International Organization

# Artificial States and Civil Conflict Revisited

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# Artificial States and Civil Conflict Revisited

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**Abstract**

Recent studies have explored the effects of pre-colonial institutions on post-colonial patterns of peace and conflict. However, most studies have examined the impact of pre-colonial ethnic institutions rather than pre-colonial states, which were numerous and often multi-ethnic. We argue that the number of historical states that a post-colonial state is host to impacts the likelihood of armed conflict. Historical states can create latent capacities for collective action and difficult to resolve bargaining problems. We show robust empirical evidence using new global data on 423 modern and historical states from version 2 of the 'International Systems Dataset' to suggest that states with modern borders that encapsulate many historical states have experienced significantly more conflict onsets than other countries. The paper concludes by discussing why pre-colonial ethnic institutions might be locally peace-inducing while multiple historical states might be conflict-inducing.

***Keywords***— Artificial states, civil conflict, historical states, state entities, state formation, civil war, ethnic conflict, pre-colonial states

# 1 Introduction

The notion that the territorial composition of the states left in the wake of collapsing European colonial empires is "artificial", and that this has posed serious challenges to decolonised countries is not new. Indeed, the resolution of the first All African People's Congress in Accra in 1959 states that "artificial barriers and frontiers drawn by imperialists to divide African peoples operate to the detriment of Africans, and should therefore be abolished or adjusted" (All African People's Congress 1959, 46). Scholarly works also describe states as more or less artificial. According to Clapham (1996) some states are founded on the association of a group of people and the territory of the state is formed when the limits of its authority meets the authority of other states. These boundaries[1] can be adjusted in one direction or the other, without affecting the identity of the state which lies within them. In contrast, artificial states are states formed within pre-determined territories that pay little respect to the ability of existing political entities to project power (Clapham 1996). The assumption in the literature has been similar to that of the All African Congress that these boundaries are "unnatural and are not conducive to peace or stability;" (All African People's Congress 1959, 46). Yet, systematic theorizing regarding artificial states and empirical testing of their relation to civil conflict remains scarce. Our paper tests the relationship between state artificiality and civil conflict, and finds that having more historical states included within a modern state's boundaries is associated with more conflict onsets and conflict years in the post World War 2 period. We also find that this is primarily a problem for less developed states, who do not have the capabilities to incorporate historical states within the modern state through either military power or economic appeasement.

This paper makes three contributions to the existing literature on the historical legacies of statehood and civil conflict. First, we expand the geographical scope by

[1] In the following we distinguish between frontier, border and boundary as suggested by Prescott & Triggs (2008). A frontier is understood as an area between one polity and another, or at the margins of one polity, which is not under permanent control by any polity. A border is synonymous with borderland and is a description of the indeterminate area separating two polities. While boundaries describe a line, demarcating jurisdictional limits of polities.

using a global sample where existing studies have been largely focused on Africa. What has been common in the literature is to propose more or less general theories that link historical statehood, while testing them on an African sample (Besley & Reynal-Querol 2014, Depetris-Chauvin 2016). Without testing whether these theories also find empirical support outside of Africa, it is difficult to know whether they are generalizable or reflect particularly African experiences of pre-colonial statehood (Dincecco et al. 2019). Other studies have a more limited application to Africa. For example, Nunn (2008), argues that the traumatic experiences of the slave trade have led ethnic groups to distrust one another[2], and finds that it has had long term detrimental effects on economic development. Similarly, Michalopoulos & Papaioannou (2016) finds that ethnic groups who were split as a result of the "scramble for Africa" have experienced more political violence, are more likely to be affected by government-led discrimination and ethnic wars.

Second, our paper problematizes the assumption that pre-colonial states were ethnic states, an assumption that underpins many existing studies of historical statehood and conflict. Within the larger civil conflict literature there has been a substantial focus on the relationship between ethnic groups and conflict (Horowitz 1985, Collier et al. 2009, Fearon & Laitin 2003, Hegre & Sambanis 2006), and their constellations (Collier & Hoeffler 2004, Montalvo & Reynal-Querol 2005), locations (Toft 2005, Weidmann 2009, Weidmann et al. 2010) and interactions with religion (Selway 2011, Toft 2007) and the state (Cederman et al. 2013, Gleditsch 2007, Salehyan 2009). Recent studies show that ethnic groups often have legacies of historical statehood that extend far back into the pre-colonial period. These legacies are thought to influence contemporary conflict risk. For example, Wig (2016) argues that pre-colonial political institutions in Africa have largely persisted through incorporation into current institutions and local political traditions. Using Murdock (1967)'s measure of "jurisdictional hierarchy" as a measure of pre-colonial political centralization, he finds that ethnic groups that were more politically centralized prior to being colonized are less likely to experience violent conflict with the government. He argues that this is because institutional

[2]The majority of slaves were captured by other African groups and sold to European slave traders.

frameworks inherited from pre-colonial forms of statehood allow centralized ethnic groups to punish leaders who would renege on agreements and thus make more credible commitments (Wig 2016). Similarly, Englebert et al. (2002) argue that "The relationship between cultural diversity and civil wars ... may depend on the number of politically distinct pre-colonial groups contained in the state." (Englebert et al. 2002, 1110-1111). They hypothesize that "the degree to which they [boundaries] bring together distinct pre-colonial political cultures"(Englebert et al. 2002, 1093) increases group grievances and weakens governments. Nevertheless, Englebert et al. (2002) also operate under the assumption that pre-colonial statehood and pre-colonial ethnicity is interchangeable when they measure this "suffocation" effect as the standard deviation of the jurisdictional hierarchy index from Murdock (1967) within each country. Interestingly, their results show that the variance in jurisdictional hierarchy among ethnic groups is associated with *increased* risk of civil war (outbreaks) and political instability (coups) at the country level (Englebert et al. 2002).

A recent article by Paine (2019) argues that ethnic groups with pre-colonial states were more likely to inherit the state apparatus, and have tended to exclude stateless ethnic groups, thus triggering civil war. This is supported by the finding that stateless groups in countries containing at least one ethnic group with a pre-colonial ethnic state are more conflict prone than stateless groups in countries without any pre-colonial ethnic states (Paine 2019)[3]. Yet, Paine (2019) suffers from the same underlying assumption that only the pre-colonial states that can be tied to ethnic groups in the EPR data are relevant.

Using an ethnic conceptualization of statehood risks failing to identify the impact of pre-colonial state-structures that were not primarily ethnic on modern conflict. This further implies a risk of misattributing the causes of modern conflict to a lack of previous statehood in contemporary ethnic groups when those ethnic groups may have indeed had past experiences with statehood not defined on an ethnic basis or were parts of multi-ethnic empires. Our paper seeks avoid these potential problems by including all states (identified in the ISD2 data) rather than

[3]Paine (2019) also supports this mechanism by demonstrating that countries with pre-colonial state groups have a higher degree of ethnic politics

only including states that can be tied to ethnic groups in the EPR data set (as Paine (2019)), or examining political centralization of ethnic groups (like Wig (2016), Englebert et al. (2002) and others). While the pre-colonial political landscape was certainly populated by ethnic groups, it was also populated by hundreds of states, many of which were multi-ethnic. It was often states that created political infrastructures that overcame collective action problems and mobilized (but not necessarily monopolized) collective violence and we argue in this paper that these legacies remain important for understanding onsets of civil war. Existing studies by and large assume that statehood in historical systems (primarily in Africa) was coterminous with historical ethnicity (Englebert et al. 2002, Paine 2019, Wig 2016). But this is empirically questionable. While some states were ruled by one primary ethnic group, even within pre-colonial Africa, there were numerous states that were multi-ethnic and incorporated large land areas, primarily with empire-like structures. Some of these states deliberately embarked upon state-building projects that crossed ethnic lines, such as the Sokoto Caliphate in 19th Century Nigeria, Niger and Mali, the Massina Empire and Wassulu Empire. The Asante were both an ethnic group and a multi-ethnic empire that incorporated large parts of modern-day Ghana in an increasingly centralized administration (Wilks 1989).

Third, while previous work by Depetris-Chauvin (2016) and Wig (2016) find previous statehood to be conflict reducing at the group level, we propose a new mechanism – drawing on bargaining theory – for why multiple historical states can actually be conflict inducing at country level. This mechanism does not depend on the assumption that historical statehood is coterminous with ethnicity. It can also help explain some findings in Paine (2019) that state-connected groups are also more conflict prone than stateless groups in stateless countries. He attributes this to cases where state groups have been forced from power and subsequently mobilize to retake it, yet acknowledges that his theoretical expectations for this empirical finding are "ambiguous" (Paine 2019, 26). This mechanism is theoretically different to existing mechanisms that connect state artificiality, low levels of economic development and conflict (Alesina et al. 2011, Englebert et al. 2002). We show evidence in this paper that this is not the primary mechanism linking state artificiality to conflict, although low levels of development may exacerbate

the effects of state artificiality on conflict.

