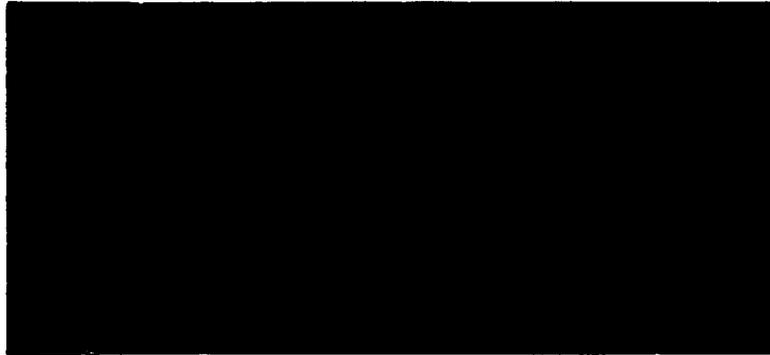




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IN A PERIPHERAL AREA:
ARGENTINA AFTER INDEPENDENCE

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Dominant Class and Statemaking in a Peripheral Area:

Argentina after Independence*

Karl Monsma

In most of the former Spanish colonies during the early and mid nineteenth century, national states were fragile institutions, regularly afflicted by civil war, rebellion, and bankruptcy (e.g., Safford 1987; Halperín Donghi 1973). Perhaps nowhere in Latin America was construction of a central state more difficult and prone to reversal than in Argentina. For much of the nineteenth century, attempts to build an Argentine state ended in political fragmentation and civil war.

This paper uses the Argentine case to explore the effects of peripheral status in the world-system on state formation. With independence and the end of Spanish controls on trade the economies of the former Spanish colonies became reoriented toward direct trade with the core areas of Northwestern Europe. This reorientation was uneven: some regions experienced export booms and others were marginalized. This paper develops the argument that regional dominant classes producing export staples had little to gain from the construction of central states with sovereignty over larger territories, and that attempts to build central states could directly threaten such classes if their economic positions depended on privileged access to political power. I analyze relations between statemaking political elites and the export-oriented ranchers and merchants of Buenos Aires Province in newly independent Argentina, arguing that statemaking projects led to bitter conflict between state elites and the Buenos Aires dominant class in the mid-1820s,

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and that this conflict was an important cause for the dissolution of the Argentine state in 1827.

Peripheries, States, and Dominant Classes

Social scientists working within a world-system or dependency framework often see state action as crucial to the protection and promotion of national economies within the world-system. Indeed, much of the story told by Immanuel Wallerstein in the first three volumes of The Modern World-System concerns ways in which states attempted to promote the interests of dominant classes in competition with the dominant classes of other states (Wallerstein 1974, 1980, 1989). Another strand in the dependency literature stresses state promotion of economic development within national territories (e.g. Evans 1979; Rueschemeyer and Evans 1985). In general, however, Wallerstein and other students of the world-system have not taken the state seriously as an analytic object in its own right. Nor have they treated state elites as potentially autonomous actors; that is, as actors who sometimes have the motivation and capacity to implement projects of their own that are not derived from the interests and conflicts of groups outside the state (Evans, Rueschemeyer, and Skocpol 1985; Skocpol 1979, pp. 24-33; Skocpol 1985). When these scholars focus on states, they tend to see variation in states as corresponding to different forms of dependent capitalism or as defined by conflict among classes shaped by the world-system (e.g. Braunmühl 1978; Collier, ed. 1979; Hamilton 1982; O'Donnell 1973, 1977).²

Historical studies of dependency in Latin America also tend to reduce the activities of state elites to dynamics of the world-system or to class conflict. In a broad historical interpretation intended to answer earlier criticisms that dependency theory neglected class relations within dependent countries, Andre Gunder Frank (1972) sees Latin American states as expressions of class structures formed by dependency, and politics as reflecting conflict among classes and regions. In a long-run account of the origins of Latin American

2. Some of the literature on "state capitalism" in peripheral areas does see state elites as actors with interests of their own, but this literature tends to be rather narrowly focused on situations in which states are directly involved in production (Canak 1984, pp. 4-14).

dependency, Stanley and Barbara Stein (1970) are careful to distinguish the interests and projects of the Spanish and Portuguese Crowns from those of economic elites during the colonial period, but they pay little attention to the statemaking initiatives of political elites after independence, instead emphasizing political consequences of dependent class structures and regional economic differentiation.

In their account of Latin American dependency since independence, Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Enzo Faletto (1979) are widely considered to have overcome earlier problems in the theory by combining internal and external dynamics, accounting for qualitative variation in economies and social structures, and explaining how economic development ("dependent development") can occur within situations of dependency. Cardoso and Faletto pay close attention to political forces shaping dependency, and they acknowledge initiatives of state elites that are not reducible to class interests. However, they refer to these initiatives in an ad hoc manner to explain specific events and do not include them in their more general theory, where they see states as reflecting class interests or particular balances of class and regional power.³

The literature on Latin American dependency generally portrays the delayed consolidation of central states as a result of interregional conflicts caused by dependency. In discussions of the Argentine case, Buenos Aires Province, which was the principal beneficiary of direct trade with the core, is seen as dominating the rest of the country and ruining artisanal production in other provinces by introducing British manufactures (Alvarez 1914; Barba 1972; Burgin 1946; Cardoso and Faletto 1979, pp. 43-52; Corradi 1983, pp. 320-327; Gunder Frank 1972, pp. 51-55). The resulting conflict between regions delayed consolidation of a durable national state until the late nineteenth century. Similar conflicts occurred in most other parts of Spanish America. Interregional conflict did hinder state formation, but dependency theory could contribute more to an explanation

3. For example, they portray state elites as acting on their own initiative in their discussion of the "entrepreneurial" states of recent decades that are directly involved in production through public corporations, but they give no theoretical explanation for this state activity aside from a desire of state elites to stimulate economic development.

of delayed state formation in Latin America if it recognized the potential autonomy of states and state elites.

Taking state elites seriously as actors allows examination of ways in which dependency may shape relations between economic elites and state elites. In the following discussion, I use Charles Tilly's notion of "statemaking" to refer to the activities of political elites attempting to construct national states, and I use Maurice Zeitlin's concept of class "segments" to distinguish portions of dominant classes engaged in different forms of economic activity (Tilly 1975a, 1975b, 1985; Zeitlin 1980, pp. 25-28, 1984). I try to understand the effects of economic dependency on statemaking by considering ways in which the interests and actions of different segments of dependent dominant classes may constrain attempts to construct central states.

The literature on state formation in core areas of Europe points to the mutually reinforcing development of capitalism and states, which implies a generally symbiotic relationship between state elites and dominant classes, especially capitalist or proto-capitalist classes. For states, capitalist development provided the increased production and revenue necessary for warfare, organizational rationalization, and intensified control over populations. For capitalists, states stimulated commodification and provided order, security of property, standard currencies, unified markets, and investment opportunities in the form of loans, provisioning contracts, and tax farms (Giddens 1987, pp. 148-160; Tilly 1975a, pp. 72-73; Tilly 1985, pp. 178-180).

There are several reasons for thinking that the relationship between dominant classes and emergent national states was weaker and more prone to disruption in Latin America than in Western Europe. To the extent that dominant classes derived their income from producing staples for the world market, they had less need for the national markets and unitary currency and legal systems provided by the existence of central states, and less need for the economic protection that central states could offer. They also had less need for the state as buyer of their products and as an opportunity for investment

in forms such as loans and government bonds. Production of export staples did not preclude production for national markets or investment in states, but dominant classes deriving most of their income from production for the world market were likely to resist paying the costs of statemaking because their positions did not depend on the existence of central states.

Although the central states and dominant classes of Latin America were less likely to develop symbiotically than those of the core, connections between dominant classes and local and regional state institutions tended to be tighter in Latin America. The economic positions of staple-exporting dominant classes often depended on direct access to local or regional political power. Export-oriented staple production was often associated with coercive forms of labor control, for which dominant classes had to either exercise local political power themselves or receive strong support from local authorities,⁴ and expropriation of land from peasants and petty producers often required influence over judges and the police (e.g. LeGrand 1984).

Nascent Latin American states not only demanded resources from dominant classes, but also could threaten forms of direct access to political power that were crucial to these classes. Statemaking involved preemption of local and provincial powers, as well as internal and external political conflict and even war, all of which could disrupt regional and local political arrangements supporting an export-oriented dominant class. Specific ways in which statemaking could threaten a staple-exporting dominant class were related to the forms of political power maintaining the economic position of this class, which in turn were strongly influenced by the nature of the specific commodities produced for the world market, as well as the ecological context and social relations of their production.⁵

4. The causal ordering of the relationship between peripheral status in the world-system and coerced labor remains controversial. Wallerstein (e.g. 1974, pp. 87-119), Chirot (1975), Kolchin (1987), and Hall (1989, pp. 16-17) argue that peripheralization leads to coerced labor, whereas Brenner (1977) argues that areas where dominant classes have the pre-existing capacity to coerce labor are especially likely to be peripheralized.

