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Week 11 – States, State-Building and State Weakness

Key terms

State strength/capacity

the *strength* of state power, which has to do with the [End Page 21] ability of states to plan and execute policies, and to enforce laws cleanly and transparently—what is now commonly referred to as state or institutional capacity

State scope/size

scope of state activities, which refers to the different functions and goals taken on by governments, their range of activities

Measuring state strength

Tax capacity

- Taxes collected as % of GDP
- Average for developed countries: 35%
- Average for developing countries: 10-15%
- Extremes: Denmark (48%), Central African Republic (5.2%)

Level of violent crime

- # of homicides per 100,000
- Japan: 0.3
- Australia: 1.1
- USA: 4.7 (guns rather than state?)
- Nigeria: 20
- Honduras: 90

Measurement is an important issue for political scientists

- Getting people to do what they don't want to do, esp income tax
- Australia collect 27% of GDP in taxes

Tax capacity = scope

Level of violent crime = strength

Level of violent crime is a good sign of state weakness in other areas

Bellicist/war-centred theory

In sum: state-building
and war-making go
hand-in-hand

State = "protection
racket"?

Protection racket = an entity coercing individuals to pay money for protection from both external powers and the entity itself (if you don't pay your taxes, the state will imprison you) therefore states = "largest examples of organized crime" (Tilly)

Extractive-coercive cycle

Extraction-coercion cycle

- Pre-WW2 Europe was plagued by centuries of increasingly violent warfare
- Wars are expensive, as technology became more complicated wars became more expensive
- To make war effectively the state must tax its citizens; taxation tends to go up in wartime and does not go down to pre-war levels after (ratchet effect)
- The more taxes that are raised, the stronger the army becomes, creating a stronger coercive apparatus to extract taxes from the population

Survival of the fittest; those who were able to mobilise effectively for war survived and were able subsume smaller independent states under their rule

Total vs. limited war

Latin America has a limited history of warfare, smaller scale and less frequent wars

Total war = incredibly violent, entire society mobilised behind war effort

- Give rise to the coercion-extraction cycle
- Citizens begin to identify with state, have stronger connections

Limited war = shorter, less violent, fought by professional soldiers or mercenaries and therefore do not require societal participation

- Don't impact social life/economy/state's coercive capacity

Lack of wars left Latin American states weak

Hurst: state weakness in Sub-Saharan Africa is a function of geography

- Low population density makes it difficult to broadcast power from centre to hinterland
- e.g. Rwandan state is strong compared to other African states due to high population density

"Brown areas"

Brown areas = areas where the state is absent, people have no protection from the law, private group is in control

- Even if you're living in a democracy, if you live in a brown area your voting preferences will be coerced by a private entity in control of that area, no true democracy

The Imperative of State-building – Fukuyama 2004

History of governance

Controversies over the size and strength of the state heavily shaped the politics of the twentieth century.

Early 20th century - state growth

- It began with a liberal international order presided over by the world's leading liberal state, Great Britain. The scope of nonmilitary state activity was relatively narrow in Britain and all the other leading European powers, and in the United States it was even more restricted. As the century proceeded through war, revolution, depression, and war again, that liberal world order crumbled. Across much of the world, the minimalist liberal state gave way to a much more centralized and active one.
- One stream of development led by way of two branches toward the "totalitarian" state, which focused on wholly abolishing civil society as an independent sphere and subordinating it to state purposes instead. In a sense, both branches came to a stop in Berlin: the right-wing branch when Hitler's bunker there was overrun and the Nazi Third Reich crushed in 1945, and the left-wing branch when the Berlin Wall was torn down in 1989 and the communist experiment crumbled under the weight of its own contradictions across Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.
- Yet the first three-quarters of the century saw the size, functions, and scope of the state increase in nontotalitarian countries as well, including virtually all the democracies. In 1900, state sectors in Western Europe and the United States generally consumed no more than 10 percent of annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP); by the 1980s that figure approached 50 percent, and in the case of social-democratic Sweden, 70 percent.

Neoliberalism

- This growth, and the inefficiencies and unanticipated consequences that it brought, led to a vigorous countertrend in the form of Thatcherism and Reaganism. The politics of the last two decades of the century were **[End Page 19]** characterized by the reascendancy of liberal ideas throughout much of the developed world, and attempts to control if not reverse state-sector growth. The collapse of the most extreme form of statism—communism—gave extra impetus to the movement to reduce the size of the state in noncommunist countries. At midcentury, the Austrian-American economist and classical-liberal thinker Friedrich A. Hayek was pilloried for suggesting that there was a connection between totalitarianism and the modern welfare state. By the time of Hayek's death in 1992, his ideas were being taken much more seriously.² This was true not just in the political world, where conservative and center-right parties came to power, but in academia as well, where neoclassical economics gained enormously in prestige as the leading social science.