In this paper we build on the concept of "artificial states" from Alesina et al. (2011) and define it as states that overlap-poorly with historical patterns of state-building, and argue that historical statehood can be conflict inducing where modern boundaries bundled together a large number of historical states into a single territory. Such artificial states left many groups with latent capacities for collective action and exacerbated bargaining problems between these groups and post-colonial regimes. Often these bargaining problems broke down into open conflict. States where modern boundaries overlapped to a greater degree with patterns of historical statehood, leaving smaller numbers of states encapsulated in a state's territory have fared better. Our theory helps explain, why, for example, multi-ethnic Benin has not experienced armed conflict while neighboring Nigeria has, and why the ethnically homogeneous Somalia has experienced multiple conflicts while the similarly homogeneous Tunisia has not. We test our theory with a new global dataset that records the number of states that existed in modern-day territories from 1816-1920 and a second measure of pre-colonial statehood drawn from the Correlates of War Entities List. These data capture many new states not recorded in existing datasets and extend the empirical focus beyond pre-colonial Africa to provide a more complete map of historical statehood. The results from regression models show a robust relationship between the number of historical states that existed in a territory between 1816-1920 and the number of conflict onsets and conflict years experienced in the 1946-2017 period. These result do not appear to be explained away by typical factors that drive state-building and conflict such as population density, land area, and historical conflict.

# 2 Theory

## 2.1 Conceptualizing Artificial States

A definition of artificial states should be able to capture differences between states like Niger and Egypt. Both are former colonies in Africa, and thus artificial in the sense that their boundaries were determined by other states. Nevertheless,

Niger is a French administrative construct with no historical precedents and bears little resemblance to the distribution of local ethnic groups or historical state formations in the region. The modern territory of Niger was host to at least three historical states from 1816-1920 (Zinder, Kanem-Bornu and Sokoto,Griffiths & Butcher (2013)). On the other hand, the boundaries of the modern Egyptian state more or less overlap with a single historical Egyptian state, even though Egypt was colonized and has large areas with straight borders. Recognizing that some states are more or less artificial than others, we therefore propose the following definition of state artificiality as *the degree to which a states' boundaries correspond to that of historical states.*

The term "historical" refers a state's existence prior to some point, and in this paper, prior to being colonized or prior to 1920 with the establishment of the League of Nations and, arguably the beginning of the formal, modern global state system. Our definition of 'states' comes from the International Systems Dataset (ISD) (Griffiths & Butcher 2013, Butcher & Griffiths 2019), which adopts a 'thin' definition of statehood. Conceptually, to qualify as a state in the ISD, a political entity needs to have a population of at least 10,000, autonomy over a specific territory and sovereignty that is either uncontested or acknowledged by the relevant international actors. According to these criteria, states have minimum levels of population, and internal and external sovereignty. This thinner version of statehood suits our purposes well as thicker definitions of 'modern', 'territorial' or 'national' statehood that require standing armies, permanent bureaucracies or centralized decision making over the gamete of sovereign functions would exclude nearly all historical states in places such as Africa and Southeast Asia (Spruyt 1998), and indeed a few current states. These criteria permit a wide variety of independent states from highly decentralized, "composite" states (Nexon 2009) such as the Oyo empire in 19th Century West Africa (Law 1977), to the much more centralized Ethiopian empire.

We argue that the artificiality of modern states is well captured by the overlap between historical states and modern boundaries. To illustrate this, Figure 1 shows a number of the states in West Africa around 1850. A state like Nigeria (containing 9 historical states at that time) is more artificial than Ghana which

roughly corresponds to the historical Ashanti kingdom. By our definition, a modern state containing four states prior to 1920 or colonialism, would correspond less with historical political structures than a modern state containing only one historical state, and thus be more artificial.

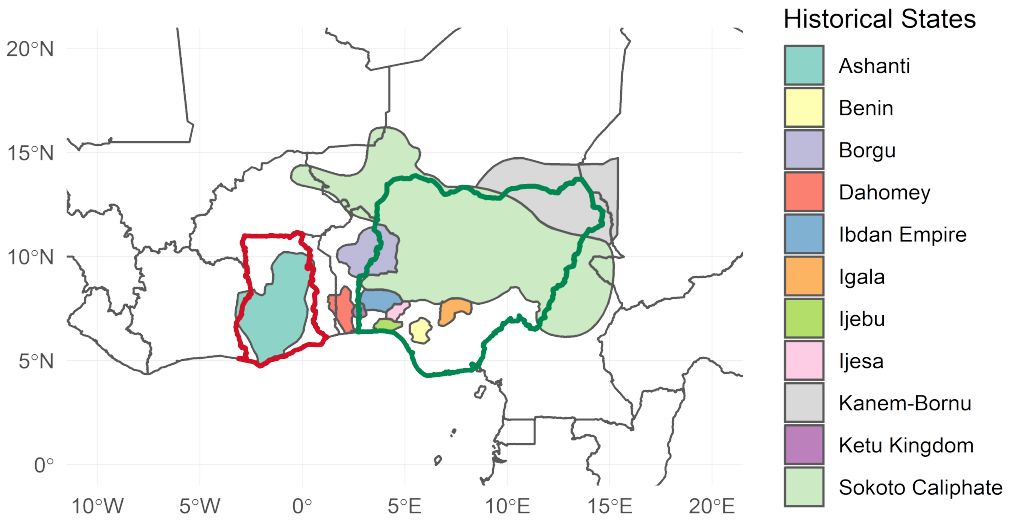


Figure 1: West Africa (1850). Modern boundaries of Nigeria are highlighted in green, while those of Ghana are highlighted in red.

Much of the previous literature (including Alesina et al. (2011), Englebert et al. (2002), Nunn (2014), Paine (2019) and Wig (2015)) have focused on ethnic state formations or more or less politically centralized ethnic groups, this focus overlooks the important fact that many states were multi-ethnic (Englebert et al. 2002). By focusing on state entities we also avoid the problem of identifying which ethnic groups are "politically salient" (Posner 2004).

## 2.2 Artificial States and Civil Conflict

How could the number of historical states condition the likelihood of conflict in the post-colonial era? In this section we use insights from the bargaining theory of

war (Fearon 1995) to argue that multiple historical states provide latent networks around which armed groups can mobilize, in addition to creating information and commitment problems that make bargaining between the state and these groups difficult. This mechanism is different to those proposed by Besley & Reynal-Querol (2014) whereby conflict in the past (which is correlated with statehood) is related to lower levels of trust in the state, potentially poorer institutions and lower levels of economic development that drive armed conflict. The mechanism is also different to those surveyed by Englebert et al. (2002) that highlight reduced economic development and competition between multiple groups for state resources. While Paine (2019) identifies pre-colonial states as potential sources of conflict, his focus is on the dyadic relationships between ethnic groups and the state, which overlooks the broader, often multi-party, strategic environment that regimes and internal challenger groups face at the country-level (Cunningham 2006).

### 2.2.1 Latent Networks of Rebellion

The first part of our argument is that historical state entities can provide latent networks of mobilization. In order to launch a rebellion, dissidents often mobilize from existing networks that lower the cost of organization-building and help overcome collective action problems (Staniland 2014, 17). Historical institutions can survive into the post-colonial period (Wig 2016) and provide a basis for mobilization. An illustrative example is the Buganda Kingdom in Uganda, which has existed as a state entity for over 500 years (Tuck & Rowe 2005). Wig (2016) uses the Baganda an example of group that has largely been able to avoid conflict by having the necessary institutions to provide credible commitments, however the Buganda were brutally suppressed in 1966 after falling out with the Obote regime and launching a brief and unsuccessful armed rebellion (Tuck & Rowe 2005).[4] Another example of historical state institutions that survived into the modern era is the Sultanate of Aussa (Awsa) in Ethiopia. In the process of consolidating their power, the Derge regime tried to arrest the semi independent Sultan in June 1975

[4]This also raises the possibility that observations of peaceful relations in the recent past between groups that hark back to historical states is actually the product of violent conflict further back in time.

(Shehim 1985). However, the Sultan was able to escape and quickly launched an armed rebellion with men previously sent to Somalia for training in guerilla warfare (Afar Liberation Front - AFR, Shehim (1985)). While the Sultanate was unable to win independence, the institution survived the rebellion and continues to exist within the current Ethiopian state (Hanfare 2011). This example illustrates a number of key points. First, the Dirge identified the Sultanate as a potential threat, and tried to remove that threat before it was realized. Second, the Sultanate had the organizational capacity to foresee this move by the regime, to train troops outside Ethiopian boundaries, and mobilize these troops as a capable fighting force once the conflict erupted. Further demonstrating the importance of the Aussa state, in the response to the rebellion the Derge themselves enlisted the children of the former Sultan to launch a counter-claim to the Sultans title.

A second potential pathway through which prior state entities provide networks of mobilization for armed rebellion is when there is no continuation of historical institutions, but the collective memory of independent statehood provides a symbol to rally around (see Ahram (2019) for a related argument about the long-run effects of pre-existing states in the Middle East and North Africa). In these instances the pre-existing state entity is a "locus" or focal point that can allow groups to overcome collective action problems. There are multiple examples of groups using former states and empires in this manner. For example, the Macina Liberation Front refers to a short lived Islamic Empire in Northern Mali. Even though the Empire lasted for only 44 years (between 1818 and 1862) it has apparently created a legacy powerful enough that a modern rebel group would choose it as its namesake. In addition, the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJWA) "seeks to revive the "jihad" of Alhaji Umar Tell", leader of the 19th Century Tokolor empire, and the Vanguards for the Protection of Muslims in Black Africa (Ansaru) claims to "revive the "jihad" of Usman Dan Fodio", leader of the Sokoto Caliphate, also a 19th Century West African state (Zenn 2015). Non-Islamist examples include the Cyranecia Liberation Army (a nominally independent vassal state of the Libya in the 19th Century) in Libya, the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) (Aceh was an independent sultanate in modern day Indonesia until 1904) and the various Afrikaaner resistance groups that gained prominence

in the late 1980s and early 1990s and aimed for a re-establishment of the Boer Republics in South Africa. There are even examples of rebel groups using the image of historical states that have not existed for hundreds of years (and thus far outside the sample window used in this paper), such as the Islamist rebel group Al-Mourabitoun[5]. Their name refers to the Almoravid dynasty who ruled modern day Morocco, Western Sahara and large parts of the Iberian peninsula from the middle of the 11th century to the middle of the 12th century. The Khmer Rouge in Cambodia also actively used the image of the Angkor Empire (Locard 2015).

