

STATE-BUILDING IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE*

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DEFINITIONAL ISSUES

- **Main focus on: 1/ origins of state; 2/ territorial size of states.**
 - **Standard definition: state as individuals/organization with monopoly of coercion (Weber 1968).**
 - **Still, the definition is a contested one:**
 - **state = modern national state (absolute sovereignty over territory; impersonal institutions; ruler defends a separate legal order; inter-state recognition)**
 - **versus a variety of political orders (empires, city federations, feudal networks)**
 - **The choice of the concept has implications for measurement of outcome to be explained and seems to be correlated with preferred explanatory variable (war among the former; institutional/bureaucratic choices, ideas, trade among the latter).**
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FROM STATELESS SOCIETIES TO POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS (1)

- **Until 1970s-1980s:**
 - a/ **normative approach (contractarian theorists);**
 - b/ **sociological theories (Marxist [Wallerstein 1974]; functionalist [Wittfogel; Hardin 1989; partly Olson 1993]; war-making (Hintze, Tilly))**

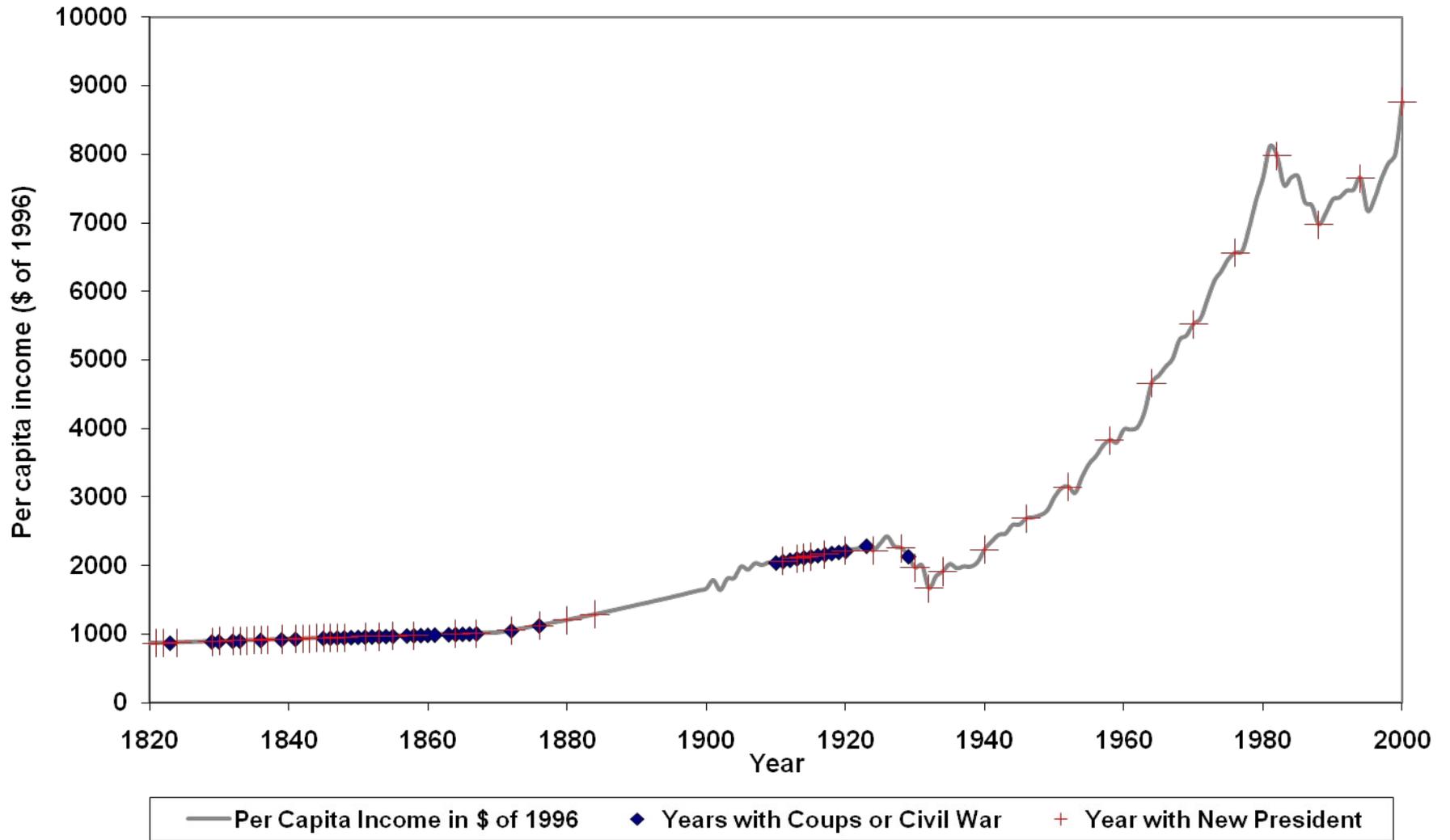
 - **First generation of PE models of state formation: state as a contract between two parties (producers / looters) exchanging rents for protection. Problems: bandit's credible commitment; exogeneity of parties' initial resources; lack of account of distributional consequences.**

