogue between grand theory and Latin America has pointed to the need for more serious work at the intermediate level, where the basic rules of authority and exchange are negotiated and established.

The next section places this enterprise in the specific context of Latin American studies. The section after that discusses how the chapters offer valuable lessons to academic foxes seeking generalizable and comparative claims. The one after reverses pedagogical roles and asks how this wider perspective can improve Latin American studies. Following some general conclusions, a final section describes the structure of the book.

Looking for a Latin American Vision

If the "cultural turn" of much of contemporary social science has taught us anything, it is that the production of knowledge is often circumstantial and constrained by institutional and social boundaries. The social sciences, and especially those dealing with comparative historical work, are

still dominated by a predominently European and North American perspective. The result is that our most general models of political and social development are based primarily on a very small set of cases of questionable relevance to the contemporary world. While history may perhaps suffer less from this confusion than the social sciences, we are all used to assumptions that peasant means French, state means Germany, revolution means Russia, and democracy means Westminster.[3]

We would be less concerned with this situation if the empirical models replacing regional specializations were truly generalizable. But, as in the case of "globalization," for instance, the abandonment of local references has meant not an integration of many countries' experiences but the domination of scholarly discussions by a limited set of cases. Instead of replacing area studies with a wider comparative framework, as would be most desirable, we have increasingly restricted our study to a few empirical references masquerading as universals. In other words, as important as 1688, 1789, and 1870 may be for Europe,[4] we want to argue that 1521, 1810, 1852, and 1889 may be more critical for Latin America. The inclusion of these dates in the comparative almanac will lead to a more accurate understanding of historical processes.

Since its inception as part of the global economy in the sixteenth century, Latin America has looked elsewhere for models to understand and imagine itself or to emulate. The early philosophers of independence were inspired by the triumph of the European Enlightenment and later by the American and French Revolutions. Rare voices sought to imagine a Latin America defined in its own terms and by its own capabilities and limitations. The independence of the continent partially originated in events outside it. The countries imagined by independence leaders had little to do with the areas they inhabited and much more to do with their personal bibliographies or travels abroad; San Martín looked to Europe, while Bolívar searched north for inspiration. In most cases, the United States was the model used both to design many of the subsequent political creations and to judge their success. Few of the more localized (and indigenist) visions of independence survived the process.

The search for external models continued throughout the nineteenth century. Imitation was arguably more of a liberal habit than a conservative one. Conservatives sought their inspiration in an idealized past. Liberals, on the other hand, sought their political inspiration in Washington and their economic models in Manchester; the "Hausmannization" of practically every capital on the continent is the most concrete manifestation of their ideological triumph. Of course, some voices spoke against external emulation,[5] but the angle of view remained northward.

The collapse of liberalism in the interwar years generated perhaps the first "homegrown" regime model. While clearly influenced by both the

Popular Front Left and fascism, Latin American corporatist populism had indigenous ingredients and sought to formulate answers clearly linked to the nature of the economic, political, and social problems they were meant to solve. Yet, with some individual exceptions, this interlude lasted no more than twenty years, and by the 1950s Latin America was once again seeking to emulate other places and be other things than itself. Modernization theory represents perhaps the most explicit attempt to establish a particular historical trajectory as a universal standard. Its various manifestations stipulated a need for Latin America to transform either its culture or its history to follow more closely a British or North American model. While it had fewer adherents on the Latin American continent than outside, the theory nevertheless helped shape many of the development and political policies of the 1950s and 1960s.

In many ways, this period also served as an inspiration for *dependencia*, which is probably Latin America's most important contribution to social science theory. Yet while producing its own version of history, Latin America focused its intellectual attention on centers and actors outside the continent. Even in its more sophisticated guises, dependency theory saw Latin America as a practically passive actor in its own underdevelopment. Note was taken of what Latin America *did not have*, such as a nationalist bourgeoisie or dirigiste states. While conceived as a response to modernization theory, *dependencia* repeated the same "metadiscourse" of looking for the answers to Latin America's problems in its difference from an unstated standard.

The last twenty years have seen a return to the application of external models with neoliberalism's rise to hegemonic status. The Thatcher and Reagan revolutions and the collapse of the Soviet block firmly established the notion that there was no alternative to liberal markets and democracy. Certainly the idea of a Latin American "third way" is no longer taken seriously, nor is the last vestige of a previous alternative, Cuba. Globalization has taken the process of external orientation to its ultimate form—there is no longer an "inside" or a "local," only a universalized "global" order.

Efforts to challenge this vision are of more than purely academic concern. Work on the importance of ideas has more than adequately demonstrated that the manner in which we view the world plays an immense role in determining whether we choose to change it and how we seek to interact with it. A Latin America understood through European or North American eyes is not an accurate representation—not because Eurocentric spectacles are worse than any other but simply because they are shaped by assumptions foreign to the continent. As we see in the following chapters, notions of state, property, or race are not necessarily universal. What may be understood as the natural basis for political power, for example, may remain an illusory goal for nations on the continent. What

may appear as the most normal forms of social regulation may assume different shapes in Latin America. Since the names we give to things help define them, inappropriate labeling using alien categories can and will lead to critical misreadings. The imposition of academic models, much like that of their policy counterparts, rarely succeeds. Even if they prove to be useful or productive, they need to be tempered in a debate with those visions arising from local conditions. It is the formulation of the latter that this book hopes to encourage.