These references are strategic. Unless claiming lineage to a historical state entities provide a meaningful contribution to organizational resources for the rebel group, they would have chosen another name, for example referencing values such as democracy, freedom or socialism instead (Toft 2007).[6]

### 2.2.2 Bargaining Problems

Although historical states can provide organizational resources for rebellion, this does not imply that they will be used for violent contention. Indeed, these very institutions may be used to lower the costs of governance if modern states can tap into the institutional legacies of historical states or such institutions allow groups and the state to overcome commitment problems (Wig 2016). We argue in this section that modern states with boundaries that encompass *many* historical states - what we call highly artificial states - are more likely to experience bargaining breakdowns and violent internal conflicts. Specifically, high state artificiality creates information problems and problems of credible commitment that have been identified as key causes of armed conflicts (Fearon 1995, Walter 2009).[7]

[5]Often referred to as a terrorist group for their use of such measures, however in terms of their political goal they are similar to any other irridentist group who seeks to establish sovereign territory. We therefore prefer to label them according to their goals rather than their means of achieving them. [Reference others using this distinction]

[6]This is very common among resistance groups. Examples include RFP: Rally of Patriotic Forces, UDD: Union for Democracy and Development, Dont Touch My Constitution Movement, and so on.

[7]We don't deal as extensively with problems of indivisible goods, initially identified by (Fearon 1995) as a potential cause of conflict but later established by (Powell 2006) as a subset of commitment problems.

When a government is faced with multiple actors making demands and threatening the use of violence, it has incentives to identify the strong actors and accommodate only those capable of punishing the government. However, capabilities are often not readily observable. Groups opposing the government have incentives to hide information that can be used against them (such as the location, sources and size of finance and material capabilities). Capabilities can also change rapidly, especially in a civil conflict setting where sympathies for groups opposing the government can shift dramatically. Actors challenging the government simultaneously have incentives to misrepresent their capabilities, so as to appear more formidable, in order to extract as many concessions from the government at possible. These information asymmetries increase the likelihood that one or both sides will demand too much, or offer too little, resulting in bargaining failure. Indeed, Walter (2009) argues that fighting may be one of the ways in which challengers can signal their strength to the regime, in the absence of other methods for sending costly signals or communicating capabilities.

Bargaining can also break down because one side does not have incentives to uphold the terms of a potential deal. In civil wars this often occurs because rebel groups anticipate growing weaker if they accept a peace agreement that requires demobilization. In this situation rebels fear that the government will renege and press it's advantage after the rebels have demobilized. In the absence of guarantees to punish defection, weak sub-state groups may find it difficult to bargain with the regime and armed conflict may be the outcome.

An increased number of historical states makes information problems and bargaining failures (and therefore armed conflict) more likely for several reasons. First, more historical states means a larger potential for one of the actors to miscalculate their relative capabilities. If it is difficult for a regime to estimate the war-fighting capabilities of one potential challenger then it will become more difficult as the number of potential challengers rise (Walter 2009). Second, more groups also implies a greater number of potential constellations of alliances, exacerbating the difficulties in estimating relative capabilities (Cunningham 2006). Third, groups based on historical states are likely to advance goals that represent indivisible stakes, such as secession of territory or regional autonomy, making accommoda-

tion costly for the government. Fourth, in an environment where there are multiple latent challengers, regimes have incentives to signal resolve and deny concessions to challengers so as to deter other challengers from initiating conflict (Walter 2006). If the government yields concessions to one challenger, it risks signalling low resolve and a willingness to compromise in order to avoid an escalation to violence. In a highly artificial state (countries with multiple historical states), such a signal can be extra costly because there are multiple potential challengers to the government, all of which will adjust their demands according to the signal of government commitment.[8] In in order to avoid having to compensate all groups, governments have strong incentives to build a reputation for strong resolve and not giving in to demands. Governments of artificial states therefore have an incentive to fight early challengers, or even strike first as in the cases of Buganda and Aussa, to serve as an example for other groups, and signal that the government will not be pressured into yielding concessions. The more historical states, the stronger this incentive, as the cost of appeasing groups increases with their number, and the more effective the signal will be. Based on the above reasoning, our first hypothesis is:

*$H_1$: Higher numbers of pre-colonial states in the territory of a modern state increase the probability of civil war*

## 2.3 Additional implications

The preceding reasoning implies at least three additional empirical expectations. First, states in the modern international system should have particular difficulty navigating the bargaining problems implied by multiple historical states when they lack resources to compensate these groups or lack the institutions to make credible commitments. Prior to the establishment of the global international state system, boundaries reflected the carrying capacity of the state they encompassed relative to that of neighboring states and internal actors.[9] States would expand, contract

[8]For example the Toubou rebellions in Niger in the 1990-ties cited exclusion from the greater Tuareg movement and similar demands of autonomy as their motivations for rebellion (Banks et al. 2010).

[9]In the post second world war period the international system has proved capable of establishing and supporting "states within territories" (in the words of Clapham (1996))

and sometimes shatter in competition with internal and external actors. By expanding its territory, a state would demonstrate its capacity to deploy significant military resources into that territory, demonstrating a measure of its capacity to control that territory. Yet, the initial conquest was often just the starting point for a prolonged period of contention, as newly conquered territories would frequently revolt.[10] Over time the territory would either be consolidated as part of the expanding state, gain some measure of independence, or be swallowed by another state entirely. We argue that a similar process is happening in artificial states, except in these cases the post-colonial state (taking the role of the conquering/expanding state) has not demonstrated any ability to control the territory within which it has been placed. This marks an important distinction between states like Italy and the United States who has incorporated 7 and 3 states respectively (in the ISD data), from that of Indonesia and Malaysia (31 and 12 respectively). The main alternative to military superiority available to states is appeasement, usually in the form of compensation through the transfer of economic resources. More developed artificial states should therefore have a larger carrying capacity for historical states and be better able to solve bargaining problems peacefully by appeasement. We use GDP per capita as a measure of state capacity and model an interaction with the number of historical states. We expect historical states to lead to civil conflict primarily in less developed countries. Our formal hypotheses are stated below:

*$H_2$: Higher numbers of pre-colonial states in the territory of a modern state have a stronger positive effect on the probability of civil war in less developed states*

Second, bargaining problems should also be more severe when the mobilization structure of pre-colonial states survived into the post-colonial period. Colonial methods of rule varied across the European empires, and especially in the extent to which they co-opted and ruled "through" existing states or administrative struc-

[10] An example is the Muslim/Arab conquest of Persia. While all of Persia was under Arab rule from 651, there were frequent revolts until 680 and repeated attempts by the children and grand children of the last shahanshah to cast the Arabs out as late as 746 (Crone 2012, Daryaee 2014)

tures and the extent to which they attempted to supplant or disrupt them. A distinction is often drawn between the British empire and other European empires where the British practiced 'indirect rule' by co-opting existing indigenous elites where other European states attempted 'direct rule' (Doyle 1986, Motyl 2001, Gill 2016, Griffiths 2016, Wucherpfennig et al. 2016). In reality all European empires practiced a mix of direct and indirect rule, but, if, on average the British were more likely to preserve and incorporate historical states then British colonies with numerous historical states should have more severe bargaining problems and a higher number of armed conflicts. Examples may include the British use of 'princely states' that survive to to this day, or some federal regions of Nigeria that bear the names of historical states (for example, Sokoto, Adawama and Oyo states).

*$H_3$: Higher numbers of pre-colonial states in the territory of a modern state have a stronger positive effect on the probability of civil war in former British colonies*

Finally, our reasoning suggests that the number of historical states and bargaining issues should not predict an increase other forms of political violence, such as coups. The mechanism forwarded by Englebert et al. (2002), for example, suggests that 'suffocation' works by depressing economic growth and creating a cycle of instability where civil wars and coups are more common. This is similar to mechanisms proposed in Alesina et al. (2011) whereby state artificiality depresses economic growth. However, our mechanism does not imply a relationship between economic growth and the number of historical states (other than that which runs through increased conflict) and rests more upon the latent mobilization networks and symbolic resources contained in historical states. While we argue that these factors can increase the feasibility of launching armed insurgencies we see a much weaker theoretical link to coups which depends more on mechanisms operating within the state elite (Powell & Thyne 2011, Paine 2019).

*$H_4$: Higher numbers of pre-colonial states in the territory of a modern state are uncorrelated with the number of coups*

# 3 Methods/Research Design

The unit of analysis is a country, observed over the 1946-2017 period. For the main dependent variable we use (1) a count of the number of new conflict onsets experienced in a given state over the 1946-2017 period with data from the UCDP Armed Conflict Dataset (Pettersson & Eck 2018) with a new onset recorded when a state experiences a new internal or internationalized internal civil war after a period of two or more years of no conflict and (2) a count of the number of rebel groups that were active over the same period.

