

War and State-Building in Ibero-America¹: A Dialogue with Tilly and Centeno

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Abstract

The article discusses Miguel Ángel Centeno's attempt to apply Charles Tilly's model, based on the impact of interstate wars on the building of Western States to Ibero-American countries, where international wars have been rare and short, and whose results have not led to State centralization, but rather to "disastrous balances" between center and periphery. In response to this analysis, the paper complements Tilly's models with contributions by other authors such as Barrington Moore Jr., Theda Skocpol, Norbert Elias, Ernest Gellner, Philip Abrams, and Pierre Bourdieu. It also contrasts Centeno's approach to international wars with the wars of independence as a comprehensive approach to the role of wars, whether international or domestic, linking them to the tensions inherited from the Colonial period, as made evident by Colombia's civil wars. The conclusion is that it is not possible to consider currently existing States as entities that exist prior to the break with the Spanish Empire; rather, they must be seen as the products of that break.

Keywords: state building, civil war, Colombia, Ibero-America, Charles Tilly

Introduction

In recent years, various analysts have addressed the issue of the formation of Ibero-American States from the perspective of general models such as those proposed by Charles Tilly (1992) and (1993) or Barrington Moore Jr (2002) and (1966), which are based on experiences in other countries of the world. In the case of Latin America, the analyses carried out by Fernando López-Alves (2000), (2001) and (2003), Miguel Ángel Centeno (2002), (2002b) and (2003), and Frank Safford (1995) and (2013), among others, are worth mentioning, as well as other studies on specific countries in the continent. Clearly, concrete studies of specific countries show the differences between historical developments and theoretical models (González F. E., 2011). Nevertheless, the use of such abstract models is very useful when carrying out a comparative approach to the realities of the historical processes of our countries.

This comparative approach is usually lacking in most studies of the historical formation of our countries, since they are usually restricted to a specific nation. Works that adopt a comparative outlook are scarce, although there are notable exceptions, such as Tulio Halperin Donghi's (1969) classical and pioneering study of our countries as a whole. Furthermore, the existing studies are usually limited to one discipline, thus neglecting an approach that combines history, political science, historical sociology, and political anthropology.

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This article, in contrast, starts out by discussing some classical representatives of historical sociology, such as Barrington Moore, Charles Tilly, Norbert Elias, Theda Skocpol, and Michael Mann, and then goes on to establish a dialogue with anthropologists like Ernest Gellner, sociologists like Pierre Bourdieu, political scientists like Miguel Ángel Centeno and Fernando López-Alves, and historians such as Frank Safford and Tulio Halperin Donghi, and others like Heraclio Bonilla and Florencia Mallon, who concentrate on specific countries yet shed light on the comparison among our nations.

Brief Overview of Tilly's and Barrington Moore's Arguments

Our approach to the problem begins with a brief overview of the central ideas set forth by these two pioneers of historical sociology, which serve as the general framework for our analysis. According to Tilly's bellicist model, the modern State is the unpremeditated and unplanned result of interstate wars, brought about by the efforts made to finance armies made up of professional soldiers. The military results obtained by those armies forced other countries to copy the model of State administration that had led to the dominance of countries such as France, England, and Prussia-Brandenburg. By comparing the development of these nations with other European cases, Tilly shows why this type of State organization could not take place in cities-states with commercial, capitalist-type economies, or in countries characterized by the dominance of great landowners and noble warlords, as well as by scarce trade and few cities. In both of these cases, the existing coalitions among the dominated classes managed to impede attempts aimed at State centralization and at State monopoly of force. In contrast, the centralization model succeeded in countries with populations susceptible of being recruited by professional armies and with great capitals that made it possible to equip and maintain armies through contributions and loans (Tilly, 1992).

The problem with the generalization of this model was its adoption by countries that had not undergone the historical experience or the social processes that had led to the successful creation of nation-states. Such generalization came about when the great powers began to divide the rest of the world into States with mutually excluding borders, despite their significant internal diversity. The new States were thus subjected to the influence of the concerted action of the powerful States, who ended up reorganizing, either directly or indirectly, all of the countries in the world into a single State system, currently ratified by the United Nations.

This difference in the previously existing contexts led to varying results in the adoption of the model from one country to another, since internal differences such as those arising from diverse agrarian structures produced different political regimes. Thus, according to Barrington Moore Jr., the presence or absence of commercial agriculture and of coerced labor serving great landowners determines the way in which political regimes and the paths followed by different nations were organized (Moore, 2002). Thus, the cases of England, France, the United States, Japan, China, and India illustrate "diverse routes toward the modern world", with varying degrees of participation by peasants. In some cases, there was a bourgeois revolution leading to a Western-style parliamentary democracy; in others, there was a top-down revolution leading to an authoritarian capitalism, based on the subjection of the work force and the alliance with the State; and, in others, there was a peasant revolt leading to Communism.

These approaches to interstate wars and their relation to the agrarian structure can be framed in more general analyses of the formation of national States, such as that carried out by Norbert Elias (1986) and (1987), according to which those States are formed on the basis of two complementary processes: the integration of territories and the articulation of social groups, which frame the rise of parties as intermediaries between central governments and the countries' populations. However, that articulation of social groups and territories is not peaceful by any means; rather, it encompasses conflictive relationships and changes in the behavior of people who transition from a personalized relation with the local authorities they depend on to subjection to an abstract State that operates through professionalized officials, abstract regulations, and an impersonal justice system (1987) and (1998).

In our view, Tilly's and Barrington Moore Jr.'s more abstract models need to be supplemented with contributions deriving from the field of cultural anthropology, such as Ernest Gellner's (1977), (1992) y (1997), which show how those integration processes are socially and economically conditioned. His analysis shows that in some circumstances and regions, the attempt to monopolize coercion and the administration of justice on the part of the State may turn out to be too costly to make it worth the effort.

For example, when the population is not totally attached to the land and can move to peripheral zones, with scarce economic exchange and scarce social interrelations, it might be more profitable to delegate, de facto or de jure, State functions to the powers previously existing in the regions and localities. Such delegation obviously implies perpetuating the State's indirect government mechanisms, given that the central government exercises its authority through the dominant elites, which, in turn, entails accepting the loyalties rooted in clientelism and neighborhood as the basis of political life. Furthermore, this delegation gives rise to permanent negotiation between the institutions of the central State and local and regional powers, which leads to a balance of power that changes according to the correlation of forces between these two spheres of power at any given moment.