- Reducing the size of the state sector was the dominant theme of policy during the critical years of the 1980s and early 1990s when a wide variety of countries in the former communist world, Latin America, Asia, and Africa were emerging from authoritarian rule. There was no question that the all-encompassing state sectors of the former communist world needed to be dramatically scaled back. But state bloat had affected many noncommunist developing countries as well.
- In response to these trends, the advice offered by the U.S. government and by international financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank stressed measures meant to reduce the degree of state intervention in economic affairs. One of the formulators of these measures would dub them the "Washington Consensus."³
- The state-building agenda, which was at least as important as the state-reducing one, received no particular thought or emphasis. The result was that liberalizing economic reform failed to deliver on its promise in many countries

Scope vs strength

- The United States, in other words, has a system of limited government that carefully restricts the *scope* of state activity. But within that scope, the state has ample power—and not just on paper—to frame and carry out laws and policies
- It therefore makes sense to distinguish between the *scope* of state activities, which refers to the different functions and goals taken on by governments, and the *strength* of state power, which has to do with the [End Page 21] ability of states to plan and execute policies, and to enforce laws cleanly and transparently—what is now commonly referred to as state or institutional capacity. One of the confusions in our understanding of stateness is the fact that the word "strength" is often used indifferently to refer both to what is here labeled "scope," and to "strength" or capacity.
- The problem for many countries was that in the process of reducing state scope they either decreased state strength, or else generated demands for new types of state capabilities that were either weak or nonexistent. The austerity required by stabilization and structural adjustment policies became an excuse for cutting state capacity across the board, and not just in more-ambitious activities. In other words, while the optimal reform path would have been to decrease scope while increasing strength, many countries actually decreased both scope and strength. Instead of ending up in quadrant I, they ended up in quadrant III.
- Something like this occurred in sub-Saharan Africa in the last quarter of the twentieth century. It is common to characterize regimes in this region as "neopatrimonial"—that is, with political power used to service a clientelist network of supporters. In some cases, like Mobutu's Zaire, the neopatrimonial state could only be described as predatory. In other cases, it led to simple rent-seeking by families, tribes, regions, or ethnic groups. As Nicolas van de Walle points out, the neopatrimonial regime, usually embodied in the office of the president, exists side-by-side with a Weberian rational bureaucracy, often created in colonial times, that exists to perform the routine tasks of public administration.¹¹ The neopatrimonial regime is often threatened by the existence of the "modern" state sector and is a competitor with it for resources

State strength and neoliberalism

- Many proponents of the Washington Consensus now say that they *of course* understood the importance of institutions, rule of law, and the proper sequencing of reforms. But questions of state capacity and state-building were largely absent from policy discussion in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and few policy makers in Washington warned of how liberalization might fail or be turned to perverse ends without proper political, legal, and administrative institutions to provide a context within which the reforms could work.

- Thinking on these issues began to shift only after the East Asian economic crisis of 1997-98 and the problems experienced by Russia and other postcommunist countries. The financial crises in Thailand and South Korea were directly related to premature capital-account liberalization. In both countries, foreign short-term capital suddenly flooded into domestic banks while regulatory institutions lagged in effectiveness
- Thus while privatization involves a reduction in the scope of state functions, it requires a high degree of state capacity to implement. This capacity did not exist in Russia, and the stealing of public resources by the so-called oligarchs did much to delegitimize the postcommunist Russian state.
- There is evidence, however, that the strength of state institutions is more important, broadly speaking, than the scope of state functions. We have, after all, the growth record of Western Europe, whose scope of state functions is far larger than that of the United States, but whose institutions are strong as well. And why have East Asia's economies grown more robustly than their Latin American counterparts over the last 40 years? The likely answer has more to do with the former region's higher-quality state institutions than with any differences in state scope.¹⁵ East Asian states have scopes that range from minimal (Hong Kong) to highly interventionist (South Korea), yet all achieved extraordinarily high rates of per capita GDP growth. By contrast, Latin America as a region scores worse than Asia on virtually every dimension of governance.
- . The fact that a strong positive correlation exists between tax extraction and level of development suggests that, generally and over time, the positive effects of greater administrative capacity counterbalance the negative effects of excessive state scope.

War Making and State Making as Organized Crime – Tilly 1985

authority's monopoly of force. A tendency to monopolize the means of violence makes a government's claim to provide protection, in either the comforting or the ominous sense of the word, more credible and more difficult to resist.

to become established. Early in the state-making process, many parties shared the right to use violence, the practice of using it routinely to accomplish their ends, or both at once. The continuum ran from bandits and pirates to kings via tax collectors, regional power holders, and professional soldiers.