The main independent variable is a count of the number of states that existed between 1816 and 1920 in the territory of a modern state (i.e a state that existed between 1946 and 2017). We take these data from version 2 of the ISD data Butcher & Griffiths (2019). The ISD data corrects for some of the Eurocentric biases in the Correlates of War State System Membership List that mean many historical states in Africa, South Asia, Central Asia and Southeast Asia are excluded because they did not have formal diplomatic exchanges with France and Britain. While more inclusive than the COW data, the ISD data are more restrictive than other sources that have been employed in analyses of historical legacies such as the Murdoch map (1967). Butcher & Griffiths (2019) require that the polity in question have a population of more than 10,000 people, autonomy over a specific territory and uncontested or recognized external sovereignty by polities relevant for the polity in question in order to qualify as a state (Griffiths & Butcher 2013, Butcher & Griffiths 2017).

The ISD has a number of advantages for our study. The first is global coverage. Existing studies have depended almost exclusively on an African, or Sub-Saharan Africa, sample to analyze historical legacies, while there were dense states systems in South Asia, Southeast and East Asia and South America that are excluded by these analyses. The ISD record, for example, the Rajput states in India as independent political entities, along with the Balinese states in modern-day Indonesia. Even within studies of pre-colonial Africa, many state entities are not included. For example, Besley & Reynal-Querol (2014) uses data for 19 historical kingdoms in Africa over the 1400-1700 period to assess the impact of historical conflict. The ISD identify 92 states on the African continent that were independent at some

point over the 1816-1920 period, many of which extended even further back in time. Figure 2 shows how many historical states (i.e states that existed at some point between 1816 and 1920) are recorded within the boundaries of modern states. Historical states in our data do not necessarily overlap in time. Some historical states can disappear, while others can come into being during the sample period, within a given territory. Only the number of unique states are counted, that is to say that a regime change is not sufficient to count as a new state. This measure does not vary across time so the analyses below are cross-sectional.

Second, Butcher & Griffiths (2019) do not take ethnic groups as the starting point for identifying states and therefore include states that were ethnically based (such as Buganda), multi-ethnic empires such as the Sokoto Caliphate and states that were not strongly based on ethnicity such as the Maratha polities in Western India. This provides a more accurate picture of statehood in the 19th century, even within Africa. For example, Paine (2019)'s recent study of pre-colonial ethnic-states and post-colonial conflict identifies just one (ethnic) state in Ethiopia (Amhara), while the ISD identifies 10[11], some of which were highly centralized, such as the Shoa (or Shewa) kingdom. Moreover, some of these pre-colonial states have very direct links to post-colonial wars such as the Sultanate of Aussa, which we have discussed earlier. Thus, what Paine (2019) identifies as a country with one ethnic-state that is otherwise "stateless", is in our view a country with multiple historical states. By avoiding the assumption that states are ethnic states we are also avoiding the problem of projecting ethnicity back onto pre-colonial polities and ethnic categories (such as those in the Ethnic Power Relations data) that are themselves the product of historical experiences with statehood and the varied experiences of ethnic groups through the colonial period. This assumption becomes even more tenuous outside of Africa when we consider states such as the Rajput states of India which were based more upon shared warrior "class" than ethnicity (Ramusack 2004, 12).

The main drawbacks of the ISD are that these data only start in 1816 and are not geocoded. The former means that some states, which were colonies or

[11]Enarya (Limmu), Ethiopia (Amhara), Jimma-Kakka, Kaffa, Saloum, Shoa, Gera, Gumma, Sultanate of Aussa, Harrar

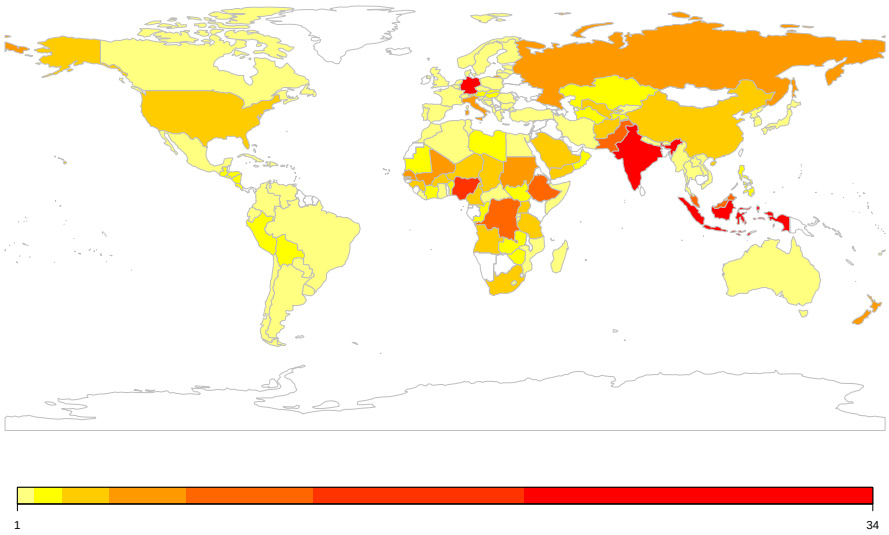


Figure 2: Number of historical state entities per country

non-independent vassal states in 1816, get a '0' in the data despite the presence of historical state entities. Examples include Syria which was colonized by the British and French before 1816 and Bangladesh which was under British rule before 1816. We deal with this problem in three ways, first by running analyses dropping cases where the modern state territory was under occupation by a foreign power for the 1816-1920 period. Therefore, '0's in these analyses represent locations that were not colonized or occupied during the 1816-1920 period but where no political entities that met the inclusion criteria for ISD statehood were included. Second, we used an alternative independent variable drawn from the Correlates of War Entities list (Correlates of War Project 2019). The Entities list records territorial entities that were transferred from one entity to another after 1816. As such, it includes many historical states in Africa and Asia that were colonized, along with a host of other entities such as islands, colonial governance structures and territories leased to foreign powers. Drawing from this list, we reduced the number of entities by excluding uninhabited islands, leased territories or bases and colonial

structures of rule (such as French West Africa or the Viceroyalty of New Spain). The result is a list of political entities that were subsequently incorporated into modern states. The destination state was identified for each of these remaining entities and summarized across modern states to give an alternative account of the number of historical political structures encapsulated by modern state boundaries. The inclusion criteria for the entities list are less strict than the ISD, in particular, entities do not have to be independent in a formal or de-facto sense to be included. This means that the entities list contains a number of very small and nominally sovereign entities, but the lower threshold means that entities in states like Burma are captured (Myanmar has 70 historical state entities, for example). Figure 4 shows the spatial distribution of COW entities. Third, we used Murdock (1967)'s measure of *jurisdictional hierarchy*, coding 3-4 as alternative state entities (results shown in the appendix). Because the data are not geocoded we cannot employ sub-national analyses as Besley & Reynal-Querol (2014) do, however, our mechanisms are located at the level of the modern nation-state, making a cross-sectional design appropriate.

Our identification strategy rests upon conditioning on observable factors (Morgan & Winship 2015), making the question of what causes higher or lower numbers of historical states to be included in the territory of a modern state a critical one. Before discussing control variables, we emphasize that the count of the number of historical states is likely exogenous to many factors that are thought to cause conflicts in the modern period. Where states form is clearly not random and reflects local conditions conducive to state-building (Tilly 1990, Osafo-Kwaako & Robinson 2013, Bates 2008), but the *number* of states encompassed by modern boundaries depends more upon the process through which modern boundaries were drawn. For many post-colonial states these boundaries were not drawn with contemporary development or conflict in mind, but reflected competition between colonial powers, generating boundaries that were quasi-random in relation to local conditions (Clapham 1996, Branch 2013). The 'Scramble for Africa' is infamous for paying little to no attention to local conditions when demarcating colonial spheres which eventually became the foundations of modern state boundaries (Michalopoulos & Papaioannou 2018, 32-34). European powers had very little information about the

regions over which they were drawing borders in Africa and these borders were never intended to be the borders of modern states (Asiwaju 1985). Therefore there is a strong case that the number of historical states encompassed by modern boundaries is assigned by a process that is largely independent of factors that cause modern conflict.

We considered a large number of control variables that may correlate with the number of states and conflict. The following controls are included in the main models. Large land areas and more populous areas may also contain more historical states and large countries with large populations are also probably at greater risk of civil war (Fearon & Laitin 2003). Controls for population in 1500 from (Acemoglu et al. 2001) and the land area of the modern state were included in the main models. Statehood and ethnicity are closely related in many pre-colonial contexts, as kinship structures provided foundations for state-building (Herbst 2014). Independently, ethnic fractionalization may be related to low growth and armed conflict (Easterly & Levine 1997) and a control for ethnic fractionalization from (Fearon & Laitin 2003) was included. Countries that were colonized by Europeans may also contain more historical states compared to un-colonized countries because Europeans often drew borders without respect to historical states as opposed to more indigenous processes of state building, absorption and separation that may leave fewer historical states behind (Tilly 1990). The link between European colonialism and civil wars is less clear, however (Hegre et al. 2001). The correlation matrix shown in Figure 3 shows that any relationship to the number of historical states applies primarily to British colonies, while the link to number of civil war onsets is weak. We nonetheless include a control for British colony. Finally, a control for historical conflict from Dincecco et al. (2019) was included, as historical conflict may have driven state-building (although this is highly contested (Osafo-Kwaako & Robinson 2013)) and may be related to armed conflict through other channels such as lower trust (Besley & Reynal-Querol 2014) or lower levels of development (Englebert et al. 2002).