As Theda Skocpol (1973) points out, in order to understand this changing balance of power, it is necessary to take into account the importance of the concrete scope of the power of State bureaucracy with respect to resistance by the already existing local and regional powers, as well as the possibility of a relative autonomy of the political elites with respect to the short-term interests of the economically prevalent groups. It is also essential to consider Michael Mann's insistence on the fact that State centralization does not suppress actually existing local and regional powers, but rather articulates them in a different manner (Mann, 1997, págs. 37, 86, 110 & 122). This may give rise to situations in which the center is not in a controlling position and in which what Centeno calls "disastrous balances" between the center and the regions are produced (2002b). These arrangements are clearly not that disastrous for the regions, whose powers try to preserve their autonomy in relation to centralization, which represents an attempt to impose direct domination of the State by the central institutions.

Moreover, in order to understand the problems entailed by the application of the normativity consecrated in philosophy and the law to very different social realities, it is necessary to compare Pierre Bourdieu's (2002) and (2005) ideas on the role of the discourse of legal experts and the law on the creation of the State with the distinctions drawn by Philip Abrams (1988) between the State as idea and the State as system, that is, as a set of agencies, routines, and practices. For Abrams, resorting to the "idea of the State" as an ideological artifact makes it possible to attribute unity, morality, and independence to disconnected, amoral acts deriving from the exercise of government. Thus, the idea of State and the discourse of the law contribute to depersonalizing power and replacing pre-State local power, such as that of clans, tribes, or rural communities, with a hierarchy of specialized officials that administer justice according to pre-established norms (Elias, 1987).

Nevertheless, it is also important to take into account the importance of the bureaucratized procedures of those officials when addressing the "cultural constitution of the State" (Sharma & Gupta, 2002, págs. 9-12), which has to do with the way in which State institutions materialize in the everyday life of the people. The population learns about the existence of the State on the basis of the seemingly banal, routine, and repetitive everyday practices of bureaucracies, which gradually shape the real meaning of the State for both government officials and citizens in general.

The problem, however, with this idea and system of State, expressed in the discourse of the law and in bureaucratic procedures, is that they are the product of abstractions arrived at on the basis of the historical processes of specific countries, which are then transplanted to extremely different social realities. In the case of Spanish American countries, the problem was that the new international situation led countries to adopt the external forms of the national State model, despite their previous trajectories as former colonies that had little to do with the internal political processes of the metropolis or with the internal tensions of the colonial administrative units. The latter were far from homogeneous since they were characterized by rivalries among the main cities of the provinces and between these and rising secondary cities, as well as by numerous jurisdiction conflicts between the Colonial government authorities and the attempts at autonomy on the part of the *cabildos* (Spanish colonial councils), which represented the resistance of existing local powers with respect to the central colonial powers.

Tilly himself referred to the cases of Spain and Ibero-America as special cases within his general model. When the aristocracies of Castile, Portugal, Russia, Hungary, and Poland attempted to impede the advance of commerce and State centralization, central governments were forced to co-opt the private armies of these lords or negotiate with them, which resulted in the combination of a large State bureaucracy and the privileged groups of nobles.

Tilly reaffirms this particularity of the cases of Spain, Portugal, and Ibero-America in the special prologue he wrote for the Spanish edition of his book, *Coercion, capital and the European states*, where he points out that the historical experience of these countries makes it necessary to discard the idea that there is “only one normal path for State building”, as well as the idea that said path would be “the imitation of British, French, or American political institutions” (Tilly, 1991). The peninsula's previous history, marked by the Muslim conquest and the Castilian re-conquest, together with the power of the Castilian oligarchy and Catalonia's mercantile companies in the Mediterranean world, introduce significant variables to the model based on the cases of France and England.

With respect to his model, Tilly argues that the political history of Spain and its prolongation in Spanish America is not an exception to the European rule, but rather “one more variation of the multiple combinations of coercion and capital”, which, in his view, determine the differences among the processes of State-building. The Spanish case, which features a relatively centralized structure and serious obstacles to unified action by the State, is not a pathology, but rather the consequence of the type of negotiation that went on among the monarchs and whose paradoxical result is that by providing the monarchs with resources to finance their wars, the local and regional powers strengthened their capacity to hinder the policies of the central government. According to Tilly, this would explain the relative autonomy of military leaders and local landowners of Ibero-American countries with respect to the central governments throughout the 19th century. This type of permanent negotiation between State officials and the powers previously existing in the localities and regions leads us to recall Michael Mann's insistence on the need to always bear in mind that all State centralization does is to articulate those powers (Mann, 1997).

On the other hand, Tilly's and Mann's ideas can be complemented by looking at the previously existing conditions in the new nations, for example the agrarian structure and the rural work regime, as pointed out by Barrington Moore and emphasized by Markus Kurtz (2013) in his studies on Chile. The latter highlights another aspect that makes it necessary to qualify Tilly's bellicist model: the contrast between the incapacity of Lima's elites to jointly tackle Chile's threats of war and the cohesion of the Chilean elites that enabled them to start a war of aggression would make it necessary to take into account the relative autonomy of the elites to respond to endogenous causes. In this case, Chilean cohesion preceded the war, which was not the result of an external threat, while the lack of unified action of the Peruvian dominant classes in the face of aggression was due to the country's domestic problems. Both of these facts contradict Tilly's model, if the internal peculiarities of the two countries are ignored.

Other critiques of Tilly's model emphasize the importance of the imaginaries regarding the relations among monarchs, representative assemblies, and local governments. Thomas Ertmann (1997) points out that when State-building efforts encounter organized local governments, as was the case in England, Scotland, Hungary, Poland, and Scandinavia, the relation among the local, regional, and national levels can be one of cooperation. In Latin Europe and Germany, however, the absence of local participatory governments and the resulting division within assemblies led to monarchic absolutism, as was the case of Spain. This legacy makes it possible to understand the current problems caused by the patrimonialist type of rent-seeking or parasitical behaviors in Spain, Portugal, France, Italy, and the former colonies of Spain and Portugal Latin America, Asia, and Africa.

Why International Wars Did Not Lead to State-Building in Ibero-America

The above references to countries other than France and England set the stage for our discussion of Miguel Ángel Centeno's attempt to apply Tilly's bellicist model to Ibero-America (Centeno, 2002, págs. 52-61, 108-127), on the basis of its few interstate wars: the wars of the River Plate, the War of the Triple Alliance, the War of the Pacific, the Chaco War, and the European and American invasions of Mexico. The conclusion of the analysis of these cases is that in Ibero-America, the rarity, brevity, and inopportune nature of international wars prevented the consolidation of states and did not provide the financial means or the incentives to centralize power and rally the population in view of the external threat. According to Centeno, there were no wars among nations because the States were not prepared for them, and they were unprepared because the wars never occurred.

As an exception to this rule, Centeno cites the cases of Chile and Paraguay. Chile's greater administrative capacity allowed it to defeat Peru and Bolivia militarily, while Paraguay's centralized autocracy garnered enough State capacity to embark on the War of the Triple Alliance. Other authors mention, albeit marginally, the cases of Brazil, where some social groups identified with the central State represented by the imperial family and its followers, and of Mexico, where the confrontations with the French and American invaders generated a certain national identity (Centeno, 2002, págs. 160-162, 198-202).