 - **Second generation of PE models of state formation (North 1981, ch. 3; Olson 1993; Olson 2000; Konrad & Skaperdas 2006): instead of looting, the “specialist in violence” becomes a ‘stationary bandit’, extracting rents and protecting producers.**
 - **States break down following sudden price shocks, shifts in military technology, changes in bandit's discount rate (Bates 2008)**
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FROM STATELESS SOCIETIES TO POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS (2)

- **Problems of second generation models:**
 - **Sparse empirical validation**
 - **Imprecision about conditions under which non-feasible cooperation is feasible**
 - **Exclusion of ‘republican’ solution**
 - **Lack of analysis of redistributive effects**
 - **Lack of attention to institutional mechanisms to sustain political order among coalition of rulers**
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Figure 6. Mexico. Economic Development and Political Instability



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 - **A potentially more encompassing model ...**
 - **Individuals cooperate (without third-party enforcer) as long as economic conditions are relative equal . [*Foraging communities*]**
 - **After a biased technological (economic) shocks introduces inequality, ‘spontaneous’ cooperation impossible, individuals sort out into different types, conflict becomes generalized. [*Agrarian Revolution*]**
 - **Three outcomes are feasible: permanent conflict; monarchy; self-government. [*State Formation*]**
 - **Each solution is a function of military technology and affects the final distribution of income (in interaction with the initial economic shock).**
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MILITARY TECHNOLOGY AND POLITICAL REGIME

- **Shifts in military technology change the balance of power and political institutions:**
 - **Bronze weapons led to more hierarchical societies: emergence of Mesopotamian states ca. B.C. 3,500.**
 - **Two-wheeled chariots led to ‘feudalization’ around 1,800 BC.**
 - **Introduction of iron & Greek/Roman democracy (Andreski 1968, McNeill 1981)**
 - **Stirrup * Terrain: Variation in European & Japanese feudalism**
 - **Gunpowder and modern state.**
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STATE FORMATION IN EUROPE

- **War-making & state-making (Hintze 1902, Tilly 1990):**
 - **Modern technologies (canon) behind process of political concentration & centralization in Europe since ca. 1450**
 - **Variation in timing & size due to ‘coercion/capital’ (land/capital ?) ratio, army/navy, endogenous institutions**
 - **Final convergence by 1870**

- **From state-making to national identity:**
 - **In Tilly (also Levi), war-making changes the nature of state institutions. But non-war explanations of national identity dominate in the literature: economic modernization (Gellner 1983), ideational processes (B. Anderson 1983), elite strategies (Laitin 1998)**

- **From national identity to state-making:**
 - **Ethnic fractionalization and efficiency (Alesina et al 1999); inter-group inequality & civil wars (Cederman et al 2010).**
 - ~~**Institutional imbalances (due to colonial legacies) and instability (Wilkinson)**~~

STATE FORMATION OUTSIDE EUROPE

- **Herbst (2000) on Africa. H extends Tilly's arguments:**
 - **Population density & natural barriers explain weak states**
 - **The colonial legacy and the Westphalian system of inter-state recognition have reinforced the fragility of states**

 - **Centeno (2002) on Latin America:**
 - **Internal splits within the ruling strata & the stabilizing influence of European powers also produced weak states**
 - **Soifer (2008, 2010) offers a long-run comparison of several LA states: relative strong states (i.e Chile) were the result of the victory of a centralizing Liberal elite ca. 1840-1850**

 - **Hui (2004, 2005) compares China's unification with Europe's fragmentation.**
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ALTERNATIVE ACCOUNTS

- **The construction of bureaucratic structures preceded the successful adoption of gunpowder (Strayer 1970).**
 - **Societal coalitions explain the type of state (empire, city-state, national state) adopted in Europe – but competitive pressures finally led to historical convergence (Spruyt 1997).**
 - **Analytical models stressing state size as an outcome of trade gains (Friedman 1977) & of trade gains – public goods trade-offs (Alesina and Spolaore 2003). Two concerns: exogeneity of preferences; 20th-century waves in state formation coincide with imperial implosions.**
 - **Agent-based models (Cederman 1997, 2003).**
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