5. Social consequences of the ways in which particular primary commodities are produced are examined in Bunker 1988; Hirschman 1981; Paige 1975, 1984; Stinchcombe 1961, 1983.

Due to their external economic and political ties, the export-oriented dominant classes of Latin America also tended to have more power vis-à-vis central states than did the dominant classes of core countries. Thus statemaking elites in Latin America generally had less capacity to divert resources from dominant classes, a capacity which was important to the formation of central states in the core regions of Western Europe (Tilly 1975a).

These ideas apply more to large peripheral states encompassing ecologically diverse territories with many productive regions than to small states, which may include only one such region. If a state claimed sovereignty over only one productive region, then it was a regional state and the dominant class of that region was likely to support its existence.⁶ The remainder of this paper explores the usefulness of this theoretical perspective to an understanding of relations between statemaking political elites and export-oriented segments of the dominant class in post-colonial Argentina.

Case Selection, Data, and Methods

This paper evaluates the ideas developed above by examining the extent to which they help explain relations between the national state and the dominant class of Buenos Aires Province prior to the disbandment of the Argentine state in the mid-1820s. Buenos Aires was politically and economically the most powerful of the Argentine provinces. It was also the principal center of cattle production for hide and salted meat exports, which increased dramatically during the same period that the first serious efforts were being made to build a national state. The expansion of cattle ranching involved a rapid reorientation of the Buenos Aires dominant class, which facilitates examination of the consequences of this export boom. Prior to independence the wealthiest residents of Buenos Aires were engaged almost exclusively in various forms of trade, and most

6. This does not mean that states were necessarily consolidated earlier where they claimed smaller territories. Conflict between state elites and export-oriented dominant classes is only one of a number of possible impediments to statemaking. Uruguay, for example, was torn apart for much of the nineteenth century by a combination of elite factionalism and the interference of Argentina and Brazil.

members of the dominant class only began investing in cattle production after independence. The shift toward cattle ranching can thus be viewed as an "intervention" affecting attitudes of the dominant class toward the statemaking activities of political elites.

The empirical evidence for this paper consists of qualitative and quantitative data drawn from Argentine archives, published primary sources, and the secondary historical literature. The qualitative data include debates of the National Constituent Congress of 1824-1827, the correspondence of rural Justices of the Peace, newspaper reports, and the text of petitions sent to the national government. The quantitative data consist primarily of a sample of economic elites, for whom I have modelled the effects of involvement in various economic activities on the likelihood of signing an important petition sent to the national government from residents of Buenos Aires Province shortly before the national government was dissolved. All of this evidence is woven into an historical narrative structured by the general theoretical approach introduced above. The overall "test" of this approach, then, is to be found in the extent to which the resulting narrative is internally coherent and consistent with the Argentine evidence. In general terms, this theoretical framework leads to the expectation that the rapid expansion of cattle ranching in post-colonial Buenos Aires was associated with increasing conflict between central-state elites and the dominant class of Buenos Aires Province, and that this conflict was particularly intense just before dissolution of the central state in 1827.

The Expansion of Cattle Production in Buenos Aires Province

Prior to independence rural Buenos Aires was marginal to the world-system. The city of Buenos Aires was primarily an entrepôt for European trade with the silver-producing regions of Upper Peru (later Bolivia). Exports of hides and other cattle products from rural Buenos Aires to Europe were sporadic, although tending to increase, in the era of the Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata, which lasted from 1776 to 1810 (Giberti 1970, pp. 45-81; Montoya 1970; Villalobos R. 1986). Although some large-scale ranching

operations did exist in this period, much of the rural population in areas under Spanish control was engaged in small scale, semi-nomadic cattle raising, which provided most of their subsistence needs and produced some income from the sale of cattle and hides (Cárcano 1917; Garavaglia 1987; Azcuy Ameghino and Martínez Dougnac 1989; Mayo and Latrubesse de Dias unpublished). The majority of the present-day Province of Buenos Aires was occupied by Amerindian groups who were not dominated by Spaniards (Halperín Donghi 1969b; Zimmerman 1945).

Demand for hides grew during the Viceroyalty because of increasing European and North American shoe production, the growth of European industry, which used leather belts and hoses, and the expansion of European armies, which required boots and other leather articles (Brown 1979, pp. 50-58). However, silver remained the principal export of Buenos Aires merchants, and Spanish restrictions impeded trade with Northwestern Europe, where the principal markets for hides were located (Socolow 1978). Independence (which began, de facto, in 1810) brought both free international trade and the collapse of the silver trade--due to the disruption of war and the withdrawal of Upper Peru from Argentina (Halperín Donghi 1975; 1985). Buenos Aires Province became more tightly connected to the world economy and less connected to the economies of the other Argentine provinces.

The shift of the dominant class toward production and export of cattle products after independence was probably hastened by the growing predominance of resident foreign merchants, especially British merchants, in the import of manufactured goods from Europe. Many Buenos Aires merchants were already investing in ranches during the 1810s, and this process accelerated during the 1820s. Import-export and wholesale merchants who claimed land tended to claim much more than other land claimants, and many of them became large-scale ranchers within a few years during the mid-1820s.⁷ Hides were the most important export, but some wealthy merchants and ranchers also

7. Data on land claims are published in Carretero 1970a. See also Table 2 below.

started factories (saladeros) to produce salted meat, which was exported to Cuba and Brazil to be used as food for slaves.⁸ By the mid-1820s, it was clear that the best long term investment opportunities in the province were in ranching and salted meat production (Giberti 1970; Halperín Donghi 1969a; Montoya 1970).

State elites actively promoted the interests of large ranchers. They undertook campaigns against the Indians to conquer more land, and gave out vast tracts of public land on long-term leases at low rates (Carretero 1970a; Coni 1927; Oddone 1975). In an attempt to force rural inhabitants onto the labor market, they passed a series of vagrancy laws and restrictions on mobility and independent economic activities.⁹ Thus, in a process which began slowly in the colonial era and accelerated after independence, rural Buenos Aires underwent what Wallerstein calls "incorporation" and "peripheralization" (1989, pp. 129-131). Buenos Aires cattle ranching became "integral to various of the commodity chains that constitute the ongoing division of labor of the capitalist world-economy" (Wallerstein 1989, p. 130).

Success in large-scale cattle ranching depended on the ability to influence political authorities, judges, and the police. Buenos Aires cattle ranching was associated with chronic labor shortage because the province was thinly settled and, despite laws intended to force them to sell their labor, the rural lower classes had many possibilities for independent economic activity. To obtain labor, a large rancher had to build patronage relations with the local population, allowing those who were reliable workers to farm or graze cattle on his land and sheltering them from strict enforcement of vagrancy and pass laws, which required the capacity to influence Justices of the Peace and Police Commissioners.¹⁰

8. Various other animal products, such as tallow and horsehair, were also exported, but their total value was relatively small.

9. A collection of these laws, along with instructions for their enforcement, is found in Buenos Aires 1825.

10. Monsma (1988) discusses the selective enforcement of vagrancy laws and other legal restrictions on the rural population. On the social organization of cattle ranching in general see Baretta and Markoff 1978; Bishko 1952; 1963; Otto and Anderson 1986; Strickon 1965. For an overview of recent work on rural Buenos Aires in the late colonial

Acquiring and maintaining official title to land had long depended on political influence (Cárcano 1917; Giberti 1970). Because ranching methods were land-extensive, fences unknown, and land claims vaguely defined, large ranchers relied on regular access to courts, police, and Justices of the Peace to defend their claims to land and cattle. 64 civil court cases concerning rural land were initiated in Buenos Aires Province during the 1810s, and 205 such cases were initiated during the 1820s, an increase which corresponds to the expansion of cattle ranching in this period.¹¹ These data include only part of the ranching-related litigation. Civil courts also decided many cases in which individuals were accused of slaughtering stray cattle, failure to deliver purchased cattle, branding the calves of neighbors' cows, or monopolizing watering places. Many minor disputes never reached the court system because they were decided informally by Justices of the Peace (Diaz 1959).

Statemaking

The violent struggle for Argentine independence produced an unusually self-conscious statemaking elite. Although members of this elite, like the large ranchers, were generally children of the merchants and royal bureaucrats who were the most important upper class groups of colonial Buenos Aires, they themselves tended to be lawyers, clerics, and military officers, and had devoted much of their adult lives to what was then called "the career of the revolution" (Galmarini 1974, pp. 14-15; Halperín Donghi 1985, pp. 161-165). The statemaking elite of Buenos Aires was thus linked to the dominant class through ties of kinship and common culture, but the activities which were most central to their own lives and their principal sources of income were different from those of large ranchers and merchants.

and early national periods, see Anuario (Instituto de Estudios Histórico-Sociales, Tandil) 1987. Other important work on the subject includes Brown 1979; Giberti 1970; Halperín Donghi 1969a; Mayo 1984; Montoya 1984; Rodríguez Molas 1982; Slatta 1983.