There seems to be great unanimity regarding the exceptionality of Chile, attributed to diverse factors, such as the internal cohesion of its elites, concentrated mainly in the haciendas of the central valley, where most of the population lived and was linked to the haciendas through a semi-servile labor system, whose social base granted political legitimacy to local landowners through patronage mechanisms and served to support an oligarchic State. Internal cohesion was also enhanced by a greater economic integration of the territory, thanks to the country's good maritime communication with the rest of the territory and the location of its natural resources (gold, silver, copper, and nitrates) near the Pacific coast, which facilitated foreign trade. To this must be added the importance of Valparaíso as a port connected to Chinese trade. This economic prosperity made possible the early construction of railroads and the establishment of a banking system. Furthermore, Chile's strong and authoritarian presidential regime and the strength of its civilian guard, that balanced the power of the military and strengthened the nationalism of the middle sectors, which would be reinforced by the victories over Peru and Bolivia (Kurtz, 2013) and (Bauer, 1995), are factors to bear in mind. Contrary to Tilly's argument, Chile's strengthening as a State was not the result of war, but the condition that made war possible, while the significance of its work system brings that country's case closer to Barrington Moore's model.

Another exceptional case studied by Centeno is that of Paraguay, where the dictatorship of Rodríguez Francia before 1820 caused the exclusion or near elimination of the elites that could limit central power, and whose population was quite homogeneous. State-owned lands that were the legacy of the Jesuit Reductions and the trade of *yerba mate*, together with Paraguay's geographic isolation, facilitated the political isolationism of its ruler. To this must be added the threat of Argentinean domination, the tensions between Asunción and Buenos Aires, and the rivalries among merchants from Spain, Brazil, and Buenos Aires, which created a sort of Paraguayan proto-nationalism that led the country to confront its neighbors and, consequently, lose many lives and economic resources (Potthast, 2009) y (Capdevila, 2012).

In many ways, Brazil featured different characteristics: the enormity of its territory, the great difficulties in communication, and the scattered population gave great autonomy to the regional powers of the provinces since Colonial and Imperial times. However, the country's regionalism was offset by the central State's bureaucracy, educated according to the same model at the University of Coimbra and which inherited certain legitimacy from the imperial monarchy. This order, nevertheless, was limited to the coastal cities and regions or to those near the coast (Rio, Bahia, Pernambuco, Minas Gerais, and Sao Paulo), since it was practically nonexistent in Goiás and the Mato Grosso). Moreover, this alleged bureaucratic centralization featured severe limitations: imperial officials were often absent from the regions or came from the elites; the National Guard was made up of members of the regional elites and their subordinates; and the army continued to be quite fragile. The result was that State policies were only effective if they were accepted and implemented by the regional elites (Needell, 2013).

However, this restricted unification around the bureaucracy inherited by the "Old Republic" gradually strengthened itself thanks to the productive expansion of coffee-growing sectors in the states of Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, which allied themselves with the cattle-raising sectors of Minas Gerais to build a political and economic system that subordinated the remaining states to their interests. For some, the greater tax and administrative effectiveness of the federal republic would show that the centralization of authority was not a necessary condition for State-building. For that reason, despite the restrictions generated by the country's dependence on England, it was its connection to world trade and not an external war that determined the building of the State. However, it is important to point out that the effects of the war with Paraguay were very important for the reorganization and modernization of the Brazilian army (Love, 2013).

Another case is that of Mexico. According to Centeno, the war between Mexico and the United States (1846) illustrates how a more powerful neighbor took advantage of the weaker one, since the defeat of López de Santa Anna caused Mexico to lose a good part of its original territory (the current states of Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, and California). In spite of this, Mexico's wounded pride over this affair and the subsequent victory of Juárez over Maximilian and his French and Mexican allies ended up giving birth to Mexico's feeling of nationalism. Furthermore, this war that was both an international and a civil war produced the strengthening of a feeling of identity and national unity, by eliminating the conservative enemies of the liberal State and neutralizing the political power of the Church, which impeded the creation of a national identity in other countries such as Colombia (Ballard Perry, 1972, págs. 154-155).

However, argues Centeno, not even these wars produced the administrative growth that Tilly's hypothesis would lead us to expect, because they were too brief and required little logistical support. They were "limited wars" that produced "limited States" (in my view, the opposite is also true: limited States fight limited wars). For this reason, the author concludes that the formation of nation-states is more an exception than a necessary and inevitable rule. In order for wars to promote the administrative development of nations, it is necessary for them to have a previous background in that respect and for the dominant elites to identify with the expansion of the State. Centeno also believes that wars in themselves produce nothing, but may come to foster the growth of the State when there is a minimum of political organization and social cohesion.

According to Centeno, territorial and social integration in most Ibero-American countries had more to do with the development of the agricultural export economy, which brought about the reorganization of territorial hegemonies, the channeling of economic and social resources, and the redefinition of social preeminence. The export boom caused regional and provincial rivalries in countries like Brazil, Argentina, Chile, and Mexico to lose ground, to a greater or lesser extent, in view of the prominence of certain cities, thus putting an end to what Centeno calls the "disastrous balance of power" between regions and regional networks, which characterized Latin American political life until the middle of the 19th century.

In Centeno's view, the limited organizational capacities of Spanish American States were the result of the manner in which they achieved their independence. However, it is difficult to classify those wars of independence as international or civil wars since they feature aspects of both, given that they combine internal tensions deriving from the Colonial period, reflected in border issues, jurisdiction conflicts, struggles between social groups, such as *criollos* and Spaniards, and sometimes among castes, indigenous, *mestizo*, or black, which were covered up by the war against an alleged external enemy (Centeno, 2002, págs. 266-280).

Nevertheless, Centeno does not make the most out of the preceding analyses of the internal tensions; rather, he seems to assume that the wars he analyzes are confrontations between more or less consolidated nations. He fails to address the obvious fact that Spanish American nations are, to begin with, the result of an international war: the Napoleonic Wars that trigger the crisis of the Spanish Empire and reactivate the mentality of autonomy inherited from the Castilian municipalities at the time when the Catholic Monarchs and the House of Austria opposed the centralizing reforms of the Bourbons. For this reason, we could say that the wars of independence of those proto-nations were the product of both an international war in Europe and a civil war between *criollos* and Spaniards and between main and secondary cities, whose functioning as "quasi city-states" or "region-states", backed by a rural hinterland and locally autonomous traditions impeded the centralization of power by the old capitals and imposed power-sharing.

Thus, the situation was not that of preexisting nations that obtained independence from a foreign power, but that of nations that gradually form themselves on the basis of the break with the Spanish Empire and then have to face a second challenge: that of maintaining internal cohesion of their territory, which had been vaguely delimited during Spanish rule. Therefore, the processes that these nations went through should not be compared to the historical developments of France and England, but to those of the nations that arose as a result of the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman, or Roman Empires (as Bolívar did in his famous "Jamaica Letter").