Tudor demilitarization of the great lords entailed four complementary campaigns: eliminating their great personal bands of armed retainers, razing their fortresses, taming their habitual resort to violence for the settlement of disputes, and discouraging the cooperation of their dependents and tenants. In the Marches of England and Scotland, the task was more delicate, for the Percys and Dacres, who kept armies and castles along the border, threatened the Crown but also provided a buffer against Scottish invaders. Yet they, too, eventually fell into line.

By the later eighteenth century, through most of Europe, monarchs controlled permanent, professional military forces that rivaled those of their neighbors and far exceeded any other organized armed force within their own territories. The state's monopoly of large-scale violence was turning from theory to reality.

Eventually, European governments reduced their reliance on indirect rule by means of two expensive but effective strategies: (a) extending their officialdom to the local community and (b) encouraging the creation of police forces that were subordinate to the government rather than to individual patrons, distinct from war-making forces, and therefore less useful as the tools of dissident magnates. In between, however, the builders of national

Lane also speculated that the logic of the situation produced four successive stages in the general history of capitalism:

1. A period of anarchy and plunder
2. A stage in which *tribute takers* attracted customers and established their monopolies by struggling to create exclusive, substantial states
3. A stage in which merchants and landlords began to gain more from protection rents than governors did from tribute
4. A period (fairly recent) in which technological changes surpassed protection rents as sources of profit for entrepreneurs

As should now be clear, Lane's analysis of *protection* fails to distinguish among several different uses of state-controlled violence. Under the general heading of organized violence, the agents of states characteristically carry on four different activities:

1. War making: Eliminating or neutralizing their own rivals outside the territories in which they have clear and continuous priority as wielders of force
2. State making: Eliminating or neutralizing their rivals inside those territories
3. Protection: Eliminating or neutralizing the enemies of their clients
4. Extraction: Acquiring the means of carrying out the first three activities – war making, state making, and protection

This analysis, if correct, has two strong implications for the development of national states. First, popular resistance to war making and state making made a difference. When ordinary people resisted *vigorously*, authorities made concessions: guarantees of rights, representative institutions, courts of appeal. Those concessions, in their turn, constrained the later paths of war making and state making. To be sure, alliances with fragments of the ruling class greatly increased the effects of popular action; the broad mobilization of gentry against Charles I helped give the English Revolution of 1640 a far greater impact on political institutions than did any of the multiple rebellions during the Tudor era.

Second, the relative balance among war making, protection, extraction, and state making significantly affected the organization of the states that

emerged from the four activities. To the extent that war making went on with relatively little extraction, protection, and state making, for example, military forces ended up playing a larger and more autonomous part in national politics. Spain is perhaps the best European example. To the ex-

If we allow that fragile distinction between "internal" and "external" state-making processes, then we might schematize the history of European state making as three stages: (a) The differential success of some power holders in "external" struggles establishes the difference between an "internal" and an "external" arena for the deployment of force; (b) "external" competition generates "internal" state making; (c) "external" compacts among states influence the form and locus of particular states ever more powerfully. In this perspective, state-certifying organizations such as the League of Nations and the United Nations simply extended the European-based process to the world as a whole. Whether forced or voluntary, bloody or peaceful, decolonization simply completed that process by which existing states leagued to create new ones.