Numerous other control variables were considered but showed unclear relationships to either the number of historical states or armed conflict onsets and were only included in robustness tests. For example, population density is likely related

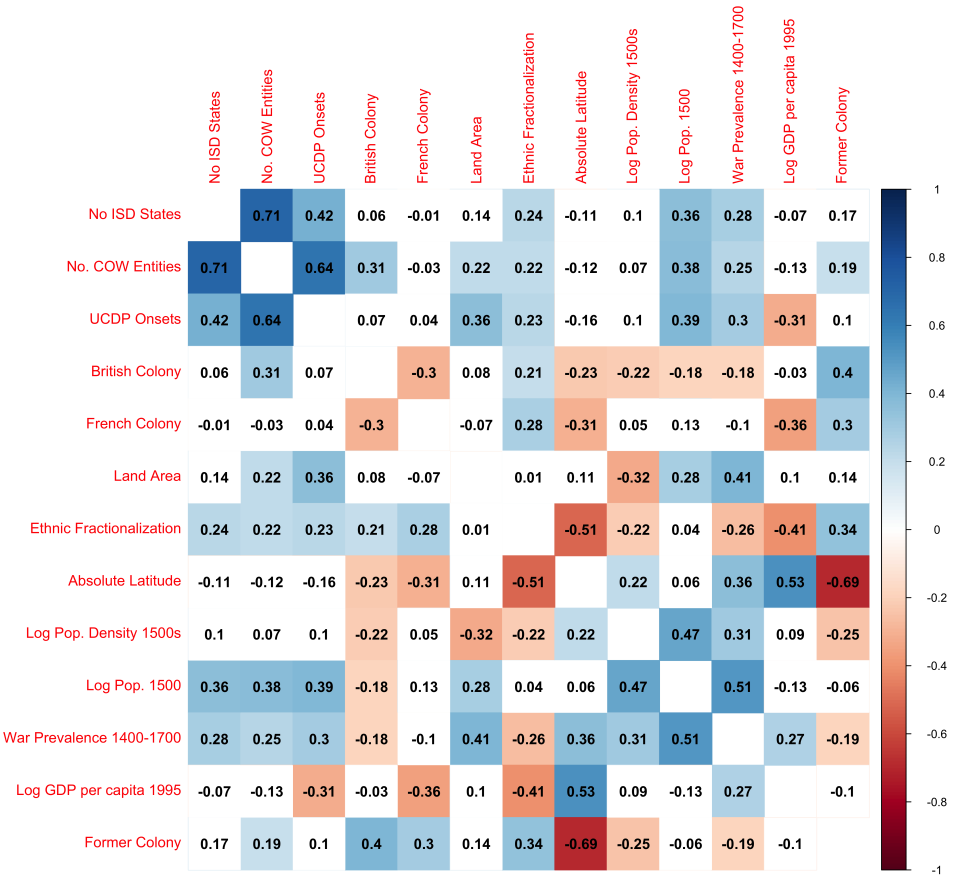


Figure 3: Correlation Matrix of Main Variables

to the viability of state-building (Herbst 2014, Besley & Reynal-Querol 2014, Tilly 1990, Butcher & Griffiths 2017) and Acemoglu et al. (2001) find that population density in 1500 is negatively related to income in 1995. Low income, in turn, is strongly related to the probability of civil war (Fearon & Laitin 2003). We also considered measures of tropical climates and disease propensity which may have inhibited state-building along with patterns of colonial rule, along with slave exports in Africa (Nunn 2008). However, very few of these variables are correlated with

the number of ISD states or COW entities and armed conflicts. Figure 3 shows the correlation between the number of states and some key control variables. Only the population in 1500, land area, ethnic fractionalization and war prevalence between 1400 and 1700 stand out. Factors such as British and French colonialism, population in 1500, latitude and the number of slave exports are weakly related to historical states and conflict. We see this as reflecting the quasi-random drawing of modern borders to encompass large land areas, populations or ethnic groups that were more likely to contain historical states. A battery of additional control variables were included in robustness tests and can be found in the results section below.

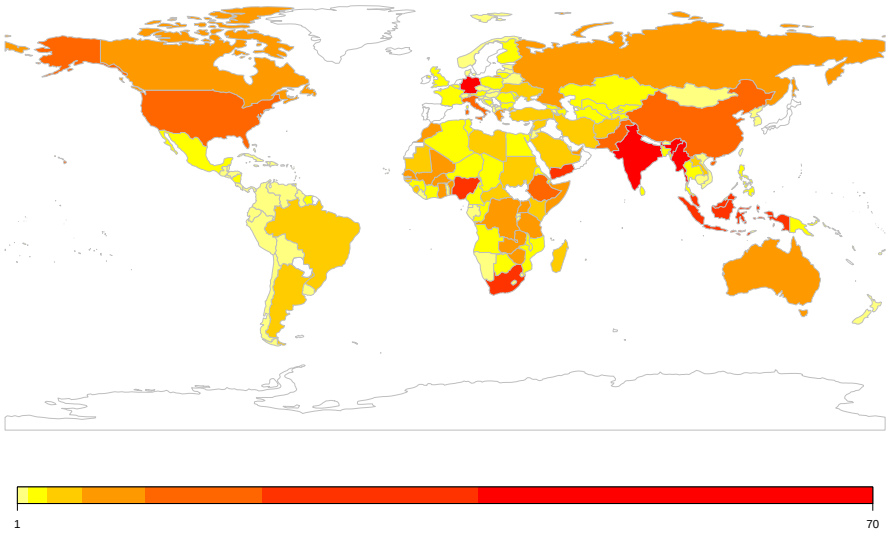


Figure 4: Number of COW historical state entities per country

We follow Besley & Reynal-Querol (2014) and use OLS regressions with the control variables mentioned above included. Negative binomial models can be found in the appendix. The models proceed as follows: the first two models look at a count of the number of UCDP civil war onsets over the 1946-2017 period. The first model includes no controls and the second the battery of controls described

| | Onset | Onset | Rebel Groups | Coups |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of States (1816-1920) | $0.18^{***}$ | $0.21^{***}$ | $2.01^{**}$ | $-0.03$ |
| | (0.03) | (0.04) | (0.74) | (0.11) |
| Ethnic fractionalization | | $1.22^{*}$ | 8.56 | $3.30^{*}$ |
| | | (0.58) | (10.83) | (1.55) |
| Land area ($100km^2$) | | $0.02^{*}$ | $-0.02$ | $-0.00$ |
| | | (0.01) | (0.13) | (0.02) |
| UK Colony | | 0.12 | $10.27^{\cdot}$ | $-1.51^{\cdot}$ |
| | | (0.33) | (6.20) | (0.89) |
| War Prevalence 1400-1700 | | $2.09^{\cdot}$ | 0.94 | $-9.35^{**}$ |
| | | (1.26) | (23.45) | (3.36) |
| Log Population 1500 | | 0.12 | $3.61^{*}$ | $0.49^{*}$ |
| | | (0.08) | (1.54) | (0.22) |
| $R^2$ | 0.18 | 0.41 | 0.18 | 0.14 |
| Adj. $R^2$ | 0.17 | 0.38 | 0.14 | 0.11 |
| Num. obs. | 157 | 140 | 140 | 140 |
| RMSE | 1.78 | 1.59 | 29.63 | 4.24 |

$^{***}p < 0.001$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{\cdot}p < 0.1$

Table 1: Statistical models

above. The models then proceed with different dependent variables, retaining the main controls. Model 3 uses the number of rebel groups that were active over the 1946-2017 period in that country and Model 4 uses coups from the INSCR coups data (Marshall & Marshall 2018).

# 4 Results

Table 1 shows the results from the analysis using the ISD data to count the number of historical states and Table 2 shows the results using the revised COW entities list described earlier.[12]

Results from Table 1 show a positive correlation between the number of historical states in the ISD and the number of conflict onsets in the 1946-2017 period. The effects are substantively large when the control variables are included - one additional historical state is associated with 0.21 more conflict onsets (i.e 5 addi-

[12]The results for jurisdictional hierarchy are not shown but we observed no strong, statistically significant measures between this indicator and any of our conflict outcomes

| | Onset | Onset | Rebel Groups | Coups |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ethnic fractionalization | | 1.21* | 3.11· | 3.33* |
| | | (0.48) | (1.69) | (1.53) |
| Land area (100km$^2$) | | 0.01* | 0.01 | −0.00 |
| | | (0.01) | (0.02) | (0.02) |
| UK Colony | | −0.89** | −1.42 | −1.32 |
| | | (0.31) | (1.07) | (0.97) |
| War Prevalence 1400-1700 | | 1.94· | −3.28 | −9.31** |
| | | (1.06) | (3.70) | (3.36) |
| Number of Entities (COW) | 0.14*** | 0.15*** | 0.35*** | −0.03 |
| | (0.01) | (0.02) | (0.05) | (0.05) |
| Log Population 1500 | | −0.01 | 0.30 | 0.52* |
| | | (0.07) | (0.25) | (0.23) |
| $R^2$ | 0.41 | 0.58 | 0.37 | 0.15 |
| Adj. $R^2$ | 0.41 | 0.56 | 0.34 | 0.11 |
| Num. obs. | 157 | 140 | 140 | 140 |
| RMSE | 1.51 | 1.34 | 4.68 | 4.24 |

$^{***}p < 0.001$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{\cdot}p < 0.1$

Table 2: OLS Models: Number of COW Entities

tional historical states entails roughly one additional armed conflict) and 2 more rebel groups. War prevalence is only significant as a predictor of conflict onsets in the 1946-2017 period at the 0.10 level, indicating some support for the findings in Besley & Reynal-Querol (2014). Importantly, the associations between historical statehood and contemporary conflict are independent of prior conflict levels even though many of the states recorded in the ISD have roots in the 1400-1700 period and including the war prevalence variable may introduce post-treatment bias. States arguably precede armed conflict, and armed conflict may be a result of many states. Nonetheless, disentangling the relationship between historical statehood, historical violence and post-colonial patterns of warfare remains an important challenge. The results remain for the number of rebel groups. As expected, we observe no significant relationship between the number of ISD states and coups, which suggests that the "suffocation" mechanism linking historical entities to conflict risk is not a strong explanation for the patterns that we observe here (i.e is not operating through lower levels of GDP per capita).