11. I am grateful to Eduardo Saguier for giving me these data.

The most active and best organized political group of the 1810s and 1820s centered on Bernardino Rivadavia, who was secretary of the first governing Triumvirate in the early 1810s, Minister of Government of Buenos Aires Province in the early 1820s, and President of the short-lived national government of the mid-1820s. The "Rivadavian group," as Sergio Bagú has called them, had strong ideological motivation. Influenced by enlightenment writers, especially Adam Smith, Jeremy Bentham, and James Mill, and inspired by the models of Great Britain, revolutionary France, and the United States, this political elite rejected the Spanish colonial past and attempted to stimulate capitalist development and build a strong Argentine state. The goals of economic development and statemaking were interrelated: a strong national state was considered necessary to provide social order, a national market, and the infrastructure for economic development; economic development was considered necessary to legitimate the central state, increase its revenue, and strengthen its military capacity (Bagú 1966).

This state elite thus exemplified many of the characteristics identified by Skocpol as likely to lead to autonomous action, approximating "a strategically located cadre of officials enjoying great organizational strength inside and through existing state organizations and also enjoying a unified sense of ideological purpose about the possibility and desirability of using state intervention to ensure political order and promote national economic development" (Skocpol 1985, pp. 9-10). Due to both their common background and the revenue derived from exports, political elites generally supported the interests of large ranchers and merchants, but there was also potential for conflict between state elites and the Buenos Aires dominant class if the process of constructing a national state damaged the ranching economy.

Parts of the upper class supported early attempts at statemaking. A group of wealthy Buenos Aires merchants had major investments in financing and provisioning the national state, and therefore had a direct interest in its successful consolidation. Members of this group negotiated a large loan to the government from British sources, helped form

the first Argentine banks, and endeavored to contract with the national government for large-scale public works projects such as the construction of a port in Buenos Aires (Galmarini 1974). During the 1820s, however, high rates of profit in ranching led this group of capitalists to acquire a substantial community of interest with large ranchers as they began investing in ranch land and starting their own ranches (Galmarini 1974, pp. 31-40; Oddone 1975). Of the 14 men that Hugo Galmarini has identified as investing heavily in state finance and infra-structural projects in the 1820s, 7 had acquired large tracts of ranch land (at least 5 square leagues) by the end of 1826, claiming an average of 30.9 square Spanish leagues (322 square miles) apiece (Carretero 1970a; Galmarini 1974, pp. 15-16).

The national government squabbled with parts of the Buenos Aires dominant class over several issues, including replacement of the Bank of Buenos Aires by a national bank, control over the Famatima silver mines in La Rioja Province, and the amount to be paid for leasing public land (Bagú 1966; Burgin 1946; Galmarini 1974). Each of these conflicts ended in compromise. Two political projects, however, brought the statemaking elite into severe and irreconcilable conflict with the dominant class of Buenos Aires Province during the mid-1820s. These projects were a war with Brazil and an attempt to make the city of Buenos Aires the national capital and divide the remainder of Buenos Aires Province into two smaller provinces.

The War with Brazil and the Conscription Issue

The war with Brazil was an attempt to recover the Banda Oriental (later Uruguay), which was claimed by both Argentina and Brazil and had been under Portuguese and then Brazilian occupation since 1820. The war began with the rebellion of the area against Brazilian rule in 1825.¹² With sovereignty over the Banda Oriental, the Argentine state

12. The expedition of the "33 orientales" which initiated the rebellion was financed in part by some prominent Buenos Aires ranchers, who probably had claims to land in the Banda Oriental (Halperín Donghi 1985, p. 222). For reasons discussed below, however, ranchers soon lost enthusiasm for the war.

would control both sides of the Río de la Plata, which linked a vast and fertile territory with the Atlantic Ocean by way of the Paraná and Uruguay river systems. The territory dependent on these rivers for communication with the outside world included the present-day Argentine provinces of Santa Fé, Entre Ríos, Corrientes, Chaco, Formosa, and Misiones, as well as the country of Paraguay and parts of southern Brazil.

The Rivadavian political elite considered control over the Banda Oriental to be crucial to consolidation of an Argentine nation-state. As Julian Segundo de Agüero, the Minister of Government, put it in during a debate of the National Constituent Congress in mid-1826:

This war will decide the fate of the Republic and, either we win it or we will not be a nation, because it is not possible for there to be tranquil security of our liberty nor of our prosperity, if the usurper continues to dominate the Banda Oriental, because he will then have the key to the door for entering this territory. Thus we must either triumph or cease to exist as a nation (Ravignani ed. 1937, Vol 3, p. 346).

Another argument in favor of military intervention, propounded in secret sessions of the Congress, was the importance of not allowing the inhabitants of the Banda Oriental to defeat the Brazilians on their own, which might lead them to declare independence from Argentina (Archivo Histórico de la Provincia de Buenos Aires 1936, pp. 219-220). Victory in this war also could have increased the capacities of the Argentine state to extract resources and men, capacities often strengthened by war (Finer 1975; Tilly 1975a).

Parts of the Buenos Aires upper class profited from the war. Some merchants went into privateering, and merchants with large stockpiles of goods were able to charge elevated prices when Brazil blockaded the port of Buenos Aires.¹³ Some large ranchers probably took advantage of depressed prices to buy up the cattle and land of smaller ranchers less able to survive the blockade. Most of the Buenos Aires dominant class was

13. According to The British Packet and Argentine News (September 22, 1827), "All the goods existing in the different warehouses are objects of competition: the ounces appear to have a wish to quit our territory, and to signalize their last moments by a most scandalous price. The bank does not cease to discount; in private transactions the interest of money is increasing hourly--here they are bargaining for privateer shares--there they are drawing up proposals for a new loan;--in short, the streets in the centre of the town are so many Lombard Streets..."

hurt by the war, however. This was particularly true for large ranchers. Not only were they hurt by the blockade, but the state also infringed on their interests more directly through diversion of frontier troops to the war and through massive conscription of rural workers. By mid-1825, ranchers were already complaining about the removal of frontier troops, which made them vulnerable to Indian raids (Archivo Histórico de la Provincia de Buenos Aires 1936, pp. 9, 185).

Large ranchers had relied on selective conscription of "vagrants" to force rural inhabitants onto the labor market. During the war, however, rural lower class males were indiscriminately forced into military service.¹⁴ In addition to losing workers to the press gangs, large ranchers lost the authority over workers and other rural people that they had gained by providing protection from conscription.

Massive conscription provoked an outpouring of protest from the countryside. Vicente Gonzalez, the Justice of the Peace of the partido of Monte, wrote to the President in mid-1826 complaining that a recruiting party: "violating the houses of the peaceful inhabitants of this area, took them out and made them take out the peons who were sleeping, without sparing honest men nor peons under contract." The residents of the area had come to him: "[some] demanding their peons, others their sons, due to the helpless state in which they were left."¹⁵ The Minister of Government wrote back asserting the priority of state interests over the interests of individuals of all classes:

An indispensable and urgent necessity, above all other considerations, demands that the government take serious and also harsh measures to obtain men.... This necessity is painful, but it is unavoidable that it be fulfilled, just as it is also unavoidable that all inhabitants of the State resign themselves to making a sacrifice at least once..., [which is]

14. Blanket impressment was sanctioned by a law of January, 1826, which authorized the executive branch to recruit men for military service "by the means it considers best for the defense of the Republic" (Ravignani ed. 1937, Vol. 2, p. 619). Conscription efforts were particularly intense in Buenos Aires Province because the central state exercised direct power there after the provincial legislature was closed in early 1826 (by the law that made the city of Buenos Aires the national capital). Recruitment in the other provinces was in the hands of provincial governments, which were slow to respond to the call for men (Archivo Histórico de la Provincia de Buenos Aires 1936, pp. 184-185).

15. Justice of the Peace of Monte to President of the Republic, undated. Archivo General de la Nación (hereinafter AGN), Sala X, 13-9-4, Justicia 1826.

unavoidable in the critical state of war in which the nation finds itself; a war to which, in any case, everyone should contribute.¹⁶

In March of 1827, residents of the partido of Pergamino brought a petition to the local Justice of the Peace, which they asked him to forward to the President of the Republic. The petition stated that the military was enlisting "the only sons of widows burdened with family, ranch foremen, property owners, peons and even 14-year-old youths. How is it possible to believe, Sir Judge, that this decision can be from the President of the Republic? No doubt this must be a mistake of those in charge [of conscription]." The problem was exacerbated by the fact that Pergamino bordered on the Province of Santa Fé, where conscription was more limited. The petition complained of:

...the horrible emigration that is happening. Since the enlistment day more than seventy families have moved to the Province of Santa Fé. Every day the ranch peons go on disappearing, and soon we shall find ourselves without a man.... (In addition to being without their labor, we daily suffer theft of our herds without being able to guard against it.¹⁷

Santa Fé was not the only place of refuge for those fleeing the military. Communities of refugees and deserters sprang up in the Paraná River delta and the forest and swampland by the Atlantic Ocean known as the Monte de Tordillo, where they supported themselves by hunting and selling firewood and charcoal (Rodríguez Molas 1982, p. 151). Those evading conscription could also make for the frontier or join Indian bands, a practice common among frontier renegades (Mayo and Latrubesse de Diaz unpublished). It is quite likely that more peons fled to escape the press gangs than were conscripted. The effects of impressment on the rural labor force were thus magnified, leading to a situation conveyed in stark terms by the English newspaper of Buenos Aires: "[F]or the space of 50 leagues around the city, a peon is scarcely to be seen; and numerous Estancias [ranches] and Chacras [farms] are left entirely destitute of effective servants" (The British Packet and Argentine News, August 26, 1826).