Blood and debt - war and the nation-state in Latin America – Centeno 2002

- Miguel Centeno proposes what might be called a "war dividend" that Latin American states never collected during the period crucial to his study, the nineteenth century. Many scholars have linked the rise of powerful central governments to states' ability to create effective armies and extract resources from civilians to pay for warfare: the "bellicist" school of state formation.
- Centeno largely agrees with the suggestion that war making ultimately strengthened the appeal of nationalist sentiments and the capacities of public institutions in the North Atlantic.
- Common citizens also benefited through the expansion of the franchise and other individual and collective rights. Centeno cites William McNeill's colorful claim (which echoed those of nineteenth-century positivists) that military service is "the ball and chain of political privilege" (p. 243), but he points out that the price of this dividend was so high that only extremists would recommend this path for nations who failed to take it earlier. The legacy of industrialized slaughter, genocide, and ethnic hatred that enabled the conquest of these rights in the North Atlantic did not exist in most of Latin America.
- Centeno argues that most Latin American wars were limited in scale and did not create strong central states; rather, they increased national debts, since governments financed them through foreign loans and not through internal revenue.
- The author argues that "limited wars rarely leave positive institutional legacies and often have long-term costs. Instead of producing states built on "blood and iron," they generated states made of blood and debt -- without being able to increase their capacity to collect taxes. It is precisely this latter pattern that we may observe in Latin America." Rather than building nation-states and fostering democratic citizenship, he shows, war in Latin America destroyed institutions, confirmed internal divisions, and killed many without purpose or glory.
- The Latin American wars, the author notes, were not long or threatening enough to allow national institutions to override class-based interests. Latin America lacks the monuments to "our glorious dead" that are ubiquitous in the landscape of Europe and the United States. The limited international struggles that occurred could not overcome internal divisions. The state and dominant elites in almost all countries in the region also appeared to prefer passive populations, thus avoiding steps like mass conscription. A too active or fervent sense of nationhood could actually backfire and create conditions inimical to continued elite domination, Centeno stresses: "The very fact that the military was at least perceived as a ladder for social and ethnic mobility made its role as a national unifier problematic."
- The enemy, as defined by state elites, was thus within, defined racially, along class lines, and by critical ideological struggles. Centeno even suggests there is a negative correlation between international bellicosity and internal violence -- Chile, enjoying the most tranquil domestic scenario, engaged in international conflict most frequently, while Colombia and Mexico, torn apart by internal conflict, have not seen interstate warfare for over a century.

- Foreign intervention aimed at protecting British and U.S. trade and investment interests limited the scale of these conflicts.
- Instead of increasing state autonomy, these limited wars created new dependencies that ultimately thwarted the establishment of strong central governments.

Table 1.1 Comparison of bellic models

	Bellic Model	Latin America
Types of war	Mass war	Limited war
External environment	Geopolitical competition	Acceptance of colonial borders
	Absence of external guarantees	Pax Britannica and Pax Americana
Domestic conditions	United elite	Divided elite
	Coherent concept of nation	Race/caste divisions
	Administrative core	Postcolonial chaos

- Latin America's complicated domestic conditions—divisions within the ruling elites, postcolonial instability, and race and caste divides—stymied the type of reform carried out in the North Atlantic. For Centeno, the United States was saved from the same fate by its massive Civil War. Martyrs like Abraham Lincoln became symbols in a nationalist liturgy that helped smooth over racial tensions and the legacy of black disenfranchisement. The United States also differed from most Latin American republics in excluding or eradicating its indigenous population.
- Centeno supports his case by measuring the ability of a national government to collect taxes, raise troops, and establish effective bureaucracies, as well as to stir nationalist sentiments and disseminate a "coherent concept of nation." North Atlantic nations outstripped their Latin American counterparts in their ability to tax, raise troops, and send millions to die fighting wars.
- Similarly, he measures the less tangible connections between states, their militaries, and broader civic patriotism by looking at the percentage of streets, currency, postage, and monuments dedicated to military heroes in Latin America in comparative perspective. Despite the militarist stereotypes of the region, Latin America comes up short in this area as well.
- Even though, as Centeno rightly notes, Latin American militaries remained "small and affected the lives of a relatively small percentage of any country's population" (p. 237), one must remember there were no other national institutional entities that rivaled the military's institutional capacity and reach into the lives of ordinary citizens. Centeno's study suggests that we need to address the question of institutional fit or the timing and depth of institutional reform in Latin America and elsewhere more clearly, before large-scale comparison can advance much further. In short, what did Latin American states choose to reform and expand first (militaries, schools, poor houses, penitentiaries, etc.) and why?

States and Power in Africa – Herbst 2000

- Consolidation of power over distance is dependent on 1) costs of extending power, 2) nature of boundaries, 3) nature of state system
- In precolonial Africa, the object of war was to capture people and treasure; in Europe it was land, had to mobilize big amounts of resources from own populations and therefore had to to

develop profound ties with their own hinterlands; meanwhile African leaders mainly exploited people outside their polity i.e. those captured in war

Costs of extending power

- Broadcasting power to an area close to the central base involved the mobilization of different types of resources
- Extension of authority = need to deploy soldiers, administrators
- Cost calculations for African leaders differ to European ones due to object of war being people and resources, not land

Boundaries

- Traditional view is that African state boundaries are a weakness because they were arbitrarily drawn by colonial powers
- Book argues that boundaries have been crucial for African leaders as a foundation for state-building, helped shape other buffer institutions such as currency exchange mechanisms and citizenship rules
- States lower the cost of controlling a territory by developing a set of boundary institutions that insulate them from possible economic and political threats while enhancing the capabilities of the centre

State system

- African state system characterized by co-operation
- By changing the nature of the international system, states can profoundly alter the costs of gaining and consolidating control over land

Viability of African states depends on leaders successfully meeting the challenges posed by their particular environment