



Colonialism and Postcolonial Development: Spanish America in Comparative Perspective (Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics)

By James Mahoney

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In this comparative-historical analysis of Spanish America, James Mahoney offers a new theory of colonialism and postcolonial development. The book explores why certain kinds of societies are subject to certain kinds of colonialism and why these forms of colonialism give rise to countries with differing levels of economic prosperity and social well-being. Mahoney contends that differences in the extent of colonialism are best explained by the potentially evolving fit between the institutions of the colonizing nation and those of the colonized society. Moreover, he shows how institutions forged under colonialism bring countries to relative levels of development that may prove remarkably enduring in the postcolonial period. The argument is sure to stir discussion and debate, both among experts on Spanish America who believe that development is not tightly bound by the colonial past, and among scholars of colonialism who suggest that the institutional identity of the colonizing nation is of little consequence.

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Review

'Overall, Colonialism and Postcolonial Development is a major contribution to the history of Spanish America, to the study of colonialism and to the literature on institutions and development ... Furthermore, Mahoney's comparative historical methodology deftly accounts for how the particular histories of each country interacted with their colonial legacies to produce patterns of development. the discussion of how exogenous factors such as war affected development in Chile, Bolivia and Costa Rica is very well done ... this book is essential reading for students of comparative politics and Latin American history.' Alex McDougall, Political Studies Review

About the Author

James Mahoney is a Professor of Political Science and Sociology at Northwestern University. He is the author of *The Legacies of Liberalism: Path Dependence and Political Regimes in Central America* (2001), which received the Barrington Moore Jr. Prize of the Comparative and Historical Section of the American Sociological Association. He is also coeditor of *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), which received the Giovanni Sartori Book Award of the Qualitative Methods Section of the American Political Science Association and coeditor (with Kathleen Thelen) of *Explaining Institutional Change: Ambiguity, Agency, and Power* (Cambridge University Press, 2010).

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