16. Rough draft of letter from Minister of Government to Justice of the Peace of Monte, August 24, 1826. AGN Sala X, 13-9-4, Justicia 1826.

17. Ranchers, citizens and inhabitants of Pergamino to Justice of the Peace of Pergamino, March 10, 1827. AGN Sala X, 14-7-5, Tribunal de Justicia, Jueces de Paz 1827.

Cattle theft increased dramatically during the war. When ranch peons fled, herds scattered and became easy targets for petty rustlers, whose numbers were greatly increased by the many deserters and refugees from conscription crossing the countryside. The disruption caused by conscription led some ranchers and ranch administrators to refuse cooperation with authorities involved in recruitment efforts, and it is quite likely that they hid deserters and refugees who agreed to work for them.¹⁸

At the height of conscription efforts in late 1826, a brief insurrection shook the countryside west of Buenos Aires City. On December 13 a "considerable number of men, the greater part of them outlaws and criminals," invaded the country town of Navarro, where they deposed the local authorities and appointed new ones. They then augmented their numbers with local inhabitants and attacked the town of Lujan the next morning, where they were defeated by the militia. At his trial the leader of the band, Cipriano Benítez, who "was at one time the owner of a considerable property in the country," stated that he was supported by "several respectable citizens of Buenos Ayres, among whom were several deputies of Congress," as well as by the governors of Santa Fé and Cordoba provinces, and that his objective had been to overthrow the national government (The British Packet and Argentine News, Dec. 16, 1826; Jan. 20, 1827).¹⁹

The war with Brazil thus undermined the legitimacy of the national government among all rural classes. For the poor, the war brought the threat of conscription; for the propertied, it brought severe labor shortage and rampant crime.

18. In March of 1827, the new Justice of the Peace of Monte wrote to the Minister of Government complaining that he had tried to form a night patrol to preserve order and catch deserters, but that some of the most important inhabitants, including Vicente González, the former Justice of the Peace, had refused to cooperate (Justice of the Peace of Monte to Minister of Government, March 13, 1827. AGN, Sala X, 14-7-5, Tribunal de Justicia, Jueces de Paz 1827).

19. Benítez was executed and his body displayed on the gallows in Lujan. Participants in this uprising may also have responded to longer-standing grievances about economic change in the countryside, as Benítez had also intended to "sack all the property of the foreigners established in the country."

The Conflict Over Capitalizing the City and Dividing the Province

The other major conflict between political elites and the Buenos Aires dominant class concerned proposals to make Buenos Aires City the national capital and divide the rest of Buenos Aires Province into two new provinces. Those in charge of the national government in the mid-1820s considered the law making the city of Buenos Aires the national capital of fundamental importance to consolidation of the central state. In presenting the proposed law to the National Constituent Congress in February of 1826, the Minister of Government stated that it was the "basis for organization of the national government" (Ravignani, ed. 1937, Vol. 2, p. 697). This law provided a geographic location for the institutions of the central state and gave it control over the customs revenue of the port of Buenos Aires. Buenos Aires Province would lose these resources, and state elites thought this fact would increase support for the central state among other provinces: "[W]hen the other peoples of the Union see that it is the Province of Buenos Aires that, at first glance, appears to suffer such enormous harm, they will not refuse to enter the [national] organization..." (Ravignani, ed. 1937, Vol. 2, p. 793). In spite of strong opposition from the Buenos Aires delegation, the Congress eventually passed this law.

Several months later the executive branch proposed dividing the rest of Buenos Aires Province into two provinces, stating that the territory in question was large and there was no centrally located town that would make a good capital, whereas such towns did exist in the north and south of the territory. Probably more important, however, was the fact that division would eliminate the Buenos Aires provincial state, which was powerful enough to obstruct action by the national government and to arouse fears in other provinces that Buenos Aires would dominate the national state. The two new provinces would be easy for the central state to control. As the Commission on Constitutional Affairs stated in its favorable decision on the project: "[T]he new provinces will be a useful example, in their organization, in their union with and obedience to the capital, that will call out in a

practical way to all [the other provinces] to enjoy the same benefits" (Ravignani, ed. 1937, Vol. 3, p. 1173).²⁰

The dominant class of Buenos Aires Province had reason to oppose both division of the province and capitalization of the city. Historians have tended to pay more attention to the capitalization issue than to the issue of dividing the rest of the province, claiming especially that large ranchers feared the imposition of new provincial land taxes if Buenos Aires lost control of the customhouse (e.g. Lynch 1981). There is every indication, however, that opposition to the planned division of rural Buenos Aires was stronger than opposition to capitalization of the city. In the national congress, deputies threatened that division of the province would lead to civil war, and signatures were gathered throughout the province on a petition opposing this plan (Ravignani, ed. 1937, Vol. 3, p. 1182).

These two measures should be considered jointly. Both of them divided the territory of Buenos Aires Province and radically rearranged political jurisdictions in this territory. An important clue to the strength of opposition can be found in the fact that most important ranchers lived in the city of Buenos Aires, not on their ranches, which were run by ranch administrators. Many of them were still engaged in commerce as well as ranching and had to spend much of their time in the city. Even ranchers who were not also merchants generally preferred life in the city to the rigors of the frontier, where they were exposed to Indian raids, where schools and doctors were scarce, and where there were no diversions comparable to the cafes and theaters of the city.

These proposals threatened to move political and judicial institutions from the city of Buenos Aires to the country towns that were to become capitals of the new provinces, which would make access to these institutions more difficult for residents of the city. To use vagrancy laws and selective conscription to control rural workers, large ranchers had to be able to influence rural Justices of the Peace and Police Commissioners, which was

20. The commission's decision was signed by two representatives from Buenos Aires, who were priests and loyal supporters of the Rivadavia government, and by three representatives from interior provinces (Bagú 1966, p. 93).

facilitated by location of the provincial Chief of Police and higher levels of the court system in Buenos Aires City. Routine access to courts was particularly important for protection of land claims and success in the many disputes between neighbors that arose on the unfenced plains. All major disputes were tried in the city of Buenos Aires, which provided an advantage to litigants who lived in the city. The proposed division of the province thus threatened important forms of preferential access to the provincial and local state on which members of the dominant class relied to protect their interests.

The principal organizers of the petition against division were Juan Manuel de Rosas, an important salted meat producer and rancher, and his cousin Nicolas Anchorena, who, along with his brother Juan José Cristobal, had claimed about 174 square Spanish leagues, or 1,815 square miles, of ranch land by this time (Carretero 1970a).²¹ The text of the petition highlights relations between the countryside and rich residents of the city:

Pick up from the country all the capital belonging to the residents of Buenos Aires [City], shut it up in the city, and collect with it all of the population that they maintain in the countryside at their expense, and immediately the imagination will not find in the vast territory that is going to be made into two provinces anything more than an almost deserted area, or an area with a scarce, poor and insignificant population....[T]he countryside of Buenos Aires is in all of its essential relations a dependency of this city (Archivo Histórico de la Provincia de Buenos Aires 1949, p. 280).

The petition only briefly mentions the possibility of new taxes, but it reveals a central preoccupation with the consequences of separate judicial systems located in the capitals of the new provinces:

The biggest capitalists of the two provinces, by reason of residence will have their natural judges in Buenos Aires [City], and by the location of their properties will have them in Chascomús or in San Nicolás [the new capitals]. If they have to pursue litigation in one of these towns, in addition to the disturbances they will experience as a result of being there, and the cost of retaining counsel, they will have to commission [encargar] their defenses in Buenos Aires, and send them [to these towns] with the repeated expense of timely shipments (Archivo Histórico de la Provincia de Buenos Aires 1949, p. 281).

21. Rosas would become dictator of Buenos Aires Province in the 1830s and rule the province for two decades.

Residents of the countryside, according to this petition, came to the city from time to time for economic reasons anyway, and thus were not hurt by centralization of the court system.