The results are similar when we use the COW entities list and the relationship

between COW entities and conflict is more precisely estimated for the number of rebel groups than observed when we used ISD states as the independent variable. A strong positive association is observed between the number of historical entities and the number of active rebel groups, while the same null finding in relation to coups is observed.

Control variables behave largely as expected throughout the models. Ethnic fractionalization correlates significantly and positively with onsets and coups, yet is less precisely estimated in relation to the number of rebel groups in the models with the number of ISD states as the independent variable. This is perhaps not surprising, given the inconsistent empirical results hitherto found in the literature. More populous countries in 1500 experienced more onsets over the 1946-2017 period when the number of ISD states is used as the independent variable. Population does not consistently correlate with civil war onsets when the COW entities are used as the main independent variable. Our models support the claim that larger states experience more conflict onsets, yet we do not observe any significant correlation with the number of rebel groups and coups. The results for British Colony are mixed.

Regarding our additional empirical implications, in no models do we observe a relationship between the number of historical states and coups, evidence in support of $H_4$. We also predicted that there should be significant interaction effects with GDP per capita at independence and whether the state was a British Colony ($H_2$ and $H_3$ respectively). Here we find more mixed results. Table 4 shows the results for models with interaction terms and the main control variables. We do observe a significant interaction effect between the number of historical states and GDP per capita in 1960 when both the number of ISD states and the COW entities are used. Figures 5 and 6 show how the marginal effect of one additional historical state (for ISD states and COW entities respectively) changes the expected number of conflict onsets, conditional on the level of economic development in 1960. We can see that the positive effect of historical states pertains mainly to countries that entered the international system with a low carrying capacity. States with many historical entities but greater resources to incorporate them such as Germany or Italy fared much better than states like Nigeria or Burma that faced many potential

competitors without the resources or institutions to accommodate them.

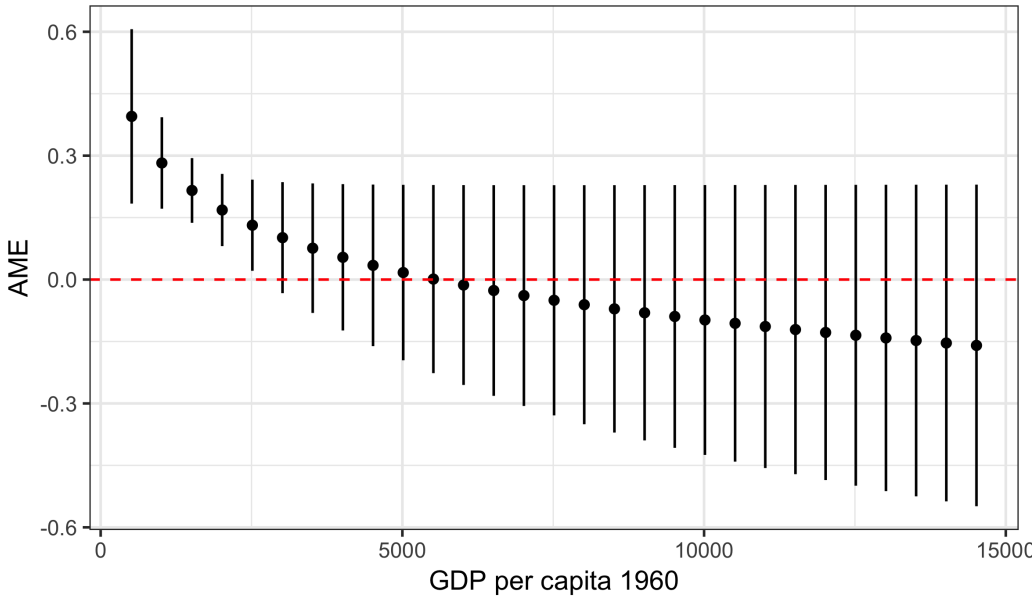


Figure 5: Number of historical states and civil war onsets, conditional on GDP per capita

In relation to $H_3$, however, a significant interaction between the number of historical states and former British colonies is only observed when the number of ISD states is used as an independent variable. Figures 7 and 8 show how the marginal effect of one additional historical state (for ISD states and COW entities respectively) changes the expected number of conflict onsets, conditional on whether the state was a former British colony.

## 4.1 Additional robustness tests

Additional control variables were included in the main models of conflict onsets that capture geographical or ecological factors, factors related to resource abundance and the extent of slave exports (Africa only). To capture geographical features, controls were included for the absolute latitude of the state which is widely used as a control for the difficulties of state-building in tropical regions, and dum-

| | Onsets | Onsets | Onsets | Onsets |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ISD States X GDP Per Capita | $-0.17^{\cdot}$ | | | |
| | (0.09) | | | |
| ISD States X British Colony | | | $0.24^{***}$ | |
| | | | (0.07) | |
| COW States X GDP Per Capita | | $-0.08^{***}$ | | |
| | | (0.02) | | |
| COW States X British Colony | | | | 0.06 |
| | | | | (0.04) |
| Number of States (1816-1920) | $1.43^{*}$ | | 0.08 | |
| | (0.65) | | (0.05) | |
| Ethnic fractionalization | 0.83 | $1.14^{*}$ | $-0.05$ | 0.05 |
| | (0.62) | (0.50) | (0.69) | (0.54) |
| Land area ($100km^2$) | $0.02^{**}$ | $0.03^{***}$ | $-0.01$ | $-0.01^{*}$ |
| | (0.01) | (0.01) | (0.01) | (0.01) |
| GDP per capita (log) | $-0.33$ | $-0.11$ | | |
| | (0.22) | (0.18) | | |
| UK Colony | 0.22 | $-0.68^{*}$ | $-0.25$ | $-0.84^{**}$ |
| | (0.35) | (0.31) | (0.38) | (0.32) |
| War Prevalence 1400-1700 | $2.77^{*}$ | 1.78 | $8.07^{*}$ | 3.97 |
| | (1.34) | (1.11) | (3.13) | (2.53) |
| Number of Entities (COW) | | $0.70^{***}$ | | $0.09^{*}$ |
| | | (0.16) | | (0.04) |
| Log Population 1500 | 0.08 | $-0.03$ | 0.13 | 0.06 |
| | (0.09) | (0.08) | (0.09) | (0.07) |
| $R^2$ | 0.48 | 0.66 | 0.55 | 0.73 |
| Adj. $R^2$ | 0.45 | 0.63 | 0.51 | 0.71 |
| Num. obs. | 119 | 119 | 83 | 83 |
| RMSE | 1.58 | 1.29 | 1.41 | 1.09 |

$^{***}p < 0.001$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{\cdot}p < 0.1$

Table 3: Statistical models

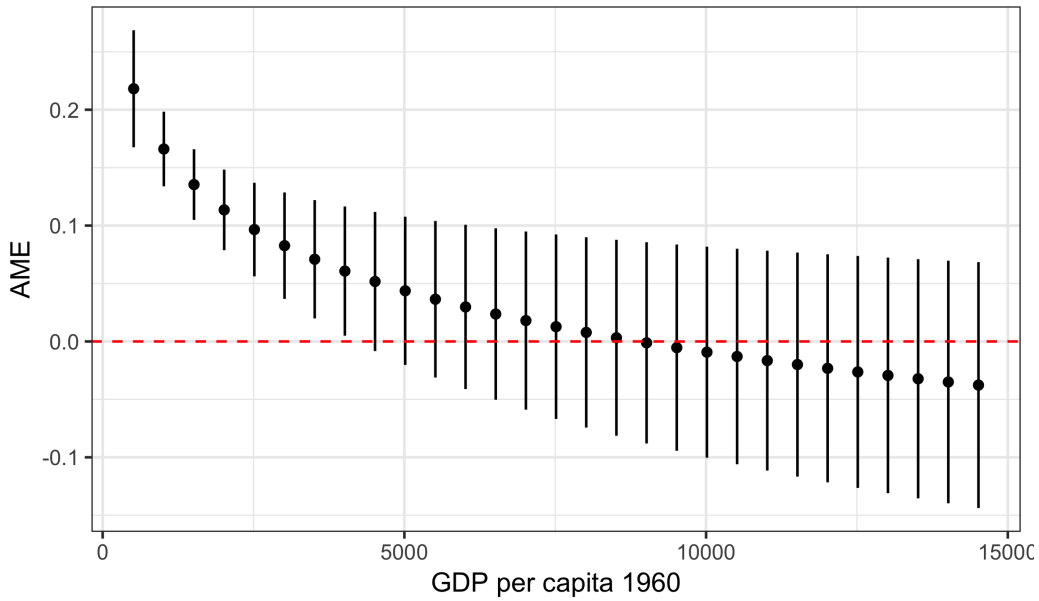


Figure 6: Number of historical COW Entities and Civil War Onsets, Conditional on GDP per capita

mies for whether the county was primarily desert, was an island, was landlocked and indicators of average temperature and humidity. These variables were sourced from Acemoglu et al. (2001). In a separate model controls were introduced for the presence of gold, silver, zinc, oil and coal resources. Finally a control for the extent of slave exports per capita from (Nunn 2008) was included (restricting the sample to Africa) because slavery has had long term impacts on political trust and conflict, and slave exports were primarily channelled through pre-colonial African states. None of these additional control variables significantly change the results observed in the main models.