The Challenges Faced by Nations in the Process of Formation

In view of the above, the challenge faced by the new rulers of these nations in the process of formation was how to build nations on the basis of the Colonial Empire's administrative units, which were breaking up as a result of the explosion of territories claiming sovereignty produced by the collapse of the Spanish Empire. This fragmentation would force us to consider the wars of independence as the beginning of a series of conflicts at the national and international levels, which gathered the prior tensions arising from the organization of Colonial trade and administration, and project them onto the new environment of nations in the process of formation. These tensions reveal the internal heterogeneity of the Colonial administrative units and their different positions within the commercial circuit of the Spanish Empire, which make evident the internal conflicts between cities and regions following the downfall of the Spanish Empire and the subsequent rise of the new republics.

The incapacity to overcome those internal divisions explains the success of the re-conquest of the royalist troops in Venezuela and New Granada, which, in turn, brought about the creation of national armies, "peoples and nations in arms" (Thibaud, 2002) and (2003).

In the end, this would mean the imposition of the French model of national State, which introduces an important question that will mark the diverse evolution of the countries: the presence or absence of actual wars of independence taking place in their own territories (López-Alves, 2003, págs. 285-291). This leads to differences between the cases of Venezuela, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia and those of Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, and Paraguay. And, in the Peruvian and Bolivian cases, it is necessary to highlight the importance of the “foreign” armies of Argentina and Chile, firstly, and then of the Greater Colombia (Venezuela, Colombia and Ecuador).

For this reason, it is also necessary to examine the independence processes as continental events (or transnational events, if we think of the nation’s resulting from the process) and not merely as national events, since this would imply an anachronism given that those nations did not really exist yet. Furthermore, it would be necessary to carry out a differentiated analysis by blocks: Venezuela-Colombia-Ecuador; Argentina-Uruguay-Paraguay; and Argentina-Chile-Peru-Bolivia, in which the Colombia-Venezuela block converges with the Argentina-Chile block to neutralize the possible royalist counterrevolution from Peru.

But even in the cases of Peru and Mexico, it is convenient to remember the role that these predominantly *criollo* troops played in the repression of the rebellions of Tupac Amaru, Hidalgo, and Morelos, because this will determine, to a great extent, their subsequent position. It is clear, for example, that the independence of Mexico was not the product of a victorious revolution, but of a compromise among the army, the Catholic hierarchy, and the urban oligarchies, together with the scarce pro-independence guerrillas still surviving at the time, in order to avoid the effects of the Riego revolution in Spain.

Moreover, it is important to bear in mind that these continental wars that developed from Caracas, Bogotá, and Buenos Aires faced internal problems due to the imbalances caused by the annexation of the Alto Perú (currently Bolivia) to the Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata, which were reflected in the clash of interests among Brazil, Buenos Aires, and the inland provinces of Argentina, neighboring what is now Uruguay. To this must be added the border problems among northern Chile, southern Peru, and the current Bolivia. In view of this complex convergence of domestic conflicts among the rising nations and continental or foreign interests, it is inadequate to address the issue from the perspective of currently existing nations.

These problems are discussed by Tulio Halperin Donghi (1972, págs. 222-237, 253-257) and (1972b) when he analyzes the distrust of the rulers in Buenos Aires regarding Bolívar’s continental project, which grouped the territories extending from the Caribbean to the highlands of Alto Perú, and which has found some sympathies between the rulers of the inland provinces of Argentina. However, the greatest problem was Brazil’s advance along the Banda Oriental, when the cattle-raisers of Río Grande do Sul seized lands in the north, and Portuguese merchants appeared in Montevideo and Colonia de Sacramento. Faced with these threats, the *cabildo* of Montevideo found little support from Buenos Aires, but considerable support in the inland province of Santafé. Hence the need pointed out by López-Alves (2000) and (2003, págs. 34-38, 106-119, 202-207) to analyze the developments of Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay jointly, since they are part of the same process.

This situation explains the difficulties faced by the authorities in Buenos Aires when trying to maintain control of the provinces that made up the Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata, which were compounded by the border problems with Brazil, the commercial and political relations with England, and the resistance of the provinces to being represented by the provisional junta in Buenos Aires. Obviously, the *laissez-faire* policies adopted in Buenos Aires and its commercial relations with England were incompatible with the interests of the inland provinces (Córdoba, Salta, Tucumán, Mendoza, and San Juan), whose trade linked them to the Alto Perú and Chile. On the other hand, Montevideo and its surroundings (the Banda Oriental) competed with Buenos Aires for cattle trade and control of maritime traffic, while Paraguay was totally isolated in relationship with Buenos Aires and Charcas (in the current Bolivia), and also saw Buenos Aires as a threat.

These contradictions were made evident in the defeat of the Buenos Aires forces in the Banda Oriental, Alto Perú and Paraguay, which would determine the future of the four nations. Asunción lacked the privileged geographic location of Buenos Aires with respect to its provinces, but its economic resources led its army to play a central role in State-building.

Uruguay arose out of the intermittent war between Montevideo and Buenos Aires since the Spanish period, the struggles between the supporters of Brazil and Buenos Aires (*abrasilerados* (pro-Brazilian) and *aportañados* (pro-Buenos Aires)), the expansionism of Brazil, and the commercial interests of England, as a “buffer state” between Argentina and Brazil, after the war between those two countries (López-Alves, 2003, págs. 108-119).

This war made evident the internal tensions that characterized Buenos Aires politics and the apprehensions of the elites with respect to the army, as well as the political crisis of the inland provinces, all of which show how far the Argentinean confederation was from being a national State. To this must be added England's interests in the trade with Buenos Aires and Brazil: obviously, its policies were aimed at preventing the downfall of the imperial regime in its main market, a position that benefited from the ambiguity of the River Plate provinces. The outcome of this combination of factors was a transnational solution: the creation of Uruguay as an independent nation.

These existing tensions, combining international trade interests, tensions among nations in the process of formation, and problems within them, make it difficult to speak of already consolidated nations that confront one another in wars such as that of the Triple Alliance and that of Paraguay. For this reason, the opposing versions of the parties involved in the Paraguay war (Crespo, 2012, págs. 11-29) show these complex interactions: the expansionist interests of Brazil intertwined with Paraguay's need to have access to the Atlantic, which was blocked by the control exerted by Buenos Aires over the River Plate estuary and its alliance with the Colorado Party of Uruguay. This alliance led Paraguay to seek the support of the Blanco Party of Uruguay, as its potential ally against the hegemony of Buenos Aires. On the other hand, Brazilian expansionism was tolerated by the government of the Colorado Party in Uruguay, but the Brazilian colonization of the lands of the Banda Oriental went against Argentinean interests. Thus, Uruguay became the center of the dispute when it was invaded by Brazilian forces, to which Paraguay responded with the invasion of the Brazilian Mato Grosso and the occupation of Corrientes in Argentina, in order to invade, from there, the Brazilian province of Rio Grande do Sul. This was the response to Argentinean president Bartolomé Mitre's refusal to authorize the passage of the Paraguayan army, which, in turn, led Argentina to become involved in the war.