Rural inhabitants did not necessarily view themselves as simple dependents of wealthy urban residents. The countryside contained many small and medium-sized ranching operations, as well as, in areas closer to the city and around country towns, many small farmers. Unlike the issue of massive conscription, which cut across class lines in the countryside, the issue of making two new provinces out of rural Buenos Aires divided the dominant class from smaller ranchers and from farmers, particularly, it seems, those living close to Chascomús or San Nicolás, the towns designated as capitals of the new provinces. Merchants and artisans living in these towns also stood to gain if the province were divided. In fact, when Rosas tried to collect signatures against division in Chascomús he was temporarily imprisoned by local authorities for causing a disturbance (Lynch 1981).

Two counter-petitions supporting division of the province were circulated in the countryside. One counter-petition, which originated in the Chascomús area, begins by stating that the petition against division was "signed by a kind of oligarchy, or conspiracy of powerful men of that capital [city], who by surprise demand the signatures of the unwary and ignorant....[T]he audacity of this oligarchy has reached such a point that they want us all to submit our rights to the convenience of fifteen or twenty men" (Archivo Histórico de la Provincia de Buenos Aires 1949, pp. 286-287).²² This petition also highlights the issue of access to courts, stating that the difficulty of litigation in country

22. This may well have been the first time that the word "oligarchy" was used in Argentine political discourse. La Gaceta Mercantil, the principal newspaper of the Buenos Aires merchant community, published a "Notice to Public Opinion" stating that the Chascomús petition was signed by "many underaged pulpería [general store] helpers, some foreigners, and the Portuguese prisoners that are there" (December 4, 1826). If, as I suspect, many shopkeepers and the like signed this petition, they probably did have their dependents and employees sign it as well. It is also likely that large ranchers and merchants who signed the petition against dividing the province had their peons and dependents sign that petition.

towns for powerful urban residents "is not comparable to what is suffered [under the existing system] by all the residents of the countryside, poor as they say, with the abandonment of their families at great distances, without connections or means of attaining them or means of subsistence. Thus it is that because of these obstacles their justice almost always perishes" (Archivo Histórico de la Provincia de Buenos Aires 1949, p. 290).²³

Who Opposed Division of the Province?

Given the extent to which the economy of the province had come to depend on cattle production, processing, and export by the mid-1820s, it is reasonable to expect that all segments of the Buenos Aires dominant class would tend to oppose division. However, those who lived in the city but carried out economic activities in the countryside should have been particularly likely to oppose division. More specifically, those who were more directly tied to rural economic activities and those engaged in rural activities for which influence over political authorities, judges, and the police were more important should have been more likely to oppose division than other members of the dominant class. To examine empirically which segments of the Buenos Aires dominant class tended to oppose division of the province, I have taken a sample of economic elites and linked the names of individuals in the sample to signatures on the petition against division.

The sample consists of individuals who either possessed five square Spanish leagues or more of land, were registered import-export merchants, owned wholesale operations, owned salted meat factories,²⁴ or owned hide warehouses. The sources for the sample

23. Jueces de Primera Instancia, the judges who ruled on major civil disputes, had in fact been stationed in Chascomús and San Nicolás between 1821 and 1824, after which they were again withdrawn to the city of Buenos Aires. In 1825 residents of Chascomús and surrounding areas sent a petition to the provincial legislature (Junta de Representantes) asking that judges be located in the country towns again (Archivo Histórico de la Provincia de Buenos Aires C48-4-37, No. 259).

24. Due to the nature of the sources, it is not always possible to distinguish managers of salted meat factories from owners. The majority of these establishments, however, were managed by their owners, and the managers who were not owners should probably be included in the sample of economic elites in any case.

and individual variables are listed in Table 1. The data are discussed in greater detail in Appendix A. For purposes of this analysis women and those identified as foreigners were excluded from the sample. Although women did own property, they were generally excluded from direct participation in politics. In fact, no woman signed any of the petitions opposing or favoring division of the province. Although foreign men were not excluded from Buenos Aires politics, the majority of the resident foreign merchants seem to have refrained from direct political involvement. Only 2 of the 93 individuals in the original sample identified as foreigners signed one of these petitions. After exclusion of women and foreigners, the sample consists of 396 individuals.

This is not a 100% sample because the lists of economic elites from which the sample is constructed are not complete for reasons discussed in Appendix A. Due to the incompleteness of these lists, variant spellings of names, and false matches of common names, there is a certain amount of random error in all of the variables, which means that the estimates presented below are probably somewhat attenuated. Fortunately all of the petition signatures seem to have survived, and there is no particular reason to believe that, within categories formed by the different economic activities, likelihood of exclusion from the sample is associated with propensity to sign the petition. Thus it is not likely that the estimates are much affected by selection bias (Berk 1983).

Because the sample consists entirely of economic elites, it is unlikely that systematic differences in proclivity to sign the petition are due mainly to either solicitation of signatures through social networks or a tendency for important people to be overrepresented among signers of most petitions. Everyone in the sample was important and belonged to upper class social networks. In any case, signatures were collected at public meetings and those who promoted the petition attempted to collect as many signatures as possible, seeking to impress the Congress with the number of signatures as well as the importance of the signers.

About 18% of those in the sample signed the petition opposing division of the province, but only 2% signed one of the counter-petitions in support of division. This difference constitutes good evidence that the dominant class of the province was much more likely to oppose division than to favor it. The rest of this analysis examines the relative propensity of different segments of the dominant class to sign the petition against division.

The independent variables correspond to the principal economic divisions within the Buenos Aires upper class. Most major merchants were engaged in either the import-export trade or wholesaling. Import-export merchants imported foreign manufactured goods, especially British cloth, and exported raw materials, especially hides and salted meat. Although Buenos Aires was the primary market for imported goods, many of these merchants also transhipped imported manufactures to other Argentine provinces (Halperín Donghi 1975, 1985; Brown 1979).²⁵ To the extent that import-export merchants were engaged in trade with other Argentine provinces, they stood to gain from the suppression of internal customs barriers and improvement of inter-regional communications that were likely to accompany consolidation of a central state, and may have felt hesitant to oppose central-state elites in the conflict over division. The economies of the interior decayed rapidly after independence, however, due especially to the end of trade with Upper Peru, and the value of European imports that the interior could absorb declined over time.²⁶ Import-export merchants found themselves placing an increasing proportion of their imports in the booming Buenos Aires market and earning an increasing proportion of their income by exporting cattle products from Buenos Aires. They thus had contradictory interests with respect to the issue of dividing the province, and it is impossible to have

25. The actual importation of British goods was often done in partnership with British merchants.

26. This was particularly true of the landlocked interior, which did not produce anything that was easily exported to pay for British imports. The provinces along the river system formed by the Río de la Plata and the Paraná and Uruguay rivers produced cattle products, but ranching in these areas was devastated by the war of independence and subsequent internal conflicts (Halperín Donghi 1975).

clear expectations about the net effect of being an import-export merchant on the likelihood of signing the petition against division.

Wholesale merchants sold to the myriad of small retail outlets, general stores, and trading posts in the city and province of Buenos Aires. Some of them also purchased hides and other products, such as pelts and rhea feathers, in the countryside for sale to exporters (Brown 1979). Wholesale merchants depended on the prosperity of the Buenos Aires cattle industry to sell their goods, and thus had reason to oppose division.

The most industrial branch of the cattle complex consisted of salted meat factories, or saladeros, where crews of men slaughtered cattle and stacked layers of meat and salt in the sun to dry. Saladero owners needed agents and contacts in the countryside to purchase cattle and drive them to the outskirts of Buenos Aires city, where most saladeros were located. They also needed arrangements for fattening cattle before slaughter in fields near the saladeros. Because almost all of these establishments were located in or near the city, their owners could better litigate disputes there than in country towns. Saladero owners thus had a strong interest in maintaining both the political unity of Buenos Aires Province and the centralization of the court system in Buenos Aires City, which leads to the expectation that being a saladero owner had a strongly positive effect on the likelihood of signing the petition against division.

Warehousing of hides in preparation for export was another branch of the cattle industry. Because hide warehouse owners had no need for delivery of cattle on the hoof, they were much less vulnerable than saladero owners to disruptions in supply networks. Hide warehouse owners did, however, have a direct interest in the continued expansion of Buenos Aires ranching. There is thus reason to expect a positive effect of hide warehouse ownership on propensity to sign the petition, although this effect may not be as strong as the saladero ownership effect.

The remaining major segment of the Buenos Aires dominant class was comprised of large ranchers. For purposes of this analysis, all those with at least five square leagues of

land (about 52 square miles) are considered large ranchers. This assumption is justified because the great majority of the land under production in the province was used for ranching, and it was extremely unlikely that tracts as large as five square leagues would be devoted primarily to farming. A minority of those with large land claims rented their land to others, but even in these cases the income they derived from the land depended on ranching because the renters were almost certainly ranchers.

