

to the trends over time. On page 834 there is a welcome presentation of the extent to which different sectors' estimates depend on the solidity of the *indicador coincidente* but more of that sort of evaluation would be valuable. A good example is the selection of Cook's estimate of population. This is commonly accepted as the best available, but it would help the reader to know why it is thought to be solid and how much difference it makes to vary the assumptions behind it within plausible ranges.

The remarkable cover to this remarkable book portrays Hieronymus Bosch's vision of the *Way to Heaven*, painted in the early sixteenth century. The good Christians are being transported by angels into the tunnel of light which in his vision leads to Paradise. A curious choice of cover, though eye-catching – perhaps more apt is the scribbled Latin tag from Bosch on the back of one of his paintings: 'Pitiful is he who always makes use of the inventions of others and never creates anything himself.' This is a book of unusual creativity and scope, and will provide provocation and food for thought for scholars for many years to come.

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Juan Carlos Garavaglia and Juan Pro Ruiz (eds.), *Latin American Bureaucracy and the State Building Process (1780–1860)* (Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), pp. xi + 434, £54.99, hb.

This book is the result of an ambitious research project on state building in Latin America directed by Juan Carlos Garavaglia. Edited by Garavaglia and Juan Pro, the book contains 14 chapters, 11 of which are dedicated to the origins of Latin American national states and three to methodological aspects on the functioning of states in a stage of bureaucratic formation. Although the book could have added studies of other cases such as Mexico, the fact that almost all Latin American countries (Brazil included) are covered is certainly an accomplishment of the editors.

Latin American Bureaucracy and the State Building Process brings together a number of relevant arguments about the political and administrative process that led to the disintegration of the Spanish and Portuguese empires, offering comprehensive answers to how national states came into being. Throughout this work we find references to key authors that give an idea of the historiographical trends this book draws on. Theoretically, the authors privilege Weber, Tilly and Bourdieu, thus adopting the European axiom that in the state building process three specific actors or institutions excelled: the military, the tax collection system and the bureaucratic corps (p. 347).

But the fact that the authors of this very good volume use European cases does not mean that they see Europe as an analytical model. As stated by Juan Pro in an introductory chapter, historians must 'consider the nineteenth-century Latin American states as nineteenth-century Latin American states, with their specific historical features, rather than as ideal types seen from a European perspective by social scientists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries' (p. 11). With this in mind, the book presents the very compelling hypothesis that 'the state is a network of social relationships of domination (several of which are expressed in institutions) and which exercise control over a given population and territory through the action of bureaucratic and military bodies fully embedded in these same relationships of domination' (p. 27).

Of the many topics addressed by the authors, three general historiographical problems deserve to be highlighted. First, it is noteworthy that the theoretical efforts of

the book are accompanied by consistent work in the archives. The discovery of new and original material in different repositories reaffirms the quality of the articles, which are based on letters, memoirs, ministerial documents and a long list of other primary and secondary sources of the period. A good example of this appears in the chapter on New Granada, in which the author, Pilar López-Bejarano, provides a detailed account of the structural disorganisation of the Secretariat of Treasury through an insightful analysis of the *Memorias de hacienda* (pp. 134–65).

A second point refers to the breaks and continuities brought about by the political revolutions that consolidated independence in Latin America. This book does not follow the nineteenth-century fashion that saw in the year 1810 an absolute and definitive break with the colonial past. The starting point of the book (1780) is, indeed, a good antidote to the teleological studies that assume both the inevitability of independence and the creation of the bureaucratic corps that gave life to the republican governments. Events in 1810 introduced certainly a new way of performing and understanding politics, so the use of the word ‘revolutionary’ to account for its main features is correct. However, it is also correct to argue that the administrative structure of the old regime did not disappear once and for all. For example, personal and social relations continued to have considerable weight in creating bureaucracies, as evidenced in Rodolfo Eduardo González Lebrero’s chapter on the Colegio de la Unión del Sud in the River Plate: ‘kinship and social networks played a major role in both filling teaching positions and awarding student grants’ (p. 320).

The third point is in line with the idea above: the continuities between the old and the new were also due to the fact that the revolutionary authorities had to constantly legitimise their political projects *vis-à-vis* republican citizens. Tax collection is paradigmatic in this sense: ‘it is not enough to force citizens to pay taxes; this precept must be internalised. For people to obey a rule, they must perceive it as legitimate’, correctly claims Evangelina De los Ríos (p. 290). This is true also in relation to the role of centres and peripheries: nothing of the old regime’s juridical system guaranteed that primary cities would become the capitals of the new national states. In order to do so, they had to face internal divisions and military conflicts. Thus, in Costa Rica, as Pablo A. Rodríguez Solano argues ‘the municipalities interfered a great deal in state policy’, which was due to the ‘inability of the latter to definitively co-opt power spaces’ (p. 119). Meanwhile, in 1831 the Ecuadorean state was composed, according to a minister quoted in Viviana Velasco Herrera’s chapter, ‘of four more or less well aggregated and united members, each with its local interests, its concerns, its provincialism, and, if you will, with its separate government’ (p. 183).

Moving from a type of administration based on colonial rules to a republican system was not, therefore, an easy task. Indeed, as Pro notes ‘national sovereignty, the division of power and an elected parliament, which are the maximum expressions of the political change that led to modernity, would mean nothing without the deployment of an effective public administration able to implement on the ground acts of parliament and the executive decisions of the government of the nation’ (p. 4). That is, nations need an effective state to work properly, a process that in the case of Latin America did not finish in 1810 but lasted throughout the nineteenth century.

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