Using the Wrong Lenses: What Latin America Can Teach Grand Theory

Without engaging in the provincialism against which Alan Knight's chapter in this volume aptly warns us, we wish to emphasize how the local should help redefine the supposedly universal. (We will address the reverse relationship in the next section.) This is not an argument for the specificities of case studies or historical pedantry, but for the need to continually adapt and improve scholarly generalizations. The chapters in this book emphasize a series of problems that are perhaps endemic to any attempt to formulate generalizable claims. Yet the specific experience of Latin America can teach us more than to simply mind our history.

Latin American studies offer macrosociology lessons in contextuality, contingency, and relationality. By the first we mean a greater awareness of the specific circumstances of the institutions that are the subject of macrotheoretical formulations. The laws of the state, the negotiations of the market, and the mental constructs of daily life arise in different ways and have different manifestations under different conditions. Our argument for conditionality is a repudiation of directionality or teleology in historical processes. If successful states and economies are all alike (questionable in itself), each failure has its own story. By calling for a relational approach, we hope to persuade students of historical processes to be more aware of the often critical role played by each society's structure of domestic and international relations. States at war, for instance, will develop in different ways than those whose existence is not threatened, and utilization of resources will depend on who is in charge.

Oftentimes, much grand theorizing and analysis in the social sciences focuses on a subject of study without proper consideration of where and how it fits into a larger social context. The concept of "holding all other things equal" blinds us to the interaction effects that surround any shift in a social condition. It may be obvious that no social phenomenon exists in a vacuum, but much theorizing assumes this is possible. Various authors in this volume rightly emphasize the contextual aspects of economic

development and the role of politics; rules naturally reflect the economic, social, and political relations under which they were written. Position within a global, domestic, or local structure of power and privilege has significant consequences for the manner in which actions are judged and controlled. Attempts to divorce the understanding of institutions from that of social structure will result in fundamental misconstructions. These concerns are of particular interest in contemporary Latin America. The imposition of a neoliberal model often assumes that classic liberal institutions (in the widest sense of the word) already exist, and that they can tame the more predatory aspects of the market. In the absence of a working system of laws, however, theoretically productive competition and self-interest become chaos and plunder.[6]

According to Jeremy Adelman, for example, efforts to narrate and explain the Latin American past have included a number of hidden assumptions about the institutions that they examine. He concludes that institutions do not purely emerge from the bedrock of that special set of claims that we usually call "property rights." Ideology and problems of collective action do intrude. Politics acquires a special status in rule making. The distribution of power cannot be ignored. The conflicts between inclusive and exclusive forms of rule that, according to Adelman, characterize most of the history of Latin America are surely far from being apolitical. Thus, grand theory must always take into account the particular contextual forces that helped shape the construction of what appear to be representatives of universal institutions.

Stretching concepts or inappropriately applying descriptive terms with heavy historical and connational baggage is pervasive in the social sciences. For all the benefits to be had in defining a common language, we have to take into account associated costs in empirical validity. We too often assume that things called by the same name are identical or fulfill the same roles—an assumption that leads to a variety of mistakes. For example, Paul Gootenberg and Fernando López-Alves discuss how *late development* and *state* meant very different things in Latin America than in Eastern Europe or postwar East Asia. The timing of industrialization and the absence of geopolitical competition produced a very different form of industrial capitalism than Bismarckian, Meiji, or Stalinist "catch-ups." Militaries and their conflicts also played different roles. Tilly's state-making wars represent a very different form of organized violence than that seen in Latin America. Similarly, the existence of certain institutions, be they prisons or markets, does not necessarily imply that they do the same things, or do them in the same way, as their counterparts in other regions.

Nowhere is the importance of recognizing the intellectual specificity of concepts clearer than in the realm of that supposedly most universal of

sciences, economics. Veronica Montecinos and John Markoff strongly argue against treating economic policies and their intellectual roots as if they arose from a vacuum. Shifts in policy priorities and models cannot be understood by allusion to a utilitarian adaptation to changing circumstances. We need references to transformations in both the intellectual roots of the economics discipline and the role played by its practitioners. Economic policy making is embedded in a set of transnational networks, of cultural biases, of scholarly paradigms, and of political openings that have to be articulated historically. A history of ideas (and of their subsequent implementation) written out of context is nonsense.

Similar concerns apply to the application of other social science models and concepts. Marxist structural analysis, for example, has faced many problems in Latin America. Political parties and interest groups in the continent did not mirror their European counterparts and did not fully express, as in Europe, class cleavages. Likewise, nation building in Latin America did not represent the victory of capitalism over feudal legacies, while in most of Europe, republican rule did. And in Latin America, the consolidation of the republican state did not express powerful class alliances connected to industrialization, as it did in Europe.