Furthermore, the evolution of these conflicts produced important internal differences between Argentina and Uruguay. In Argentina, the confrontations among guerrilla militias led to the creation of a central army, whose victory over regional forces would end up playing an important role in political life, while in Uruguay the continuing conflicts between the capital city and its rural surroundings would lead to the predominance of civilians over the military, and subsequently to the importance of parties as instruments of that subordination.

The Role of Tensions Existing since the Colonial Period

The need to take into account the tensions existing since the Colonial period when analyzing wars among nations is reconfirmed by the Pacific Wars among Chile, Peru, and Bolivia, whose tensions originated with the creation of the Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata, which put Alto Perú (currently Bolivia) under its jurisdiction. This change of jurisdiction, together with that region's claims of autonomy with respect to Buenos Aires and Lima, led to the creation of Bolivia as an independent nation and to the subsequent attempts to create a Peruvian-Bolivian confederation (actually, southern Peru and Bolivia). The clash of interests between that region and Chile, compounded by the internal divisions of Peru (between the north, especially the Lima elite, and the south, close to Bolivia), led to the Pacific Wars.

On the other hand, the autonomy of Alto Perú and its silver-based economy led the Buenos Aires elites to turn to cattle-raising in order to participate in global trade after its defeat by the *caudillos* of the provinces. This defeat was compensated by the exploitation of land formerly belonging to the indigenous population who had been expelled from their rural hinterland, thus creating new landowning elite of urban origin that found in the cattle-raising industry the perfect complement to their commercial and financial activities. The self-sufficiency of these urban elites and the privileged location of Buenos Aires on the River Plate explain the city's reluctance to form part of the Argentinean federation and the conditions of its confrontations with the inland provinces. This makes it difficult to speak of an Argentinean nation during the first part of the 19th century.

According to some authors (Gibson & Falleti, 2007, págs. 171-204), Buenos Aires accepted the centralizing federation only when it was able to control the central government, but supported decentralization when the central government was in the hands of its adversaries from the provinces. The inland provinces obviously preferred a strong central government that could protect them from Buenos Aires after they had defeated it militarily.

The same combination of tensions inherited from the Colonial period and difficulties arising during the wars of independence and the subsequent organization of the countries can be observed in the case of the confrontations among Peru, Bolivia, and Chile, which led to the failed attempt at confederation between Peru and Bolivia and to Chile's victory in the wars with those countries. These contradictions arose from the beginning of the independence movements: the early appearance of autonomist movements in what is now Bolivia contrasts with the reticence of Peru in that respect, since it feared the effects that a break with Spain could unleash in a socially and racially fragmented society. At the same time, Peru had to face the pressures for independence coming from the River Plate and Colombia, given that both San Martín and Bolívar were aware of the need to neutralize royalist power Peru in order to prevent a possible re-conquest by Spain.

In addition to the rivalries between the Viceroyalties of Lima and Buenos Aires for control of what is now Bolivia (the Colonial Alto Perú), there were also tensions between those in favor of recognizing the Junta of Seville, the followers of Carlota Joaquina, sister of Ferdinand VII, Queen of Portugal, and Empress of Brazil, and those in favor of adhering to the revolutionary Junta of Buenos Aires. Moreover, the disagreements among the royalist leaders (Joaquín de la Pezuela, José Fernando de Abascal, José de La Serna, Pedro Antonio Olañeta, and José Manuel de Goyeneche) with respect to the vicissitudes of the liberal regime in the peninsula weakened the predominance of the royalist cause, which had been achieved after the defeats of the Argentinean troops and the quelling of the *criollo* and indigenous uprisings in Alto Perú and the south of the current Peru (Fisher, 2000), (Contreras & Soux, 2009) and (Bonilla, 2007).

These complex differences, to which must be added the divergent positions of San Martín and Bolívar, paved the way for the arrival of the Colombian-Venezuelan troops of Bolívar and Sucre, whose victory led to the creation of Bolivia as an independent nation. But later they would also lead to the failure of the attempted confederation between Peru and Bolivia, which was supported by the populations of southern Peru and northern Bolivia, but opposed by the northern and coastal regions of Peru, especially by the Lima elites, who feared that the confederation would affect its traditional hegemony (Sbrevilla, 2011). The mistrust on the part of Chile and Argentina, who felt their economic interests were being jeopardized must be added to those internal problems.

For this reason, various authors highlight the contrast between Chile's institutional development and Peru's stagnation (Kurtz, 2013); (Mallon, Authoritarianism, political culture, and the formation of the State. Landowners, agrarian movements, and the making of national politics in nineteenth century Mexico and Peru, 1995) and (1995b). Though Peru had enjoyed great importance during the Colonial period, the local elites, whose power relied on control over indigenous labor, had a profound distrust of both independence from Spain and any social mobilization that could undermine that control, as well as of any modification to the regional balance of power that could jeopardize Lima's hegemony. The division among northern, southern, and central Peru and the reluctance of its elites to mobilize the indigenous and *mestizo* populations stands in contrast to the cohesion of the Chilean elite. That contrast explains the defeat of Bolivia and Peru by Chile, as well as the border problems among those countries that have continued until today.

The combination of border tensions, regional rivalries, ethnic problems, and work relations explain why Chile's military threat did not have the effect of strengthening the Peruvian State, as Tilly's bellicist hypothesis would lead us to expect. However, if one takes into account the qualifications introduced by Tilly himself with respect to the Spanish and Ibero-American cases, one could say that the type of relations among governments, regions, and dominant rural classes determines the type of State that is built according to the correlation of forces. Thus, they explain why the State centralization and bureaucratization that make it possible to finance and recruit permanent armies, control the territory completely, and subordinate regional and local power groups did not come about.

The tensions between Buenos Aires and the inland provinces of Argentina, and the institutional arrangements between them, expressed in the different styles of federalization and centralization that the country experienced during the 19th century can be similarly interpreted. Uruguay features another type of institutional arrangement, characterized by the conflicts between the capital city and its rural surroundings, which would lead the Blanco and Colorado political parties to play an important role as representatives of the rural masses and urban interests, respectively. Both of those experiences allow for comparison with the Colombian case, but with important differences. The hegemony of the capital city, which can be observed in Argentina and Paraguay is absent in the cases of Uruguay and Colombia, while Montevideo's difficulties in trying to impose itself on the *caudillos* of its rural surroundings are similar to those faced by Bogotá when trying to face the militias of the main provincial cities, such as Popayán and Cartagena.