We also ran additional models where we used the Ethnic Power Relations data (Vogt et al. 2015) to construct an alternative ethnic fractionalization index. As suggested by Hendrix (2010), we also ran models using tax income divided by GDP (sourced from Kugler & Tammen (2012)) as an alternative measure of state capacity. The results do not change substantially in any of the models.

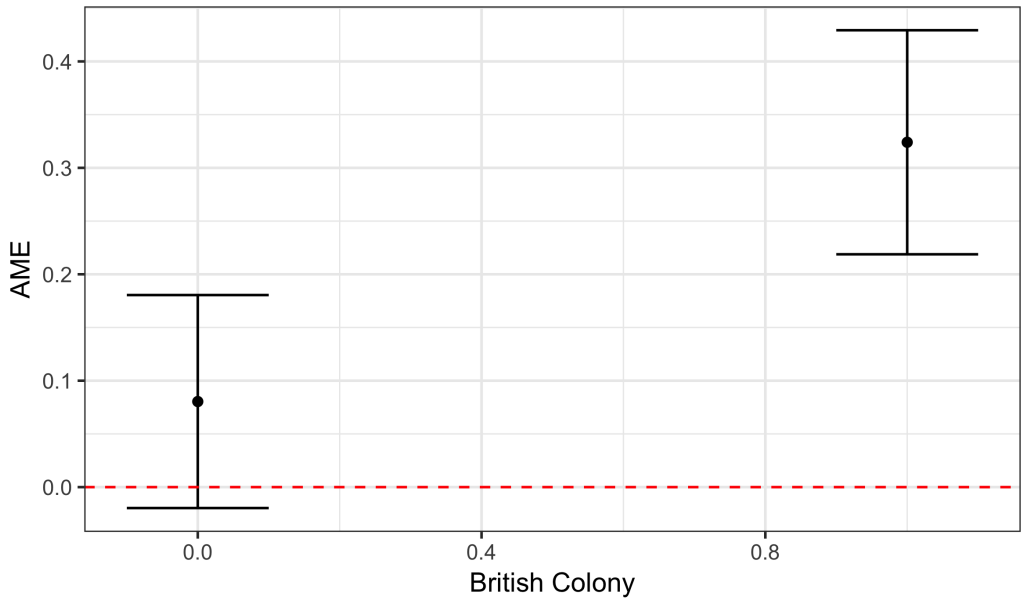


Figure 7: Number of historical states and civil war onsets, conditional on British Colony

# 5 Conclusion

We improve upon the previous literature on artificial states in both theoretical conceptualisation and empirical measurement. Using data from ISD version 2.0 (Butcher and Griffiths, 2019) and the COW entities list we also test empirically the relationship between artificial states and civil conflict. By using data with global coverage we improve upon previous research by extending the sample beyond Africa. This study finds that the configuration of historical states within modern state borders has had lasting effects on the prevalence of civil conflict. Results remain robust even after controlling for a number of variables as suggested by the literature.

We propose a new theoretical mechanism that links state artificiality to conflict by integrating bargaining theories of war and research on the 'social bases' of rebellion (Fearon 1995, Staniland 2014, Walter 2009, Cunningham 2006). Latent networks of mobilization provided by historic states can increase the capacity of

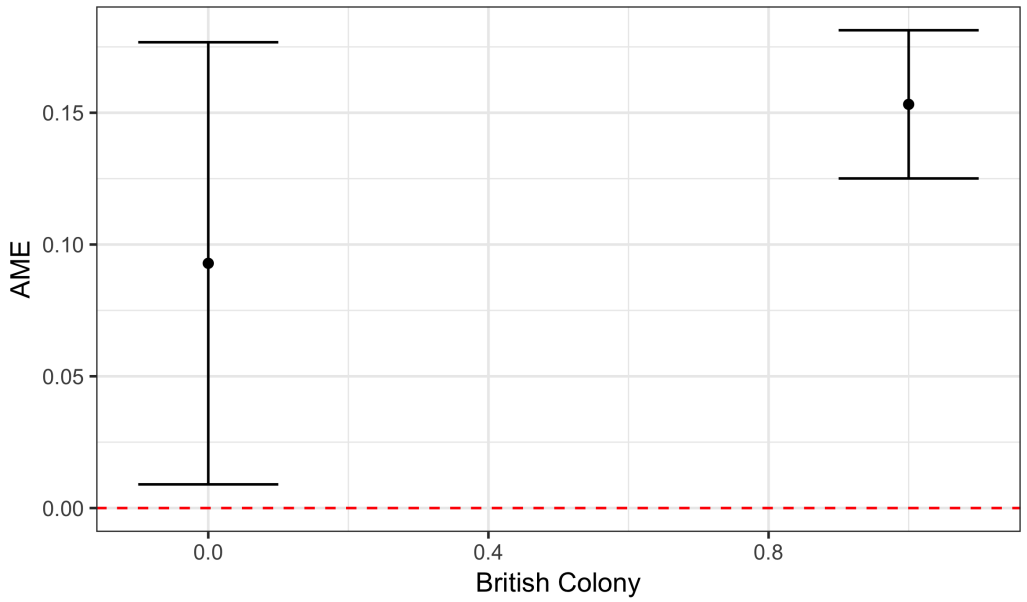


Figure 8: Number of historical COW Entities and Civil War Onsets, Conditional on British Colony

sub-state groups for war and the potential for bargaining failures increases when there are many historical states within the borders of pre-colonial states. We further propose that this relationship is dependent upon the carrying capacity of the modern state, modelled by an interaction between GDP per capita and number of historic states. Less economically developed states lack the capacity to either repress or accommodate the mobilization of historic state networks and we find evidence consistent with this. We also propose that the association should be strong when historical states were more likely to survive the colonial period. Although a rough indicator, we find that the association between historical statehood and conflict is stronger in modern states with a British colonial heritage, which we argue is consistent with our mechanism.

On the surface, our results may appear to contradict existing studies that link pre-colonial statehood to domestic *peace* in the post-colonial era (Wig 2016, Paine 2019, Depetris-Chauvin 2016). However, they are compatible with these studies. It may be the case that pre-colonial statehood facilitates governance by enabling

newly formed states to make credible commitments with ethnic groups (Wig 2016) or by leaving behind institutional structures that can lower the costs of governance and provide order (Depetris-Chauvin 2016). However, capacity for mobilization and governance, independent of the state, can be a double edged sword. Our study suggests that pre-existing governance and mobilization structures that inhere in historical states can be turned against the state when the *number* of pre-colonial states that the regime has to bargain with increases. This is because the likelihood of bargaining failures, miscalculation and war also increases (Fearon 1995, Walter 2009, Cunningham 2006). For example, in a modern state such as Ghana or Benin, where the Ansante kingdom and the Dahomey kingdom broadly overlapped with modern borders, the state can leverage these pre-colonial structures to facilitate peaceful rule. Nigeria is also host to historical states, but the larger number of states may have compounded information asymmetries to such an extent that any bargaining advantages provided by pre-colonial statehood break down.

These results also contribute to the ongoing debate about the role of ethnic groups in civil conflicts, and shed some light on the inconsistent empirical results that have been found within that literature. Our study questions a key assumption in much of the literature on pre-colonial statehood and conflict: namely that states were ethnic states. Statehood in relation to ethnic groups may be driven partly because of the widespread use the Murdoch Map (Murdock 1967) of ethnic groups in the 19th and early 20th century, and because of the explosion of high-quality data on ethnic groups (i.e Cederman et al. (2010)). However, the focus on ethnic states obscures the fact that many states were multi-ethnic, even in Africa and that some states were simply not ethnically based. Examples from within Africa include the Sokoto Caliphate, which was a multi-ethnic empire and the states around Ethiopia before in the late 19th century. The assumption that states have ethnic foundations arguably becomes even less tenable when looking outside of Africa to empires based on caste or class such as the Rajput states in India. We don't mean to imply that ethnicity is not important, it clearly was important to historical state-building (Herbst 2014) and modern conflict (Cederman et al. 2013), rather that the overlap between historical statehood and historical ethnicity is an empirical question that we hope this study can stimulate further discussion of.

Previous research has looked into the effect of boundaries splitting ethnic groups. Our study suggests that historical states are more salient than ethnic groups (perhaps because, only some ethnic groups have ties to such states). Future research is needed to examine whether boundaries intersecting the borders of historical states has a similar relationship to violent outcomes. Furthermore, our hypothesis suggests that a measure capturing the geometric difference between historical and modern boundaries using geocoded data, might be even better at capturing the effects presented in this study.