Few theories have been as "stretched" as Barrington Moore's ideas, and Samuel Valenzuela focuses on the adequacy of this framework in light of the Chilean historical record. Conservative landowners and legislators, rather than Moore's liberal bourgeois sectors, championed democratic reform in Chile. Democracy in Chile was the product neither of a bourgeois revolution nor of working-class pressures. On closer examination, the leadership that pressed for democratic reform consisted of precisely those who, given their class backgrounds, should have been antidemocratic. Of equal importance, class analysis cannot account for the battle over state-church relations, which in Chile played a profound role in creating the pressures leading to democratic reform.

Closer attention to a specific set of cases also might reveal inherent problems in the very definition of concepts. Nationalism, as Claudio Lomnitz makes clear, comes in various strands, and the very notion of nation can mean many things. Miguel Centeno, in turn, discusses the major problems with the notion of discipline, including difficulties in measurement, application after the fact, and sheer ambiguity. Both chapters emphasize the problems inherent in creating general social concepts derived from singular historical narratives.

A related problem with comparative analysis and grand theory in general is the failure to specify the functions associated with the social phenomena under study. State capacity is certainly one of the most popular objects of comparative analysis. Yet we too rarely ask, "capacity to do what?" The forms of political control required to defend a particular

policy, a social interest group, or a mafia-like predation are quite different, and subsequently our discussion should take account of such differences. In his chapter Alan Knight discards some well-known theories of the state and reviews a number of paradigms to understand the evolution of the Mexican state. He notes correspondences and discrepancies between theory and empirical reality, setting out a broad framework of analysis comprising relative strength and autonomy.

The importation of new cases will do much more, however, than merely caution theorists and comparativists to tread more carefully. It also can contribute to the substantive development of such theories and comparisons by suggesting not only new wrinkles but also new causalities and outcomes. This requires that nonstandard cases not be treated as conceptual outliers that need not concern readers. When Latin America does appear in general discussions of comparative history or grand theory, it is most often as the negative counterfactual. As several authors note, the Black Legend of Latin American failures to develop economic and political institutions is elaborate and deeply ingrained in our disciplinary heritages. Yet little effort is expended in explaining these breakdowns, malfunctions, and disappointments or even analyzing whether they were indeed failures. Why not treat Latin America as simply an alternative development, with its own probabilities and variances? The inclusion of these cases will amplify the range of outcomes considered possible and make explaining this range (rather than reaching some historical end point) the main goal of theorizing. Imagining a standard outcome, no matter how unconsciously, reduces comparative analysis to medical diagnosis. Our job is not to find what is "wrong" with a patient but to understand how the body works. For that, we need a much larger sample than has been generally available.

Latin American references point out the idiosyncrasy of European and North American institutional development. Those societies (and their theorists) tend to assume that institutions capable of guarding property rights, enforcing discipline, instilling nationalism, and fighting wars would develop in a relatively linear fashion. The Latin American experience should make students of Europe and North America even more curious about why they enjoyed this institutional development. We might well ask, as did many of the founding authors of our disciplines, how did the "West" triumph?[7] This time, the question could be posed without the cultural chauvinism that once characterized it, but with a better informed empirical appreciation of a phenomenon's rarity and a theoretical recognition of its complexity.

An awareness of multiple outcomes combined with an appreciation of singular complexities would produce a less deterministic brand of theory and one that wrestled with historical conjecture. The difference between

asking, "How do states grow?" and "What set of conditions produce what kind of states?" is crucial. The first assumes not only an outcome but also, because of the inherent specific reference, a set of underlying conditions. The second phrasing accepts the multiplicity of conditions and developments and allows for a more precise definition of significant factors. Similarly, to ask how peasants and landlords may have contributed to democratic governance is to assume that these categories have a universality devoid of the relationships between them. The key factor is not the essential qualities of owning or working land but the relationships that link one social position to the other.

Adding to the relevant set of cases improves our chances for identifying the significant attributes of political and economic development by increasing the variance found among both dependent and independent variables. Comparative efforts that implicitly or explicitly limit themselves to Europe or North America deny consideration of the importance of social phenomena that are uniform on the Latin American continent. These chapters here implicitly suggest two characteristics that tend to distinguish Latin America and pose the most interesting challenges to a general understanding of the rise of the contemporary world.

The first of these is the issue of race. Unlike Europe and even much more so than the United States, Latin American societies live with a permanent internal division that was codified in innumerable laws and supported by daily customs and assumptions. On rereading the social science classics, one notices that even those authors who recognized class divisions still tended to treat the societies in question as organic wholes. One could even say that the great success of the nation-state in Europe was to create precisely such a phenomenon by the twentieth century. But what of societies where such divisions have not disappeared? The Latin American experience indicates how much of subsequent history depends on the critical starting condition of ethnic or racial homogeneity.

