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It is difficult to do justice to a book as ambitious and rich as *Latecomer State Formation*. There is much to admire about it. Both scholars of political development more generally and specialists in Latin America will find it makes important contributions to knowledge. It offers a sweeping and general theory of state formation and detailed historical reconstruction of crucial events in Latin American political development, combining elements of structure with a novel emphasis on the political incentives and bargaining that shaped the map we have today.

The book departs from existing scholarship in two ways that underpin its core analytical contribution. First, it begins by drawing an important distinction between state formation – defined as the determination of which territorial units are aggregated into a polity – and state building, or the construction of state capacity. Mazzuca criticizes existing scholarship on the state for being overly focused on capacity, while ignoring the question of how boundaries are drawn and territories distributed in the first place.

Second, current scholarship on the state tends to either focus on a single region, or shows that region-specific theories do not travel well. In a crucial analytical move, Mazzuca provides a framework for generalizing across these bodies of scholarship. He argues that state formation takes different paths depending on the nature of the international state system and the international economy. In early modern Europe, the absence of a global hegemon and the mercantilist economic model meant that state formation was driven by war. By contrast, in 19th century Latin America, under conditions of international hierarchy and global capitalism, state formation was driven by trade. Students of each region will react initially to the last two sentences as though they are not surprising: it is conventional wisdom (though not undisputed) that war made states in early modern Europe, and that global trade was crucial to Latin American state development. The novelty in Mazzuca's work is the provision of a set of scope conditions that turn the descriptive generalizations of these divergent regional experiences into a theoretical *explanation* for why war made European states and trade made those in Latin America.

The book is focused on the trade-led model, and on Latin America. It provides a general theory of the process, and distinguishes three paths, determined by the nature of the political actors leading state formation. The general account unfolds as follows: given the rise of global demand for primary products from Latin America in the mid-19th century, professional politicians sought to create conditions for trade as they simultaneously pursued their own career incentives. Increased trade flows created domestic markets for imports, which facilitated state finance via tariffs. This strategy required the incorporation of peripheral regions, whether because they were economically productive or to preclude their emergence as spoilers, but not what Mazzuca calls the 'transformation' of those regions –

the elimination of patrimonial control and the implantation of central state institutions – which was therefore a politically costly and unnecessary undertaking. The result, as Mazzuca notes, is that state formation worked *against* the development of state capacity. This implies that not only have scholars of state building ignored the question of state formation, but that in doing so they have omitted an important cause of state building outcomes. Thus Mazzuca challenges our current understanding of contemporary state weakness in Latin America.

What this general account cannot explain, however, are the specific configurations of regions incorporated by a given center. And to fill this void, Part 2 of the book shows that three different kinds of political actors (lords, ports, and parties) each produce a distinct territorial configuration when they control an economically vibrant economic center and lead the process of state formation. The theoretical innovation here is treating the actors involved in state making as politicians prioritizing their own career motives, rather than as representatives of particular class or social groups, or simply assuming that state formation entails territory maximization subject to constraints. The empirical innovation is in taking what Charles Tilly called a ‘prospective’ perspective on state formation and explaining why counter-factual arrangements of countries did not solidify, rather than tracing history backward from the outcomes that did. The historical reconstruction of the rise and fall of secessions and unifications in many parts of Latin America is valuable in and of itself.

The lord-driven path is perhaps the most straightforward: where a caudillo controls a potentially economically vibrant territory and can enjoy political power within it, his incentive is to break away from other, larger political entities, and not to seek incorporation of additional regions that would dilute his political influence. The result are states that often break away from larger entities and remain small, consisting of a port and a single associated productive economic region. Here the emergence of five separate states in Central America is the clearest historical case, though Mazzuca also places the larger countries of Peru and Venezuela on this path.

The port-driven path creates large countries, bringing many regions under the governance of a commercially vibrant port city, including economically backward peripheries. Despite the economic costs of inclusion, they serve a purpose for the political leader, who hedges against declining support in his home region by using economic gains to buy support from caudillos in these newly incorporated regions. The logic of the bargain here, and its consequence of producing large but economically inefficient and politically unwieldy political units, is well-developed, and nicely illustrated in the cases of Argentina and Brazil in Chapters 5-7. I wonder, however, whether the political entrepreneur at the heart of this path might have other potential

strategies to play: Mazzuca traces one way the territorial configuration could be manipulated by a politician concerned with his own survival, but one might imagine that politicians might have also tried stitching together alternative coalitions, with the attendant territorial consequences. These counterfactuals, too, could perhaps be profitably explored alongside those that Mazzuca illuminates.

The party-driven path is the most interesting and counter-intuitive, since we normally think of political parties and the competitive political arena emerging only after a state has been formed. But Mazzuca argues that struggles over municipal control (often between Conservatives and Liberals) brought the formation of alliances between local proto-parties across towns which extended over time in the service of local political advantage to cover greater territory. These eventually created a national political arena, erasing regional divisions and creating state territories coterminous with the extent of these partisan networks. Here, state formation is an unintentional byproduct of political competition in a setting where economic returns are insufficient to support the emergence of a single oligarch. Compared to the other two paths it generates the most negative medium-term outcomes - the deep partisan divisions that extend across communities remain after state formation concludes, meaning that endemic internal conflict continues long after borders are determined, as we see in Mexico, Colombia, and Uruguay. The irony of this path for Mazzuca's account is that it is the one least tied to trade. Both Colombia and Mexico were regional outliers in their limited integration into the global economy before 1880, and Uruguay's emergence and territorial consolidation seem to be as much products of geo-politics as anything else. This was, in other words, a path to state formation that emerged in the 19th century in Latin America, but the fit between this path and the broader account of trade-led development is a bit more tenuous.

Crucial to the long-term outcomes of all three paths is that central politicians establishing states have very strong incentives not to engage in the process of peripheral transformation, or the removal of patrimonial structures of regional power and their replacement with central state institutions. It is this difference between trade-led and war-led state development, Mazzuca argues, that produces weaker states in Latin America. But the historical narratives in Chapters 5-10 of the book do not extend to this step: they are focused on the processes that produced different kinds of political entrepreneurs in the center, and on the process by which those entrepreneurs, pursuing their own political careers, produced states. They conclude when borders are defined and regions incorporated without showing how the concessions made to peripheral patrimonial leaders (390) "became insurmountable obstacles to state capacity." The link to long-term consequences is thus not fully developed. Its exploration, and explicit investigation of the implications of state formation

for state building, is but one of the fruitful lines of investigation that come out of this provocative and thought-provoking book.