Large landholders tended to live in the city and depended on regular access to the judicial and police systems to defend their land and cattle, and to encroach on the land and cattle of smaller ranchers. They also depended on influence over local authorities to maintain control over their peons and small settlers around their ranches. Large ranchers, especially those resident in Buenos Aires City, had more to lose from division of the province than any other segment of the dominant class. This leads to the expectation that large ranchers were more likely than any other segment of the dominant class to sign the petition opposing division of the province.

It is reasonable to expect that, among large ranchers, those with more land were more likely to sign the petition because they were more likely to live in the city and thus to have direct access to the centers of power located there. They probably also had greater capacity to manipulate the existing political system to their advantage, and the potential losses from division of the province may have seemed especially clear to them. Large ranchers with land spread out around the province probably felt more of a need for political and judicial centralization than those with holdings consolidated in one area. Those with land in several areas may also have had land in both of the proposed new provinces, and they would have had to pursue litigation and influence government officials in two country towns rather than one if the province were divided. Thus, controlling for the influence of the other variables discussed above, those with more dispersed holdings may have been more likely to sign the petition against division. For purposes of this

analysis, dispersion of landholdings is indicated by the number of rural districts, or partidos, in which each individual had land.

Results

Table 2 shows the distribution of land within segments of the dominant class. Import-export merchants and salted meat producers, who were generally wealthier than the other two urban elite groups, were more likely to claim land and tended to claim more land than did wholesale merchants. (The distribution of land shown for hide warehouse owners is not reliable because there are too few of them in the sample.) Within each category of urban elites, the majority did not have rural land by 1830. This does not contradict the idea that ranching was becoming crucial to the dominant class in the 1820s. Given the nature of the Buenos Aires economy in the 1820s and what we know about the careers of many of those who claimed land, there is every reason to believe that the wealthier members of the urban elite were the most likely to invest in ranches (e.g. Carretero 1970b; Galmarini 1974). It is also important to keep in mind that these data pertain to individuals, not families. The proportion with a family interest in ranching was undoubtedly much greater than the proportion with an individual interest in ranching.²⁷

Table 3 shows the percentage signing the petition against division of the province among those who were and were not large landholders within categories of the urban elite, as well as the percentage signing the petition among those who were large landholders but not members of any of the urban class segments. As expected the effect of landholding is strong. Within urban elite categories, large landholders were substantially more likely than others to sign the petition, and the proportion signing among those who were "only" landholders is higher than that for any non-landed urban elite category. Despite the small number of cases in some cells, the order of urban elite categories, ranked by percentage

27. Zeitlin and Ratchliffe (1988) argue that families rather than individuals should be the units of analysis in studies of dominant classes. Gathering the genealogical information necessary for such a study of early nineteenth-century Buenos Aires would be a daunting, and perhaps impossible, task.

signing, is the same for both the landed and the non-landed and is consistent with the expectations outlined above. Controlling for land ownership, salted meat factory owners were more likely than those in other urban categories to sign the petition. Import-export merchants, the group with the most to gain from consolidation of a national state, were the least likely to sign the petition.

The results in Table 3 could be somewhat misleading because the urban class segments are not mutually exclusive. Table 4 presents selected logit models using categories of economic activity to predict propensity to sign the petition against division. These models control for the effects of all variables in each equation and permit more rigorous tests of specific hypotheses. Table 5 presents fitted probabilities of signing the petition within categories of the independent variables from model 4 in Table 4, evaluated at the means of the other variables in the equation. In other words, Table 5 shows the estimated effect of each independent variable on the probability of signing the petition for hypothetical individuals who were "average" on all other variables included in the equation. Table 6 shows differences between the coefficients in model 1 (Table 4), along with t-statistics that can be used for formal tests of inequality between coefficients.

In all models in Table 4 the coefficient for the import-export merchant dummy variable is nonsignificant and close to zero, which is consistent with the idea that import-export merchants had contradictory interests with respect to the issue of dividing the province. The reduction of this coefficient when categories for size of landholding are introduced in model 2 indicates that much of the slightly positive import-export merchant effect estimated in model 1 is due to the presence of some very large landholders among import-export merchants.²⁸

28. Because it was not possible to identify all foreigners and foreigners were most prevalent among import-export merchants, the coefficient for the import-export merchant dummy variable may have a slight negative bias. If all unidentified foreigners were removed from the sample, this coefficient might be somewhat more positive, although it probably would not be nearly as strong as the coefficients for the other class segment variables.

The effect of owning a wholesale operation on propensity to oppose division of the province is strong and highly significant. In Table 5, the fitted probability that wholesalers signed the petition is over double the fitted probability that those who were not wholesalers signed the petition.

Coefficients for the effects of owning land, a salted meat plant, or a hide warehouse are all strongly positive, although the hide warehouse effect is not statistically significant--due, presumably, to the small number of individuals in the sample identified as hide warehouse owners. As anticipated above, the estimated effect of owning or managing a saladero is stronger than the effect of owning a wholesale business. Table 5 shows that, controlling for the other variables and evaluating the salted meat factory effect at the means of these other variables, the fitted probability of signing the petition against dividing the province is about .33 among salted meat producers, but only about .13 among those not involved in salted meat production. Table 6 shows, however, that the difference between the coefficient for salted meat factory ownership and that for being a wholesale merchant is nonsignificant, although the difference between the salted meat effect and the import-export merchant effect is significant at the .1 level (one-tailed).

As expected, the global effect of landholding estimated in model 1 (Table 4) is stronger than the effect of being in any of the other economic categories. Table 6 shows that differences between the landholder coefficient and each of the other class segment coefficients except the hide warehouse effect are all significant at at least the .05 level in one-tailed tests. (The difference between the landholder coefficient and the hide warehouse coefficient is significant at the .1 level).

Model 2 in Table 4 includes categories for different amounts of land held. The lowest category of landholding is not empty because, although an individual had to have 5 or more square leagues of land to be included in the sample as a large landholder, some of those included by other criteria had smaller amounts of land. Thus the smaller landholders in the sample are not representative of smaller landholders in general because

they were members of the urban economic elite. The coefficients for all land categories are strong and statistically significant, but there is no noticeable trend or pattern among categories below 50 square leagues, indicating that, among landholders with less than 50 square leagues, the amount of land had little effect on propensity to sign the petition. The coefficient for "50 or more square leagues," however, is roughly double the largest coefficients for lower categories of landholding. Controlling for the other variables in the equation, those who had 50 or more square leagues of land were much more likely than other landholders to sign the petition opposing division of the province. In model 4 the categories of land area below 50 square leagues are collapsed into one category, with little change in the likelihood-ratio X^2 for the equation, which indicates that, among landholders with less than 50 square leagues, the effect of amount of land is not statistically significant.²⁹

Models 3 and 4 also include a variable categorizing the number of rural partidos in which an individual held land. These models do not include a category for one partido because this would produce linear dependency among the independent variables. The coefficient for each partidos category is the estimated difference between the log-odds of signing the petition among those in that category and the log-odds of signing among those with land in only one partido. As expected, the number of partidos in which an individual had land does seem to be associated with propensity to sign the petition, net of the amount of land held and the other economic position variables. There is a monotonic increase in the fitted propensity to sign the petition from those with land in only one partido to those with land in two or three partidos, to those with land in four or more partidos. Although the joint effect of the number of partidos dummy variables is nonsignificant ($X^2 = 3.95$, 2 d.f.), the coefficient for the contrast between those with land in four or more partidos and

29. The change in likelihood-ratio X^2 across models is also (asymptotically) distributed as X^2 with degrees of freedom equal to the change in degrees of freedom across models. Thus X^2 for the difference between models 3 and 4, which tests for the joint significance of landholding categories between 5 and 49.99 square leagues, is approximately 2.8 with 4 degrees of freedom, which is clearly nonsignificant.

those with land in only one partido reaches the .05 level of significance in a one-tailed test.³⁰

Part B of Table 5 shows the fitted probability of signing the petition against division within categories of the crosstabulation of number of square leagues and number of partidos from model 4. There is a dramatic contrast between those with 50 or more square leagues of land and those with less land, with the fitted probability of signing the petition ranging from about .72 to about .92 among those with 50 or more square leagues and ranging from about .21 to about .55 among those with lesser amounts of land. There is also a substantial difference between the fitted probability for those with land in four or more partidos and the fitted probability for those with land in less than four partidos. The fitted probability for those with no land is only about .04, which is much lower than that for those in any of the categories of landholding. The overall pattern suggested by Table 5b is that, net of the other economic position variables, those with any amount of land were substantially more likely than those with no land to sign the petition, and those with either very large quantities of land or widely scattered holdings were much more likely than other landholders to sign the petition.