According to Lomnitz, for example, Anderson's notion of "deep horizontal camaraderie" does not capture the experience of Latin America. Lomnitz proposes to resolve what he sees as the most fundamental problem with Anderson's definition of nationalism—that is, its (false) expectation of fraternity—by looking at "bonds of dependence" rather than bonds of fellowship. The nation turns out to be a community conceived as full comradeship only among full citizens, which explicitly excludes the disenfranchised. Unlike European experiences, the first phase of the formation of Latin American nationalism in the colonies starts with colonization. The way in which the new states of the nineteenth century dealt with this legacy profoundly shaped their sense of nation. Cultural bonds were not strong enough in terms of the construction of "the nation," and the Latin American variant of nationalism emerged

from "highly unstable" formulations during the early postcolonial period.

The economic and political consequences of this colonization represent the second major challenge to comparative and historical theories. Recent work in mainstream sociology is of obvious relevance here. Mustafa Emirbayer, who arguably has done the most to push such discussions to the forefront of theoretical debates, has argued for a "relational perspective" that sees persons, for example, as "inseparable from the transactional contexts within which they are embedded."[8] Such contexts are not static or categorical but instead involve the dynamic development of relations between people and within societies. Social phenomena can no longer be treated as products of static essentialist qualities. Instead, we should emphasize much more the causal role played by the relations between the various actors under study. While the recent calls for a "relational perspective" have focused on microprocesses, a similar approach could apply to more macrosociological analyses. The relational context under which Latin American states developed and their economies grew was radically different from that found in the standard cases. By taking into account such different relations and the very different outcomes, we can better appreciate the specific contributions of institutional characteristics and contexts.

Even those not wishing to accept dependency analysis in its entirety recognize the importance of more than three hundred years of colonial history and a further two centuries of often disadvantageous dealings with the rest of the globe. Latin America's economic alternatives were at least partly constrained by its history and relationships. Stress on individual rational behavior as a sufficient and necessary condition of long-term development fails to capture the paradoxical features of the region's economic experience: well-endowed with resources and largely free of traditional fetters on market activity, Latin American performance remained at best uneven. The Latin American experience with development cannot be divorced from the pattern of transactions the region established with the world system. Similarly, the geopolitical context of Latin America was radically different from that of Europe and the United States. With relatively little intraregional competition and a legacy of external control, states developed with radically different agendas than in other areas. Theoretical analyses of European and North American developments or even more general treatments of comparative historical questions such as the rise of the state need to take into account where societies fit into a geographic and historical framework and how these positions, more than intrinsic qualities, help explain outcomes.

What Latin America offers comparative analysis and grand theory is thus not a rejection of the possibility of universal claims but a broader

base from which to make these. As discussed earlier, the practically monopolistic position of a set of Western European and North American cases within the comparative-historical canon has reduced the scope of possible comparisons. It has removed potentially critical variables from the analysis and has supported neglect of the transactional and relational contexts in which institutions develop. To expand the empirical scope of our research is not to replace generalizable theory with particularistic narrative. None of the authors suggest that we abandon theory—their affection and respect for the attempts herewith described are obvious. As the next section makes clear, Latin American studies needs the analytic signposts that grand theory provides. As believers in "inductive theorizing," we cannot but feel that the challenge of more cases will only generate better theory.

A Clearer Vision: What Latin America Can Learn from Grand Theory

If Latin America's "difference" has something to add to these theories, the classics also have much to say to Latin Americanists. The chapters in this book highlight several themes that in one way or another have been relatively neglected in the field. Perhaps more important, they also point out approaches that might benefit Latin American studies. Regional specialists have much to learn from colleagues across disciplinary lines. Scholarship on Latin America may be booming, and the quality and quantity of our knowledge about practically every social phenomenon and institution have never been better. But, other than dependency theory, the field has not produced an articulate theoretical paradigm.[9]

Renewed emphasis on economic development and institutions underlines the importance of middle-range theory. From this perspective, the current methodological and epistemological drift of theoretical work in Latin American studies offers little hope of a real conceptual advance. As disparate as their selection of authors, themes, and empirical references, the chapters in this book can help us reframe the classic problem of social order in Latin America. (By *order* we mean the assumed understanding that institutionalized rules will be both imposed and obeyed in a standard and universalized way.) What distinguishes the Latin American experience is that despite considerable economic development and an independent political history of nearly two hundred years, the classic nineteenth-century problem of chaos and institutional weakness remains. We are struck by the consistent failure of an elite to establish a stable, hegemonic, and effective domination. The continued existence of pockets of resistance to formal authority implies some institutional dwarfism. And while

this apparent failure was the subject of considerable discussion at earlier stages,[10] we feel that it has been abandoned of late. Interestingly, the neoliberal message of a state overwhelming civil society appears to have been accepted by much of the academic left when, we would argue, it is the very absence of that state that may best explain the conditions of subaltern populations.