In Colombia and Uruguay, the rise of a bipartisan system meant the dominance of civilians over the military, while the latter had a greater weight in Argentina's political life, when trying to settle the confrontations among provincial militias.

The comparisons between these different developments would lead us to conclude that current Spanish American nations are the product of wars, but taken as a whole, without distinguishing whether they are international, continental, national, or civil wars. This would basically correspond to Tilly's model, but without leading to the centralization of power, with professional bureaucracies and armies, due to the pre-existing tensions. This means that wars as a whole did produce State organization, but not that expected by theory. Rather, the type of organization was conditioned by the relations between center and periphery, which made it possible for the center to subordinate local and regional powers in some cases and not in others, thus producing a disastrous balance from the point of view of the center.

According to Centeno, these diverse results of the wars can be explained by the lack of previous centralization of a country, achieved by relatively cohesive elite with a certain degree of administrative and organizational robustness, general control of the territory, and capacity to recruit the population and collect taxes. Ibero-American countries would only meet these conditions toward the end of the 19th century, when the position of the world system of nations in favor of peace made war unthinkable since it would negatively affect the interests of the great powers. Consequently, one of Centeno's most important conclusions would make it necessary to rethink the idea that wars build States, and, rather, affirm that they may contribute to speeding up processes that had originated previously.

This entails variations in the outcome of the few wars among these nations in the process of formation, depending on the countries' internal conditions: the cohesion of their elites, the integration of their territory and social groups, and the availability of resources. Thus, the combination of the impact of the wars and the internal particularities of the countries would lead to different types of articulations between the institutions of the central State and the regional and local elites, whose cohesion or fragmentation was to determine the possible degree of State centralization or the unstable balance between spheres of power.

An Approach to the Colombian Case

In this sense, Chile's exceptionality poses the problem of explaining why, in some cases, cohesive elite arises that controls the territory inherited from the Spanish colonies, while, in others, the elites become fragmented, making it impossible for one sector to dominate the others.

The other side of Centeno's so-called "disastrous balance" is the success of regional elites in neutralizing the hegemonic attempts of certain capital cities, whose formal supremacy did not respond to the realities of economic and social life. Rather, for them, the balance was not disastrous since it meant the defense of their autonomy in view of the centralizing efforts of the Viceroyalty capitals. The most obvious example is what was known as Colombia's *Patria Boba*, while the most radical one was the fragmentation of the Captaincy General of Guatemala into the Cities States of Central America.

In the Colombian case, the attempt at federal organization in the 19th century represented the tendency to regroup cities, towns, and sub-regions according to the macro-regions formed around the old provincial capitals (Gilmore, 1995), such as Cartagena, Popayán and Antioquia, which saw themselves as rivals of the power of the capital. The Rionegro Constitution of 1863 moved in two directions: firstly, toward the weakening of presidential power at the center, due to the ideology of a weak State and to fear of Mosquera's authoritarianism, and, secondly, toward the interest of regional authorities in centralizing power in their respective spheres (Morelli, 1997). These unstable balances of power between the central authority and regional powers, which neutralized Mosquera's caudillo-style attempts (and, before him, those of Obando), make it essential to take into account the importance of the bipartisan system during the 19th century and a good part of the 20th.

In his comprehensive analysis of Spanish American countries, Frank Safford (1995) and (Huber & Stephens, 1995) expresses his skepticism regarding the application to Spanish America of Barrington Moore Jr.'s model, given the variety of agrarian structures that existed, even within one country, and the resulting inexistence of coherent political identities considered by Moore in the countries he studies. On the basis of the cases of Chile, Argentina, Central America, and Colombia, Safford underlines the absence of a clear distinction among landowners, merchants, and bourgeoisie, which is a key assumption in Moore's model.

In the Colombian case, Safford insists on the presence of different agrarian structures in the same country, a phenomenon that can also be observed in complex countries like Brazil and Mexico, whose consequence is the incapacity of the landowning sectors or of any other economic group to control the power of the State. This translates into the divergences between the great landowners and the political elite, which seems to function with a certain relative autonomy. Given this separation, the author emphasizes the scarce capacity of governments to affect the power structure of rural localities.

In his view, the diversity of geographies and prior colonial experiences, together with the different ways and moments in which these countries joined the world market, make it almost impossible to provide a single explanation of the political instability that characterized the beginnings of republican life and of the difficulties encountered when trying to build an institutional system that could be valid for each and every one of the Ibero-American States (Safford, 1992, págs. 83-89).

For many authors (Safford, 1995); (Gudmundson, 1995); (Halperin Donghi, 1995); (Huber & Stephens, 1995), the problematic aspects of the model are posed by the weakness or strength of the domestic democracy, and, especially by the State's power situation: in the countries analyzed by Moore there was a previously consolidated State, which can only be found in Latin America during the export trade period, though in some cases, it appeared somewhat earlier.

In the case of Colombia, there were no significant international wars and its insertion in the agro-export business not only occurred later than in most Ibero-American countries, but also lacked the economic and social dimensions it had elsewhere. Unlike other countries in Ibero-America, Colombia never experienced any great export booms that might bring in huge revenues and allow its regions and populations access to the dynamics of world markets. To these circumstances must be added the fragmentation of Colombia's territory, which created great communication difficulties among the regions, which also featured significant differences in their population processes, social organization, and agrarian structure (Safford, 2002). This territorial and economic fragmentation was accompanied by a deep social differentiation of the regional and local elites, which impeded the construction of a national identity (Palacios, 1986).

This territorial fragmentation and the lack of articulation of the elites date back to the processes of territorial organization of the Colonial period. The Colonial settlement pattern did not constitute an integrated urban network, but rather a series of urban centers that were isolated from one another and had few commercial relations. These centers projected themselves onto the surrounding regions, with the creation of secondary cities and towns and haciendas in the rural hinterland, forming provincial units or governorships. However, some of them never managed to fully dominate the indigenous population and the totality of their territory, which left ample "interstitial" zones that the Colonial authorities considered "empty territories" outside their control (González F. E., Poblamiento y conflicto social en la historia colombiana, 1994).

These peripheral zones, located at the margins of these quasi city-states gradually became refuges for maroons, freed slaves, and Indians who had run away from the *encomiendas* and reservations and took advantage of the country's rugged geography. Later on, in the 18th century, the accelerated process of racial intermingling and the demographic recovery led to the colonization of the so-called "tierracaliente" (hot climate regions), located on the slopes of the mountain ranges and the inter-Andean valleys, which were settled by *mestizos*, mulattoes, and poor whites who had arrived during the last Spanish migration wave. This colonization of the periphery marks the beginning of the tendency to evade the tensions of the rural world by pushing the excess population to isolated zones of the rural periphery. It is also the beginning of the resistance of this population to the control of state, civilian, and Church authorities by that predominantly *mestizo* or mulatto population.