The results of this quantitative analysis are consistent with the hypothesis that, with the exception of import-export merchants, all major segments of the Buenos Aires dominant class tended to oppose the proposed division of the province. The results are also consistent with the hypothesis that members of the dominant class more directly connected to the cattle industry or involved in rural economic activities requiring privileged access to the judicial and police systems were more likely to oppose division of the province than were those in other segments of the dominant class. Some of these results, such as the estimated difference between the effect of salted meat factory ownership and the effect of

30. When number of partidos is entered as a scaled variable it is also significant. This is true for both logged and unlogged versions of the variable. It is not likely that number of partidos is actually a surrogate for the amount of land held in the 50 or more square leagues category because most of those with land in four or more partidos had less than 50 square leagues.

being a wholesale merchant, are equivocal because they may well be due to random error. On the other hand, these data provide solid evidence that being a large landholder had a much stronger positive effect on the likelihood of opposing division of the province than did membership in any of the other economic categories.

The differential propensity of different class segments to sign the petition only constitutes indirect evidence that opposition to division among the Buenos Aires dominant class was motivated by concern about losing influence over the local and provincial state. Taken in combination with the clearly expressed concern about access to courts in the text of the petition against division, however, this analysis provides good evidence that opposition to division among the dominant class was motivated by the threat of losing privileged access to the judicial system. The idea that opposition was also motivated by concern about losing other forms of preferential access to state power, such as the ability to influence rural Police Commissioners, remains more speculative.

The issue of division pitted political elites dedicated to building a central state against the core of the Buenos Aires dominant class. Additional evidence regarding this question emerges when we consider those at the very top of the class structure. Only 17 men in the sample possessed 50 or more square leagues of land, and 13 of them signed the petition against dividing the province. Only nine individuals in the sample both held 50 or more square leagues of land and were either an important urban merchant, a salted meat factory owner, or a hide warehouse owner, but all of them signed the petition.

Import-export merchants had greater reason than the rest of the upper class to support construction of a central state, and the effect of being an import-export merchant on the likelihood of registering opposition to division was substantially weaker than the effect of being in any other major segment of the dominant class. Being an import-export merchant, however, did not decrease the probability of signing the petition; it simply had no effect. The weakness of the estimated import-export merchant effect indicates that statemaking elites could not rely on import-export merchants for support in the conflict

over division of Buenos Aires Province. Indeed it is likely that the most powerful import-export merchants were the same ones who were diversifying into ranching and salted meat production in the 1820s, and thus had compelling reasons to oppose this particular project of statemaking elites. The degree to which upper class support for central-state elites had eroded by the end of 1826 is indicated by the fact that the petition against division was signed by 9 of the 14 large merchants and financiers identified by Galmarini (1974) as major investors in state projects. The issue of dividing Buenos Aires Province may have done more than anything else to undermine support for state elites among wealthy merchants and investors who had previously supported statemaking projects.

Dissolution of the Central State

The attempt to construct an Argentine state in the 1820s was not able to survive the active opposition of the large ranchers and merchants of Buenos Aires. The proposed division of Buenos Aires Province never came to a vote in the National Constituent Congress, which suspended all business except that related to the war in late December, 1826 (Ravignani, ed. 1937, vol. 3, p. 1190). In June of 1827, President Rivadavia resigned and, after a brief caretaker government, both the National Constituent Congress and the rest of the national government were disbanded. Rivadavia offered his resignation because an envoy to Brazil had violated his instructions and signed a peace treaty unfavorable to Argentina. The ready acceptance of Rivadavia's resignation and subsequent disbandment of the national state, however, had much more to do with lack of support for the national government in both Buenos Aires and other provinces, several of which rejected the constitution written by the Constituent Congress.

Opposition by the Buenos Aires dominant class weakened the position of statemaking elites in several ways. The most direct manifestation of this opposition was growing opposition to the national government among the Buenos Aires delegation in the Constituent Congress. In the longer run, state elites were under pressure to attend to the needs of the dominant class because the state depended on import and export tariffs for

most of its revenue. The state also depended on ranchers for control of rural areas because their employees and clients occupied many positions of authority in the countryside. Finally, those opposed to the war with Brazil found a powerful ally in Great Britain, which wanted to end the war to preserve the flow of trade with the region. In 1828, Britain helped negotiate a settlement which established the independent state of Uruguay in the disputed territory (Ferns 1960, pp. 155-194).

Although leaders of the other provinces called for a new Constituent Congress and a new constitution that would organize the country along more federalist lines, the dominant class of Buenos Aires Province manifested little interest in a new congress or constitution or any form of reconstituted national state. Members of this class seem to have preferred to ignore the other provinces. Argentina would have no form of central political organization at all until the early 1850s, and Buenos Aires would remain outside the subsequent Argentine Confederation until 1860.

Statemaking II

A central state was not consolidated in Argentina until the late nineteenth century. As Oscar Oszlak has shown, the conquest of power by the Argentine state was a long process facilitated by new technologies of transport and communication, especially the railroad, which aided in the creation of a national market and allowed rapid movement of troops sent to put down regional rebellions (Oszlak 1982). To a substantial degree, the construction of the central Argentine state and the infrastructural projects that accompanied it, especially railroads, were underwritten by British capital (Lewis 1983; McMichael 1985; Platt 1972, pp. 278-302; Stone 1962).

At the same time, new opportunities for export-oriented staple production made the landed "oligarchy" of Buenos Aires more amenable to statemaking. The wool boom of the 1860s led many Buenos Aires ranchers to begin raising sheep and acquiring more land (Sabato 1989). All available land in Buenos Aires was soon taken and land further south was still held by Indians. According to David Rock, the Province of Buenos Aires could not

conquer this "new" land because its troops were repeatedly called away from the frontier to fight against other provinces. The large ranchers of Buenos Aires therefore became more willing to cooperate in the formation of a national state, which subsequently undertook to conquer Patagonia (Rock 1985, pp. 123-4). Opposition to statemaking by the Buenos Aires dominant class was thus undermined by expansion of the frontiers of pastoral production into new regions and the military exigencies of this expansion.

The genocidal "conquest of the desert" was followed by a period of intense land-grabbing similar to that of the 1820s, as Patagonia became incorporated into the world-system. During this period, and partly as a result of political alliances formed in the process of constructing a national state, the dominant class of Buenos Aires became less a regional dominant class and more a national upper class. Wealthy Buenos Aires ranching families intermarried with upper class families of the interior provinces, and Buenos Aires ranchers began investing in some of the economic activities of the interior, particularly the Tucumán sugar industry, thus forming a class with a durable interest in the existence of a national state (Giménez Zapiola, ed. 1975; Guy 1980; Hollander 1976).

Conclusions

The evidence for Argentina is consistent with the idea that dependency may undermine statemaking. The effort to build an Argentine state in the early nineteenth century led to bitter conflict between state elites and the dominant class of Buenos Aires Province. A political elite which had consistently supported the interests of the dominant class of large ranchers and merchants found itself driven by the geo-political logic of statemaking into acting contrary to some of the most important interests of this dominant class. The staple-exporting upper class of Buenos Aires came to oppose the statemaking project both because it stood to gain little from the existence of a national state and because statemaking disrupted political arrangements on which this class depended for its existence as a class. One form in which this conflict became evident was a struggle over a crucial resource for both states and dominant classes, the people who labor or fight.

Another form was an intense dispute over political jurisdictions in the territory of Buenos Aires which is only understandable with reference to the social relations and geography of cattle production in that time and place.

The results of this case study are suggestive for other early and mid nineteenth-century attempts to construct national states in Latin America, and may be validated or invalidated for them by studies of other Latin American regions. The theoretical framework used here should not, however, be directly applied to other peripheral areas and other historical periods. In areas subject to formal colonial domination there is generally little latitude for the statemaking projects of indigenous political elites. In the twentieth century, the interstate system tends to reinforce the existence of even those states that are quite weak relative to dominant classes (Wallerstein 1984, pp. 29-30). With the increase in the direct transfer of resources between states in the twentieth century, international ties may even strengthen peripheral state elites, especially military elites, relative to dominant classes (Tilly 1982).³¹

Although the theoretical framework of this paper cannot be directly generalized, a focus on interaction between staple-exporting dominant classes and statemaking political elites may prove fruitful for studies of peripheral state formation in a wide variety of times and places. Such a focus requires recognition by world-system and dependency analysts that state elites are actors who must be studied in their own right, and that the goals and actions of state elites cannot simply be inferred from putative "needs" of either national economies or the world-system as a whole.

This paper has also highlighted ways in which research on regional productive systems and regional politics can contribute to an understanding of peripheral states and dominant classes. In peripheral areas, where staple production and export are generally

31. This is particularly likely to occur in the case of military aid, which may allow political and military elites to join or even displace the pre-existing dominant class. The Somoza regime of Nicaragua, for example, was brought to power by US military intervention and used the military strength it derived from US aid to increase the economic holdings of the Somoza family at the expense of the rest of the Nicaraguan dominant class (Paige 1988).

regional activities, many of the political issues that most concern staple-producing and exporting dominant classes are regional issues, and studies of peripheral politics that focus only on national states are likely to miss much.