We would argue that part of the reason for the continental marginality in our professional disciplines is that the study of Latin America as a whole has been generally much more case driven than theory driven.[11] Rare is the book that begins with a large macro question divorced from the peculiarities of the field. Borrowing from Tilly's categories, Latin Americanists have privileged the "individualizing comparison in which the point is to contrast specific instances of a given phenomenon as a means of grasping the peculiarities of each case."[12] When theoretical concerns arise, they often are of such an abstract nature (e.g., epistemological puzzles or discourses on sources of identity) as to make systematic comparative analysis practically impossible. Perhaps this is an understandable concern with the peculiarities of their sample. Yet, note that those who work on the U.S. or European cases exclusively feel no need to treat them as isolated cases, viewing them instead as fully legitimate sites for tests of universal propositions. We may not wish to repeat such errors, but we may be inspired by the ambition.

Three structural characteristics may help to explain this atheoretical trend. First, while social scientists often took the lead in the early development of Latin American studies, now the field is increasingly dominated by historians whose professional training inherently suspects generalizable claims and who tend to wear their hedgehog identities with pride.[13] Second, specialization by time and region has become the standard in all academic fields, including ours. This has obviously produced a much richer understanding of the subjects of study. In some guises this specialization also became the most productive theoretical area, but it has come at the cost of the sweeping essay (à la Morse),[14] systemic comparison (Johnson),[15] and grand continental narrative (Burns).[16] These efforts sacrificed specificities for grander theoretical claims of patterns and causalities.[17] Finally, in part because of the limited resources available to Latin American states, in part because of intellectual fashion in the field, we have often lacked the kind of reliable data required by sophisticated quantitative techniques that dominate most of the disciplinary journals. Simply put, we lacked the forms of facts that rigorous theory testing requires.

Of course, simply adopting a theory will not solve these problems. In fact, too close an adherence to a single paradigm may stifle scholarship.

Paul Gootenberg argues that Gerschenkron's impact was eclipsed by the regional dependency school and that this stifled much needed questioning of the forms of economic dysfunction that pervaded the relevant societies. Deep-rooted historical traditions within the region, in addition to the ideologically charged 1960s and 1970s, managed to drive out Gerschenkron's pivotal metaphors from the imagery and conceptualization of Latin American development. Similarly, Jorge Domínguez charges that ideological discomfort prevented the wider utilization of a Huntingtonian perspective that might have better informed political analysis. Too often, it seems, "theory" in Latin American studies has meant a hegemonic model that did not allow for comparative debate. The poststructural habit of questioning the hidden ideological biases behind supposedly objective views of the world has perhaps infected our field too much. While such caution is warranted (and part of this book is predicated on such concerns), we need to stop associating a theory or its proponent with the evils under study. To consider the state worthy of analysis does not make one authoritarian, and to study political parties does not imply that they are all one needs for democracy.

The authors discussed in this volume should give us the courage to overcome the epistemological distress that has gripped all of the social sciences but has been particularly strong in Latin American studies.[18] The impossibility of knowing, or of using that knowledge constructively, the propensity to tell someone's story as appropriation and exploitation—all of the many self-indulgent habits of poststructuralism are to be seen in Latin American studies. The awareness of the limitations of our enterprise, the sensitivity to the inherent elitism of scientific analysis, and the guilt from our situation of privilege have frozen far too much of the field in a state of intellectual paralysis. Our awareness of the limitations of any speech may soon prevent us from saying anything at all. In addition, the strong awareness of our too often dark reality has precluded us from seeing different shades or even brighter lights. At times, the delayed entry of Realpolitik into Latin American studies and the return to the influence of leaders and individuals to explain politics and institutions have produced a positivist overreaction or too strong incursions into rational choice theory.[19] Our fear is that Latin American studies will devote less and less time to knowing something, and more and more to debates about how we know it or should prove it. We simply know too little about too much to afford to engage in such luxuries. This is not to argue against the importance of epistemological or methodological debates, but to wonder if given the massive holes in our basic knowledge of the continent, we might not use our resources more wisely. We believe that one way to accomplish this and at the same time improve our grasp on methodology

is to compare the way we work, and the paradigms we often use, with the approaches of other scholars working on areas constructed by different intellectual traditions.

The themes left unexplored by much work on Latin American studies also make us wonder if the pendulum has perhaps swung too far in the direction of nonelites and social history. As any perusal of the new book lists of major publishers will attest, the most dynamic sector in Latin American studies is that which seeks detailed social knowledge of the poor and marginalized. While not arguing for a return to a whiggish past, we join others in wondering if more attention should not be paid to those who, for better or worse, make decisions, to organizations that define policies, and to those who implement them.