These territorial control difficulties, produced by the different types and moments of settlement, were compounded by the Colonial style of administration in the localities and regions: apart from the bureaucracy made up of *oidores* and presidents of the Royal Audiencia, governors, captains-general, and viceroys, there were local and regional powers represented in the councils of principals, responsible for the local administration of justice and the social cohesion of the population. The result of this coexistence of powers was a subtle game of balance of power between the royal officials and the formal and informal local government levels. These problems were obviously greater in areas distant from the capitals of the provinces and the Viceroyalty (González F. E., 2001b).

This dual nature of Hispanic settlement raised concerns among some officials, such as Archbishop-Viceroy Antonio Caballero y Góngora (1989) and Oidor Francisco Moreno y Escandón (1985), which led to attempts to reorganize the settlement pattern, especially in Antioquia and the Caribbean coast, with varying results, according to regional differences. These attempts reflect deep changes with respect to Colonial administration as a result of the accession of the Bourbon dynasty to the Spanish throne. This event entailed the establishment of a new role within the Spanish Empire for the colonies in the Americas, which brought about the natural resistance of both the authorities in the Viceroyalties and the local and regional powers. These centralizing efforts were, however, clearly restricted due to the paucity of fiscal resources to maintain an independent administrative system and the scarcity of qualified personnel. Furthermore, they produced rebellions and uprisings all over the continent.

The political centralization efforts carried out by the Bourbons were disrupted by the crisis of the Spanish Empire, triggered by Napoleon's intervention in the peninsula, which resulted in the disintegration of the ties between the American colonies and the Spanish metropolis. This break made evident both the regional fragmentations underlying administrative units and the division of their elites². Internal struggles between royalist and patriot cities and between federalists and centralists during the so-called *Patria Boba* favored the re-conquest activities of royalist troops in Venezuela and New Granada. Only the needs of the wars of independence managed to create a fleeting unity of the nation (Thibaud, 2003) and (2002), as well as the collaboration of the different countries in their struggle against the metropolis.

Nevertheless, once the threat of re-conquest was dispelled, the fragmentation of regions and of regional elites reappeared, thus proving how difficult it was to create an integrated nation on the basis of a territory delimited as an administrative unit of the Spanish Empire, which included very heterogeneous societies centered around isolated localities and regions that were distant from one another, in a difficult geography that hindered communications among them. Thus, relatively self-sufficient economic niches that were more or less isolated from one another were formed, thanks to the variety of climates resulting from a tropical location with mountainous zones. This led to great variations in modes of production and forms of labor, which combined traditional and capitalist practices, concentrated in the local markets.

The concentration of the largest part of the population in the Andean zone, its difficult communications with the Caribbean coast, and the scarce production of exportable goods (gold and, sporadically, tobacco, quinine, and indigo) did not facilitate insertion in the world market. This weakness in exporting capacity and the almost self-sufficient nature of the regions made it difficult to differentiate socioeconomic categories, since the landowning groups were forced to combine traditional agriculture and cattle-raising with commercial agriculture, trade, mining, military activities, and public functions. This reduced their influence in the local sphere, thus impeding both their internal cohesion and their national projection, which made them politically and organizationally dependent on the urban leaders in the national or provincial capital.

The Traditional Parties as Confederations of Power Networks

This lack of differentiation leads Safford to put forward from the opposition between great landowners and merchant landowners as criterion to distinguish liberals from conservatives in the early days of republican life, and to rather emphasize the differences in the regional origins of the leaders and the fragmentation of both the territory and the elites³. The combination of these two traits has led us to think of Conservatism and Liberalism as lax coalitions of oligarchic groups that competed for power in the localities, supported by their haciendas in the rural hinterland, with their respective farm laborers and sharecroppers, together with small and medium farmers linked to the hacienda owners by clientelistic ties.

These local networks often grouped together in regional factions that competed for power within their sub-regions, regions, and macro-regions, whose struggles reflected the tensions, rivalries, and alliances among provincial capital cities, secondary cities, rising cities, towns and villages, which functioned much like Italian city-states did.

²See Armando Martínez Garnica, (2002); (2004); (2005); (2007); (2007b) and (2009); Daniel Gutiérrez Ardila, (2010); Jairo Gutiérrez Ramos, J. (2007); Ana Catalina Reyes, (2006); Adelaida Sourdís Nájera, (1994); (2009); Alfonso Múnera, (1998) y (2011); Zamira Díaz López (2007).

³See Frank Safford, (1972); (1974); (1977) y (1983); and J. León . Helguera, (1964).

They also established ties at the national level by adhering to programs designed by the urban elites, but which were not very different from theirs, except perhaps for the relations with the hierarchy of the Catholic Church (González F. E., 1977) and (1997d), the pace of modernizing reforms, and the scope of popular participation as a legitimizing element of political power. These programs, together with the more voluntary participation of urban professional groups, officials, and academicians gave the political struggle a more ideological character.

This configuration of political parties as supra-regional power networks served as a vehicle of identification between the population and a national society in the process of formation, which compensated for the deficit in political legitimacy of the new republican authorities. It also made possible the gradual integration of emerging social groups in both cities and rural areas, such as the associations of urban artisans and the power groups that started to consolidate themselves in the regions that had recently been integrated into national life as a whole (González F. E., 1997). This was so because the existence of extensive areas suitable for colonization made it difficult to keep farmers bound to the haciendas (Bejarano, 1975, págs. 363-426), while resorting to the central State institutions was almost inoperative.

For this reason, the main role of the parties was to establish a relationship between State bureaucracy and the leaders who handled political life in the regions, while at the same time they tried to reconcile institutional forms copied from the experiences of the consolidated Western European States with the personality-centered styles of power in societies whose social hierarchies dated back to the stratification by castes typical of the Colonial system and the clientelistic relationships of the Colonial oligarchies with their subordinates. According to Safford, the hybrid nature of these developments resulted in the preservation of "a significant disjuncture between the superstructure of the national State and what occurred at the local level" (Safford, 1995b, págs. 112-113). In his view, the problem derived from the incapacity of the central government to control the provinces and its weak tax-collection system, as well as from the above-mentioned structural settlement and agricultural and livestock production problems.

This complex situation is very much in line with Gellner's ideas regarding the factors conditioning the creation of a State monopoly of force, and to Charles Tilly's notion of indirect State domination, which would respond to Michael Mann's and Gupta's references to the manner in which the central State takes advantage of and articulates the power relations previously existing in regions and localities. At the same time, it forces us to qualify the application to the Colombian case of Barrington Moore's extremely differentiated categories.