Appendix A. Data on Economic Elites

This is not a 100% sample of economic elites. The information on landholdings includes land claimed up to 1830 and was drawn from cadastral records by Andrés Carretero (1970a). For land to figure in the cadastral records it had to be measured at some time by government surveyors, which, as Carretero points out, was less likely to have occurred in areas of earlier settlement. Fortunately for this study, the principal cattle ranching areas were areas of more recent settlement, so those with official claims to land in these areas are more likely to be included in the sample. Information on land occupied by the many squatters who lived on the plains was not included in the cadastral records. In the 1810s, some squatters were owners of large herds with de facto control over large tracts of land. During the 1820s, however, powerful squatters were given strong incentives to register official claims to the land they used, a process which involved having the land surveyed (Cárcano 1917). It is therefore reasonable to assume that the squatters who had not claimed land by 1830 were not among large ranchers, and would not have been included in the sample of economic elites in any case.

The information on urban economic elites is also incomplete, as J. J. M. Blondel, the editor of the political and commercial almanac for 1826 from which this data is drawn, notes in his introduction (Blondel, ed. 1968 [1825]). In particular, the 14 hide warehouse owners listed in this almanac seem to underrepresent the true number of hide warehouse owners, due to the fact that the almanac tends to include only businesses located in the city of Buenos Aires. Some hide warehouses were located on the outskirts of the city along the banks of the Río de la Plata or the Riachuelo, a smaller river on the southern edge of the city, and some were probably attached to salted meat factories, which by law were located outside of the city (due to the overwhelming stench of rotting blood and animal parts). Because Blondel's almanac does not include salted meat plants, I have compiled a list of salted meat factory owners and managers from a report on cattle slaughtered in

these establishments in late 1822,³² to which I have added the names of salted meat entrepreneurs mentioned as being active in the 1820s in Alfredo J. Montoya's (1970) history of Argentine salted meat factories.

Women were identified by their first names. Individuals were identified as foreigners if they were identified as foreign residents in A Five Years Residence in Buenos Aires (An Englishman 1825), or if they had last names that were clearly English, Scotch, Irish, French, or German. This procedure is rather rough, and it undoubtedly led to exclusion of some Argentines and inclusion of some foreigners. Foreigners were most prevalent among import-export merchants, but many were also involved in other branches of economic activity, especially salted meat production and ranching. Buenos Aires also had many residents of Portuguese descent at this time, but those with Portuguese names were not excluded from the sample because the Portuguese had already been settling in Buenos Aires for two centuries and there was no influx of Portuguese after independence comparable to that of merchants from northwestern Europe and the United States (Saguier 1985). It is likely that the great majority of those in the sample with Portuguese names were Argentine citizens and thus fully eligible for political participation.

32. "Razon del Ganado bacuno que se ha muerto en los Saladeros y Corresponde al mes de Noviembre" undated. AGN X 12-6-7, Gobierno 1822.

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Tables for Karl Monsma, "Dominant Class and Statemaking in a Peripheral Area."

Table 1. Data Sources.

Variables	Sources
Petition	<p>Archivo Histórico de la Provincia de Buenos Aires. 1949. <u>Documentos del Congreso General Constituyente de 1824-1827 (Documentos del Archivo, Vol. 13)</u>. La Plata, Argentina. pp. 279-331.</p>
<p>Import-export merchant, Wholesale merchant, Hide warehouse owner</p>	<p>Blondel, J. J. M. ed. 1825. <u>Almanaque político y de comercio de la ciudad de Buenos Ayres para el año de 1826</u>. Buenos Aires: Imprenta del Estado. (Reprinted in 1968 by Ediciones de la Flor, Buenos Aires)</p>
Salted meat factory owner	<p>"Razon del Ganado bacuno que se ha muerto en los Saladeros y Corresponde al mes de Noviembre" undated. Archivo General de la Nación, Buenos Aires. Sala X 12-6-7, Gobierno 1822; Montoya, Alfredo J. 1970. <u>Historia de los saladeros argentinos</u>. Buenos Aires: Editorial El Coloquio.</p>
<p>Landholder, Square leagues of land, Number of partidos</p>	<p>Carretero, Andrés M. 1970. "Contribución al conocimiento de la propiedad rural en la Provincia de Buenos Aires para 1830." <u>Boletín del Instituto de Historia Argentina "Doctor Emilio Ravignani,"</u> Universidad de Buenos Aires. Vol. 13 (Second series) No. 22-23. pp. 246-292.</p>

Table 2. Distribution of Land Within Upper Class Segments.

Square Leagues	Import-export	Wholesale	Hides	Salted Meat	Land Only
no land	62.2%	74.4%	71.4%	55.9%	--
.01-4.99	8.9	9.1	0	17.6	--
5.00-9.99	4.4	5.0	21.4	8.8	38.9%
10.00-19.99	8.6	4.1	0	8.8	38.3
20.00-29.99	2.2	3.3	7.1	0	13.0
30.00-49.99	6.7	2.5	0	2.9	4.7
50 or more	6.7	1.7	0	5.9	5.2
Total	100.0	100.1	99.9	99.9	100.1
N	45	121	14	34	193

Notes: Total N=396. One square league is about 10.43 square miles. Ns for class segments do not add up to the total N because the first four categories are not mutually exclusive. Percentages do not all add to 100 due to rounding. 'Land Only' means large landholders who were not in any of the other categories.

Table 3. Percentage Signing Petition Against Division Within Categories Formed by the Crosstabulation of Elite Categories and Land Ownership.

	At least 5 square leagues of land	No land or less than 5 square leagues
Import/export merchant	38.5% (13)	6.3% (32)
Wholesale merchant	45.0 (20)	9.9 (101)
Hide warehouse owner	50.0 (4)	10.0 (10)
Salted meat factory owner	66.7 (9)	12.0 (25)
Landholder only	20.2 (193)	--

Notes: N = 396. Numbers in parentheses are base n's for the percentages; they do not add up to the total N because the first four categories on the left are not mutually exclusive.

Table 4. Logit Models for Effects of Economic Position on Propensity of Economic Elites to Sign the Petition Against Dividing the Province of Buenos Aires.

Independent Variables	Models			
	1	2	3	4
Constant	-3.615 (-8.01)	-3.724 (-7.44)	-3.593 (-7.06)	-3.567 (-7.64)
Import-export merchant	.2479 (.49)	.07382 (.13)	.04832 (.08)	-.03997 (-.07)
Wholesale merchant	.9537 (2.61)	1.106 (2.56)	.9741 (2.19)	.9450 (2.43)
Hide warehouse owner	.9448 (1.10)	.9615 (1.08)	.7328 (.77)	.8992 (1.00)
Salted meat factory owner	1.213 (2.49)	1.353 (2.40)	1.212 (2.11)	1.1613 (2.25)
Landholder	2.236 (5.22)			
<u>Square leagues of land</u>				
.01-49.99				1.815 (3.91)
.01-4.99		1.811 (2.96)	1.781 (2.90)	
5.00-9.99		2.361 (4.46)	2.107 (3.76)	
10.00-19.99		1.755 (3.19)	1.466 (2.48)	
20.00-29.99		2.459 (4.02)	2.023 (2.99)	
30.00-49.99		1.993 (2.54)	1.526 (1.80)	
50.00 or more		4.671 (6.29)	4.063 (4.94)	4.077 (5.17)
<u>Number of partidos</u>				
2-3			.4299 (1.14)	.4029 (1.15)
4 or more			1.543 (1.84)	1.548 (1.89)
Likelihood-ratio X^2	36.51	61.39	65.34	62.56
df	5	10	12	8

Notes: N=396. Petition variable coded 1 if individual signed petition, 0 otherwise. All independent variables coded 1 for cases in the category listed and 0 otherwise. Ratios of coefficients to their asymptotic standard errors (t-ratios) are in parentheses.

Table 5. Estimated Probability of Signing Petition Within Categories of Independent Variables
(Evaluated at the means of the other independent variables).

A. Binary Variables

	Probability if in category	Probability if not in category
Import-export merchant	.139	.144
Wholesale merchant	.244	.112
Salted meat factory owner	.326	.132
Hide warehouse owner	.285	.140

B. Land Variables

Number of partidos	Number of square leagues		
	0	.01-49.99	50.00 or more
0	.041	--	--
1	--	.208	.716
2-3	--	.282	.791
4 or more	--	.553	.922

Source: Table 4, model 4.

Table 6. Differences Between Coefficients in Model 1 (Table 4).

Wholesale	.7058 (1.17)			
Hide Warehouse	.6969 (.67)	-.008935 (-.00)		
Salted Meat	.9649 (1.36)	.2681 (.50)	.2681 (.28)	
Landholder	1.989 (3.11)	1.292 (3.09)	1.292 (1.42)	1.024 (1.77)
	Import-export	Wholesale	Hides	Salted Meat

Notes: Coefficient for variable on bottom subtracted from coefficient for variable at left; t-ratios in parentheses. Standard error for $(b_i - b_j) = [\text{Var}(b_i) + \text{Var}(b_j) - 2\text{Cov}(b_i, b_j)]^{1/2}$

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