Specifically, these chapters encourage Latin Americanists to rediscover development, perhaps the most salient theme of the field during much of the past century yet one that has been sadly neglected in the last decade. Partly in response to the triumphalism of neoliberalism ("there are no more issues to discuss"), partly as a response to the difficulties of the past twenty years ("why speak about what cannot be?"), Latin American studies apparently has abandoned the study of the political economy of development. As we do in this volume, one can look far and wide to discover a significant new work that would follow in the lines of Polanyi or Gerschenkron. Other chapters remind us that the current dominant narrative of all-encompassing markets is neither new nor historically accurate. Those who studied the development of Europe and North America have previously challenged notions of self-regulating markets and societies. Laissez-faire has never really existed for Polanyi, for example, because the state has been "fundamental" in creating property rights and institutions that regulate market transactions and, ultimately, capitalist growth. Steve Topik suggests that this applies nicely to market-state relations in nineteenth-century Latin America, where weak states nonetheless played intrusive economic and social roles. As in those cases, Latin America's economy is embedded in a particular historically complex social system and needs to be studied as such. It is precisely this sensitivity to historical creation of institutions that makes theorists such as Polanyi an attractive model for future theorizing about the continent.

Institutions do matter—not as repositories of unchanging cultural legacies but as evolving creations of economic, political, and social developments. Various chapters attempt to resuscitate the study of institutions from both the culturalist determinism of the "Black Legend" and the scholasticism and jingoism of the traditional *historia patria*. Others argue that several institutions that played a major role in the development of contemporary European society are both underdeveloped and understudied in Latin America.[20] Douglass North's and Samuel Hunt-

ington's notions of institutions provide a much-needed framework for the still underdeveloped history of how political power came to pacify and centralize authority on the continent. The property rights approach discussed by Jeremy Adelman offers a fresh vision of institution making while at the same time rescuing a largely forgotten constitutional-legal-historiography approach that characterizes much classic work on Latin America. Fernando López-Alves similarly emphasizes institutional history. A striking conclusion of his chapter is that the emphasis on the late nineteenth century, which in part coincides with the developmentalist version of Latin America, must be revisited. To explain the type of states that arose in the twentieth century, one must search in the period prior to 1850. Both institutional design and different degrees of autonomy reflected prior developments tightly related to the conflicts involved in the first phases of power centralization. Miguel Centeno also notes that the institutions critical for the study of the impact of discipline in "disciplinary societies" appear to be less developed in Latin America. Similarly, Valenzuela offers an alternative to a class-based Moorian approach by suggesting that a political-institutional and organizational perspective is more appropriate for the study of regime formation. Domínguez notes that the analysis of political parties has already had a resurgence, with wonderful benefits for our understanding of the new wave of democratization.

The authors discussed in these chapters clearly demonstrate that theory does not have to be dogmatic or deterministic. The most fruitful research comes from placing the patterns of social theory over the chaos of empirical data while also recognizing historical uncertainty and the often unpredictable complexity of social interactions. What North, Huntington, and Polanyi have to tell us does not lose its value because it might not fit our case. Rather, it should teach us how to analyze our specific field of study in a different manner.

Conclusions

It should not be surprising that a volume covering such varied topics cannot and will not provide a broad theoretical synthesis that explains Latin American economic and political development. That was never our aim. There *are* key differences. If Huntington and Tilly consider political power to be best understood through the study of the state, Foucault and de Certeau look for it in everyday interactions. Polanyi and Gerschenkron clearly have different views on the role of the state in economic development, while more contemporary economic theorists have even questioned its general relevance or positive contribution.

As discussed previously, there are also some general convergences. Most important, the chapters here remind us of the importance of both analyzing the basic institutions that establish the rules for a society and studying their specific origins and progressions. The chapters share some key concerns regarding the relationship between grand theory and Latin American reality. First, they explicitly privilege the uniqueness of the Latin American narrative and present a healthy counter to the often imperial grasp of the grand theories of the day. If these theories undoubtedly help us study, order, and understand the empirical reality, specifics also serve to ground theories in a series of confirmations, exceptions, and falsifications. All the authors, however, also call for more attention to be paid to some of these theoretical issues. These new questions could inspire a new and original enthusiasm in Latin American studies, as well as providing new insights for old problems.

It is this combination that we consider the volume's most important contribution. Douglass North helps us understand or at least identify critical junctures in Argentine history. Simultaneously, the Argentine case makes us more aware of how conceptions and understandings of property rights need to be contextualized. Latin America has much to teach Huntington about political order, but this political scientist can also reframe attention paid to political parties. Nationalism in Latin America may not have followed Benedict Anderson's expected paths, but certainly our discussion of how it developed could benefit a great deal from his concepts. Foucault and Weber on discipline are far from being directly applicable to Latin American realities, but disciplinary institutions in Latin America can teach European-based models a different lesson about disciplinary societies. And although state formation was a very different process in Europe and Latin America, Tilly can inform and correct (or be corrected by) our traditional ways of understanding state building.

The key differences this volume found between the European and Latin American experiences and literatures suggest the need for a healthy shift in how we understand both grand theory and the Latin American experience. We would like to enthusiastically encourage—and make a plea for—future research that can wear the lenses of theory when looking at Latin America. Such a research agenda will inevitably lead to a restructuring and transformation of both fields of study. The "corrections" that authors suggest in this volume constitute an initial step in this direction. None of them want to abandon theory. Rather, our aim is to formulate macrohistorical patterns that could elaborate upon the specifics of areas like Latin America, therefore becoming a more truly universal—and recognizable—map of the social world. We need more specificity, and we are willing to pay for it by allowing somewhat less parsimony in the formulation of our theorizing. Yet we cannot fall in the trap of the "exceptional"

or the "unique," which has been so common to some Latin American theorizing.