The Political Significance of the Civil Wars of the 19th Century

Besides considering the mediation of political parties in the articulation of territories and social groups, it is necessary to take into account the gradual and conflictive nature of these processes, as expressed in electoral races and, especially in the national civil wars, which combined national-level "master cleavages" and regional and local level competences. This combination, highlighted in the studies carried out by Stathis Kalyvas (2001); (2003); (2004) and (2006), ends up producing a greater interaction among the diverse regions and between these and the central State, at the same time that it strengthened the ties of patronage and loyalty between the elites and the subordinate population (González F. E., 2006). These alliances do not necessarily entail ideological convergences, not even of interests at times, since the fragmented nature of political and economic life made possible the existence of internally heterogeneous coalitions representing diverse regional interests, yet coexisting with common positions with respect to the central State or other regions.

One of the best examples of how the political and social problems (González F. E., 2010) at the local and regional level are linked is the so-called War of the Supremes (1839-1841), which produced the first national power associations and served as a prelude to disagreements regarding the existence of a permanent army and the relations with the hierarchy of the Catholic Church, which would mark 19th century political life in Colombia to a great extent. These confrontations appear more clearly in the wars of 1851 and 1854, with respect to the pace and scope of the modernizing reforms in the social and economic spheres, which sought to integrate the country into the world market, but also with respect to the inclusion of the subordinate classes in political life and the role of the Church in society. In this sense, the defeat of General Melo by an alliance of traditional caudillos from both parties would have an important outcome for the subsequent configuration of the traditional parties: the reluctance of the *Gólgota* Liberal sectors regarding any type of autonomous popular mobilization, and the Conservative party's closeness to the traditional "fear of the people".

In this sense, the combination of these three wars was to produce the appearance and consolidation of the Conservative and Liberal parties as coalitions of very diverse regional and local elites, which had been, nevertheless, differentiated since the mid-nineteenth century. These coalitions gradually consolidated themselves over the rest of the century due to a second series of wars, those of 1861, 1876, and 1885, whose conflicts revolved around two issues: whether a federalist or centralist type of political regime should be adopted, and, consequently, the type of relation that would be established between the central State and the regions, sub-regions, and localities. Another issue was the relationship between the State and the hierarchy of the Catholic Church and the latter's weight in society.

This approach (González F. E., 2006), (Uribe de Hincapié & López, *Las palabras de la guerra. Un estudio sobre las memorias de las guerras civiles en Colombia*, 2006) and (2008) makes it necessary to recover the political meaning of the civil wars of the 19th century, against the stereotyped view that has presented them as absurd confrontations between ambitious caudillos that dragged the masses to bleed to death in meaningless conflicts driven by the red and blue flags of the traditional parties. In this sense, the wars of those years and the resulting political regimes make evident the conflictive manner in which the regional elites articulated themselves, as well as the type of relationship they established with the so-called subaltern classes.

The extremely conflictive nature of those articulations and relations in Colombia makes it impossible to talk about a homogeneous and unified *Imagined Community*, characterized by the reference to a common past, whether real or invented, a shared present, and a common project for the future, which would be reflected in feelings of "national comradeship" or common patriotic identity in (Anderson, 1983). Rather, what we have is a *fragmented political community*, divided into opposing political parties whose members exclude those who are different as absolute enemies situated outside the homeland (Halperin Donghi, 2003), while they include subordinate groups in their parties through patronage-style relations and exclude those who do not belong to those patronage systems. Toward the end of the 19th century, the struggle between these fragmented political communities culminated in a new attempt at political articulation among the center, the regions, and the sub-regions: the authoritarian and centralizing modernization imposed by the Constitution of 1886, together with the Catholic re-establishment of the Concordat of 1887 and the effort to return to the Hispanic tradition. However, the lack of resources prevented the construction of interregional communication routes to integrate the country, while the resistance of the regional and local powers managed to moderate the attempts at greater political centralization, as made evident by the withdrawal of the proposal for a new territorial ordering.

These financial and political difficulties were made evident during the War of 1895 and the Thousand Days' War (1899-1901), which also showed that the collective troops of the regions and regional caudillos were no longer able to defeat a national army, regardless of how weak it still was⁴. This last war showed the limitations of the articulations that the Liberal and Conservative parties had built in order to link regions and localities with the central State, as well as the fragility of the State institutions built on the basis of those arrangements. Despite the formal centralism of the Constitution of 1886, the civil war would show how far the model was from reality: the presence of the State continued to be precarious in ample zones of the country and the fragmentation of political power remained unmodified despite the Constitution's formal centralism.

The outcome of this war makes it possible to conclude that Colombia's territorial and economic fragmentation, together with the non-specialization of its economy, allowed for only one means of articulation of the country: the consolidation of the Liberal and Conservative parties as two lax confederations of local and regional powers, with very heterogeneous characteristics and some national traits, which gathered the tensions among regions, cities, and populations, which dated back to Spanish Colonial times and were reproduced in the republican period.

By Way of Conclusion

In a certain sense, our overview of the civil wars of the 19th century would make it possible to conclude that the formation of the actually existing State, based on the mediation of the traditional political parties, was, to a great extent the result of war, as Tilly would have it. However, those internal wars have to be seen in a relation of continuity with the confrontations over municipal sovereignty caused by the break with the Spanish Empire, and also with the wars of independence as continental (transnational), national, regional, and local conflicts.

⁴See Jorge Villegas and José Yunis, J. (1987); Carlos E. Jaramillo, (1989); (1989b); Fernán E. González, (1998).

Civil wars, strictly speaking, reflect conflicts of a very diverse nature (conflicts between center and periphery, regional tensions, generational struggles, confrontations over access to the bureaucracy, and tensions regarding the role of the Catholic Church, the army, and the masses in political life), and end up producing the disastrous balances that concern Centeno, which are the product of the diverse institutional arrangements among the national, regional, and local power levels, highlighted by Tilly, Mann, and Gupta.

The above-mentioned conflicts between political parties, whether armed or not, ended up achieving a certain unification of the territory in the integrated portion of the country, especially in the central-eastern, central, and central-western parts of the country, but much less between those regions and the Caribbean Coast, both eastern and western, or between the Andean region and the more peripheral zones of the Eastern Plains, the Pacific Coast, the Orinoco region, and the Amazon region.

These differences between an integrated Andean zone and the peripheries of the Orinoco and Amazon regions, as well as in the intermediate zones located between the Andean region and the Caribbean and Pacific coasts, will turn those marginal zones into the scenarios of the conflict in the 20th century, in view of the national development trends centered on coffee exports and industrialization in Antioquia. Conflicts over land took place during the decade of the 1920s in the common lands close to the urban centers of the Andean region, in an agricultural frontier that was about to close, while the more peripheral zones of the expanding agricultural frontier would receive the rural population overflow from the Andean region. The difficulties they faced when attempting political articulation with the center would explain, at least partially, the rise of the guerrillas in the 1960s, while colonization aimed at the cultivation of coca would be the answer to their precarious economic situation.

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