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# 6 Appendix

## 6.1 Negative Binomial Models

## 6.2 Extra Control Variables

## 6.3 Jurisdictional Hierarchy from Murdock 1967

These models use the number of ethnic groups with state centralization scores between 3 and 4 in Murdoch 1967 as the main independent variable.

| | Onset | Onset | Rebel Groups | Coups |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of States (1816-1920) | $0.09^{***}$ | $0.04^{*}$ | 0.03 | 0.00 |
| | (0.02) | (0.02) | (0.03) | (0.03) |
| Ethnic fractionalization | | $1.07^{**}$ | $1.21^{*}$ | 0.81 |
| | | (0.39) | (0.49) | (0.50) |
| Land area ($100km^2$) | | 0.01 | 0.01 | $-0.02^{\cdot}$ |
| | | (0.00) | (0.01) | (0.01) |
| UK Colony | | $-0.00$ | $-0.16$ | $-0.58^{*}$ |
| | | (0.21) | (0.28) | (0.29) |
| War Prevalence 1400-1700 | | 0.36 | $-2.10^{\cdot}$ | $-5.22^{***}$ |
| | | (0.76) | (1.09) | (1.40) |
| Log Population 1500 | | $0.20^{**}$ | $0.29^{***}$ | $0.24^{**}$ |
| | | (0.07) | (0.08) | (0.08) |
| AIC | 475.86 | 414.14 | 629.19 | 634.97 |
| BIC | 485.03 | 437.67 | 652.72 | 658.50 |
| Log Likelihood | -234.93 | -199.07 | -306.59 | -309.48 |
| Deviance | 156.31 | 143.69 | 148.71 | 146.70 |
| Num. obs. | 157 | 140 | 140 | 140 |

$^{***}p < 0.001$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{\cdot}p < 0.1$

Table 4: Negative Binomial Models: ISD States

| | Onset | Onset | Rebel Groups | Coups |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ethnic fractionalization | | $1.07^{**}$ | $1.26^{**}$ | $0.83^{\cdot}$ |
| | | (0.37) | (0.47) | (0.50) |
| Land area ($100km^2$) | | $0.01^{*}$ | $0.01^{\cdot}$ | $-0.02^{\cdot}$ |
| | | (0.00) | (0.01) | (0.01) |
| UK Colony | | $-0.50^{*}$ | $-0.58^{\cdot}$ | $-0.56^{\cdot}$ |
| | | (0.24) | (0.31) | (0.32) |
| War Prevalence 1400-1700 | | 0.33 | $-2.66^{*}$ | $-5.20^{***}$ |
| | | (0.73) | (1.07) | (1.40) |
| Number of Entities (COW) | $0.05^{***}$ | $0.04^{***}$ | $0.04^{*}$ | $-0.00$ |
| | (0.01) | (0.01) | (0.01) | (0.02) |
| Log Population 1500 | | 0.11 | $0.23^{**}$ | $0.25^{**}$ |
| | | (0.07) | (0.08) | (0.08) |
| AIC | 459.83 | 397.85 | 620.88 | 634.94 |
| BIC | 469.00 | 421.38 | 644.41 | 658.47 |
| Log Likelihood | -226.92 | -190.93 | -302.44 | -309.47 |
| Deviance | 160.94 | 141.70 | 148.45 | 146.70 |
| Num. obs. | 157 | 140 | 140 | 140 |

$^{***}p < 0.001$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{\cdot}p < 0.1$

Table 5: Negative Binomial Models: COW Entities

| | Base Model | Climate Controls | Resources | Slavery | Base Model | Climate Controls | Resources | Slavery |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ISD States (1816-1920) | 0.20*** | 0.17*** | 0.17*** | 0.26*** | | | | |
| | (0.04) | (0.04) | (0.04) | (0.06) | | | | |
| Ethnic fractionalization | 0.51 | 0.01 | 0.57 | 0.37 | 0.40 | 0.24 | 0.38 | −0.19 |
| | (0.59) | (0.69) | (0.66) | (0.80) | (0.44) | (0.50) | (0.49) | (0.92) |
| Land area (100km$^2$) | −0.01 | −0.01 | −0.02 | 0.06* | −0.01* | −0.01* | −0.01 | 0.07* |
| | (0.01) | (0.01) | (0.02) | (0.02) | (0.01) | (0.01) | (0.01) | (0.03) |
| UK Colony | 0.38 | 0.37 | 0.20 | −0.54. | −0.65* | −0.76** | −0.56* | −0.63. |
| | (0.31) | (0.35) | (0.36) | (0.30) | (0.25) | (0.28) | (0.28) | (0.36) |
| War Prevalence 1400-1700 | 4.05. | 6.24* | 2.23 | 3.05 | 1.09 | 3.54. | 0.16 | 0.83 |
| | (2.42) | (2.92) | (2.76) | (2.41) | (1.83) | (2.11) | (2.07) | (2.77) |
| Number of Entities (COW) | | | | | 0.16*** | 0.15*** | 0.16*** | 0.08** |
| | | | | | (0.01) | (0.01) | (0.02) | (0.03) |
| Temperature 1 | | 0.06 | | | | 0.01 | | |
| | | (0.12) | | | | (0.09) | | |
| Temperature 2 | | 0.04 | | | | 0.03 | | |
| | | (0.05) | | | | (0.04) | | |
| Temperature 3 | | 0.02 | | | | 0.02 | | |
| | | (0.06) | | | | (0.04) | | |
| Temperature 4 | | −0.02 | | | | −0.01 | | |
| | | (0.05) | | | | (0.04) | | |
| Temperature 5 | | −0.01 | | | | −0.02 | | |
| | | (0.04) | | | | (0.03) | | |
| Humidity 1 | | −0.00 | | | | −0.02 | | |
| | | (0.02) | | | | (0.02) | | |
| Humidity 2 | | −0.00 | | | | −0.00 | | |
| | | (0.04) | | | | (0.03) | | |
| Humidity 3 | | −0.04 | | | | −0.02 | | |
| | | (0.03) | | | | (0.02) | | |
| Humidity 4 | | 0.05. | | | | 0.03 | | |
| | | (0.03) | | | | (0.02) | | |
| Log Slave Exports per capita | | | | −0.05 | | | | −0.01 |
| | | | | (0.06) | | | | (0.06) |
| Absolute Latitude | | −0.16 | | | | −1.00 | | |
| | | (1.89) | | | | (1.39) | | |
| Desert | | −0.10 | | | | | | |
| | | (1.11) | | | | | | |
| Landlocked | | −0.48 | | | | −0.32 | | |
| | | (0.40) | | | | (0.29) | | |
| Island | | −0.32 | | | | 0.37 | | |
| | | (0.54) | | | | (0.39) | | |
| Gold Reserves | | | −0.02 | | | | −0.04 | |
| | | | (0.03) | | | | (0.03) | |
| Iron Reserves | | | −0.00 | | | | 0.03 | |
| | | | (0.16) | | | | (0.12) | |
| Coal Deposits | | | 0.49 | | | | 0.11 | |
| | | | (0.41) | | | | (0.31) | |
| Silver Reserves | | | −0.28* | | | | −0.05 | |
| | | | (0.14) | | | | (0.11) | |
| Zinc Reserves | | | 0.34 | | | | 0.01 | |
| | | | (0.22) | | | | (0.17) | |
| Oil Reserves | | | 0.00 | | | | 0.00 | |
| | | | (0.00) | | | | (0.00) | |
| $R^2$ | 0.40 | 0.53 | 0.44 | 0.62 | 0.66 | 0.74 | 0.68 | 0.50 |
| Adj. $R^2$ | 0.36 | 0.43 | 0.36 | 0.54 | 0.64 | 0.69 | 0.64 | 0.40 |
| Num. obs. | 118 | 111 | 107 | 41 | 118 | 111 | 107 | 41 |
| RMSE | 1.45 | 1.41 | 1.49 | 0.75 | 1.09 | 1.04 | 1.11 | 0.87 |

$^{***}p < 0.001$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{.}p < 0.1$

Table 6: Statistical models

| | Onset | Onset | Rebel Groups | Coups |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ethnic fractionalization | | 0.84 | 1.95 | 1.75 |
| | | (1.28) | (5.33) | (3.94) |
| Land area (100km$^2$) | | 0.07 | 0.36$^{\cdot}$ | 0.01 |
| | | (0.05) | (0.19) | (0.14) |
| UK Colony | | −0.30 | −1.45 | −1.71 |
| | | (0.57) | (2.38) | (1.76) |
| Jurid. Hierarchy | 0.09 | −0.05 | 0.49 | −0.72 |
| | (0.27) | (0.31) | (1.30) | (0.96) |
| War Prevalence 1400-1700 | | 5.17 | −18.26 | −40.09$^{*}$ |
| | | (5.05) | (21.02) | (15.56) |
| Log Population 1500 | | 0.38 | 1.74 | 1.54$^{\cdot}$ |
| | | (0.29) | (1.22) | (0.90) |
| $R^2$ | 0.00 | 0.37 | 0.30 | 0.30 |
| Adj. $R^2$ | -0.03 | 0.24 | 0.14 | 0.14 |
| Num. obs. | 37 | 35 | 35 | 35 |
| RMSE | 1.62 | 1.39 | 5.78 | 4.28 |

$^{***}p < 0.001$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{\cdot}p < 0.1$

Table 7: OLS Models: Murdoch Juristictional Hierarchy