We return in the end to the suggested model of "relational analysis." If we may use the perhaps worn-out analogy of language, words do have particular characteristics and meanings. But they acquire sense and purpose as parts of phrases and sentences. Similarly, social phenomena need to be understood in their relationship with other events, both contemporaneous and historical. We offer a new set of cases in the hope that this new literature will enrich our understanding of the linguistic possibilities. Conversely, we suggest that despite the infinite variety of word combinations, there are some grammars that, if not necessarily universal, seem to follow clear patterns. Theoretical models provide a guide with which we can organize the flow of words into meaningful sentences.

In the end, grand theory and area studies constitute a false dichotomy similar to the equally fallacious split between quantitative and qualitative work. The best social science seeks to marry general insights with grounded empirical reality; it seeks to join analysis with narrative in exciting new ways. All the authors in this volume call for such an approach. If the book inspires others to do the same, we will judge it a success.

Organization of the Book

We asked a number of leading scholars to analyze prominent theorists and schools in light of Latin American history. We invited them to think about whether these theories were useful, how they could adjust to Latin American reality, and what Latin American variants might look like.[21] The following chapters are the products of this collaboration.

More than one observer has noted the absent parties to our enterprise. Perhaps the most obvious are Marx and Weber. Early on in the project we decided to discourage contributors from writing on the "founding fathers" for two main reasons. First, we found that the central insights of these two men already played a major role in Latin American studies. Moreover, many of the later generation of theorists we did include continued classic themes that gave us an opportunity to return to the sources. Second, and most obviously, the breadth and scope of the relevant works would require at the very least one entire volume for each author.

Our choice of more contemporary authors was less systematic. We let the contributors choose their topics, and enough of the "usual suspects" were selected to make us hesitate to impose a research agenda on anyone. Obviously this left some holes. Perhaps the most apparent is the absence of a direct treatment of dependency theory, but here one might note the same objections as just mentioned for Marx and Weber. Other

possibilities might have included Gramsci, the Frankfurt school, or (crossing various divides) Seymour Martin Lipset or Reinhard Bendix. We also might have included some of *gran pensadores* of Latin America, including, for example, Fernando Ortíz, Gilberto Freyre, José Carlos Mariátegui, or Raúl Prebisch. The selection, then, is not meant to be exhaustive. While it was not composed around an explicit theme, it no doubt reflects the biases and interests of the group of contributors who tend to favor a structuralist approach to political economy.

While we did not impose an agenda on our contributors or compose the conferences with such a schema in mind, the chapters distributed themselves quite naturally along the three classic categories of economy, polity, and society. In order to provide readers with a cognitive map of the interaction between theory and the specific cases of Latin America, we have divided the book into three parts that reflect the classic issues of social science theory: the rise of industrial capitalism, the development of the democratic states, and the diffusion of what may be called the ethos of modernity. These are also the central questions of Latin American studies. How do we explain the contradictory juxtaposition of wealth and underdevelopment on the continent? Why has governance often been so ineffective *and* authoritarian? Finally, is there something in the Iberian heritage that explains Latin America's troubled past and present?

The first part focuses on debates regarding economic processes and the best ways to understand development in a Latin American context. Adelman and Topik discuss grand theoretical accounts of the rise of the modern economy and its relationship to other social institutions. Gootenberg focuses on the analysis of late developers, and Montecinos and Markoff discuss more contemporary economic theories. If nothing else, these chapters clearly demonstrate the importance of historicizing our understanding of the economy and becoming more aware of how the distribution of power influences which social relationships are judged "natural" or productive. This part also asks us to consider how it is that some intellectual ideas become more influential than others and why some authors found a small audience on the continent.

The second part of the book explores a variety of theories that have sought to explain political behavior, specifically the development of the state and democratic rule. López-Alves compares how the different forms of warfare helped define the particular form of the Latin American state. Knight focuses on revolutionary Mexico and how notions of state autonomy and state capacity can inform and learn from this case. Domínguez considers the lost opportunity that a Huntingtonian approach might have offered Latin American studies. Finally, Valenzuela uses the Chilean case to challenge class-deterministic accounts of the rise of democracy. Once again, the importance of expanding our series of

cases is made patently clear. Different relationships between states and organized violence, between private and public elites, between political interests and parties, and between conservative forces and democratic rules transform our understanding of standard categories such as war, autonomy, representation, and political order. Conversely, they offer Latin American studies new modes of framing questions of the political structures on the continent.

The contributions in the final part of this volume include treatments of a variety of themes. What are the cultural underpinnings of modernity? How to define and explain nationalism? What aspects of everyday life are most important? Centeno discusses the limitations of notions of discipline drawn from Foucault and Weber. Levine suggests how methodological and theoretical notions of "everyday life" need to be adapted to a Latin American reality but still may produce important insights. Finally, Lomnitz suggests how Latin American nationalism needs to be understood in light of the colonial legacy. The Latin American cases indicate that some of these most basic concepts are constructed around erroneous or limited assumptions. The theoretical trespassing in which these chapters engage should also encourage Latin Americanists to ask new sets of questions about their region in a comparative perspective.

Notes

With many thanks to the contributors and referees whose comments helped improve our various drafts. We want to specially thank Deborah Kaple, Charles Tilly, and Bruce Western for forcing us to make it better. These individuals deserve the credit for what may be of value and none of the blame for the rest.

1. A search through the *Social Science Citation Index* from 1978 to 1999 located only 37 out of 3,203 articles in four major journals of sociology and political science (*American Journal of Sociology*, *American Sociological Review*, *American Political Science Review*, and *Journal of Politics*) that had an explicit reference in either the title or the abstract to Latin America or any of the individual countries. A parallel search in three Latin American studies journals (*Latin American Research Review*, *Journal of Latin American Studies*, and *Hispanic American Historical Review*) found only 1 article out of 727 that used the term *sociology* or *political science* in the title or abstract.

2. Obviously, combining the different experiences of countries and societies under this rubric may also produce confusion and miss critical differences. We believe, however, that enough links these cases to allow some generalization.

3. We also err in assuming that non-European means Latin America. Certainly Africa has received even less attention, and one could say the same thing for large parts of Asia. In some recent pieces, John Markoff has noted that the real division is not between regions but between the focus on "great powers" and the assumed

marginality of lesser ones. "Where and When Was Democracy Invented?" *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 41 (1999):66–90.

4. We will be using this term as shorthand to mean the standard suspects of comparative analysis: France, Germany, Russia, and (less so) the Netherlands and Scandinavia. Obviously, within "Europe" large segments have been neglected, particularly the experience of the East but also that of the Mediterranean countries.

5. Most obviously, José Martí, Eduardo Prado, and of course, José Rodó.

6. Similar concerns apply with the use of North American and Western European models to the former socialist states. See Joan Nelson, Charles Tilly, and Lee Walker, eds., *Transforming Post-Communist Political Economies* (Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 1998).

7. See the series of review essays on David Landes's *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations* in the *American Historical Review* 104 (1999): 1240–57.

8. Mustafa Emirbayer, "Manifesto for a Relational Sociology," *American Journal of Sociology* 103 (1997): 287.

9. "Transitology" may be an exception, but its capacity to trespass is limited. The field was arguably founded by Guillermo O'Donnell, Philippe Schmitter, and Laurence Whitehead's four-volume *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Comparative Perspective and Tentative Conclusions* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987). Another exception may be gender and ethnic studies. A wonderful example of how a Latin American case can shed light on a theoretical discussion within a discipline is Peggy Lovell, "Race, Gender, and Development in Brazil," *Latin American Research Review* 29, no. 3 (1994), 7–37. For a summary of some of the work being done in gender, see Jane Jaquette, "Gender in Latin American Studies," in Peter Smith, ed., *Latin America in Comparative Perspective: New Approaches to Methods and Analysis* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview 1995), 111–34.

10. See Frank Safford, "The Problem of Political Order in Early Republican Spanish America," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 24 supplement (1992): 83–98.

11. Ironically, this may be because Latin American studies has not questioned the major "comparative" myths and has largely accepted the supposed universal patterns defined by social science.

12. Charles Tilly, *Big Structures, Large Processes, Huge Comparisons* (New York: Russell Sage, 1984), 89.

13. For a wonderful summary of recent historical scholarship, see Thomas Skidmore, "Studying the History of Latin America," *Latin American Research Review* 33, no. 1 (1998): 105–27.

14. Richard Morse, "The Heritage of Latin America," in Louis Hartz, ed., *The Founding of New Societies: Studies in the History of the United States, Latin America, South Africa, Canada, and Australia* (New York, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1964).

15. John J. Johnson, *Political Change in Latin America: The Emergence of the Middle Sectors* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1958).

16. E. Bradford Burns, *The Poverty of Progress: Latin America in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980).

17. Models do exist for such work. The quincentenary supplement published by the *Journal of Latin American Studies* in 1992 includes several excellent essays that successfully compare individual cases to grand themes and processes.

18. For a good example of the kind of debate this engenders, see *Hispanic American Historical Review* 79, no. 2 (May 1999).

19. Barbara Geddes, "Uses and Limitations of Rational Choice," in Smith, *Latin America in Comparative Perspective*.

20. Obviously some institutions (i.e., slavery and the church) have received much more attention.

21. We organized a series of panels on these themes for the Latin American Studies Association Congress held in Guadalajara in April 1997. The participants were then asked to reflect on what they had heard and written and were asked to prepare new drafts for a second meeting in Princeton in February 1998. These chapters represent a third round of collaborative thinking and tinkering.