Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

We live in a great age of statebuilding. With the disintegration of the last colonial empires, the second half of this century has witnessed the birth of dozens of new nations in Asia, Africa, and eastern Europe. The high incidence among these young states of dictatorship, corruption, and separatist threats to central authority has lent added relevance to one of the central questions of political science: how is it possible, under conditions of rapid social and economic change, to construct stable and legitimate governments and honest and effective systems of public administration and finance, all while maintaining an often fragile national unity?

The European statebuilding experience, the only case of sustained political development comparable in scale and scope to the one unleashed by the recent wave of state formation, can cast new light on this question. Between the fall of the Roman Empire and the French Revolution, Europe witnessed the creation of scores of new polities where once a single empire had held sway. Across the length and breadth of the continent, successive generations of leaders were confronted with the arduous task of constructing stable governance structures and state apparatuses capable of unifying often diverse territories in the face of both internal and external threats and of continuous market expansion, urbanization, and social and religious upheaval. Yet despite the similarity of the challenges involved, and the relatively homogeneous cultural setting in which Europe's rulers sought to meet them, the durable state structures which emerged by the end of the early modern period were anything but uniform in character. The political system of Louis XIV's France or Frederick the Great's Prussia could not have been more different from that of Pitt's Britain, not to mention the Poland of the *liberum veto.* The institutions through which government policy was implemented and enforced also varied substantially across these countries. Such contrasts in the area of political regime and of administrative infrastructure in turn corresponded to divergent levels of domestic stability and international power and influence.

Over the past several decades, social scientists have redoubled their

efforts to explain the process of European statebuilding. They have done so in order not only to understand more fully the continent's fate during the most recent period of its history, but also to generate insights relevant to today's statebuilders. The beginnings of this recent literature, which encompasses contributions from historical sociologists, economists, and historians as well as political scientists, can be traced back to the mid-1960s, when the Social Science Research Council initiated a large-scale project on the comparative development of states and nations which resulted in several studies with a substantial European focus, most notably the volume edited by Charles Tilly entitled *The Formation of National States in Western Europe.*[1] At the same time, Stein Rokkan was drawing up his "conceptual map of Europe," which sought to provide a framework for analyzing long-term political change across the continent from the medieval period into the 20th century.[2] Perry Anderson's seminal *Lineages of the Absolutist State* appeared in 1974.[3]

In 1985, Theda Skocpol lent this field of research a new dynamism with her call to "bring the state back in[to]" the social sciences and take historical cases and data seriously.[4] More recently Charles Tilly, John A. Hall, Michael Mann, Aristide Zolberg, Margaret Levi, Brian Downing, Robert Putnam, and Hendryk Spruyt, among others, have all contributed

[1] Charles Tilly (ed.), *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975). Two other volumes from this project with direct bearing on the subject of this book are: Leonard Binder et al. (eds.), *Crises and Sequences in Political Development* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971); and Raymond Grew (ed.), *Crises of Political Development in Europe and the United States* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978).

[2] Stein Rokkan, "Cities, States and Nations: A Dimensional Model for the Study of Contrasts in Development," in: S. N. Eisenstadt and Stein Rokkan (eds.), *Building States and Nations,* 2 vols. (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1973), vol. I, pp. 73–97; idem, "Dimensions of State Formation and Nation-Building: A Possible Paradigm for Research on Variations within Europe," in: Tilly, *Formation,* pp. 562–600; idem, "Territories, Nations, Parties: Toward a Geoeconomic-Geopolitical Model for the Explanation of Variations within Western Europe," in: Richard Merritt and Bruce Russett (eds.), *From National Development to Global Community* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1981), pp. 70–95.

[3] Perry Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State* (London: New Left Books, 1974). Other works on European statebuilding published around this time include: Richard Bean, "War and the Birth of the Nation State," *Journal of Economic History,* vol. 23, no. 1 (March 1973), pp. 202–221; Gianfranco Poggi, *The Development of the Modern State* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1978); Ronald Batchfelder and Herman Freudenberger, "On the Rational Origins of the Modern Centralized State," *Explorations in Economic History,* vol. 20 (1983), pp. 1–13; Anthony Giddens, *The Nation-State and Violence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

[4] Theda Skocpol, "Bringing the State Back In: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research," in: Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol (eds.), *Bringing the State Back In* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 3–37.

important new books and articles with an historical focus on European political development.[5] Studies by Stephen Krasner, David and Ruth Collier, and Douglass North on the character and dynamics of long-term political and economic change have added a further theoretical dimension to this literature.[6] The work of all of these authors has drawn on the classic texts of Tocqueville, Weber, Norbert Elias, and especially those of Otto Hintze, a selection of whose essays were published in English for the first time in 1975.[7]

This extensive new literature has greatly advanced our knowledge of European political development and of statebuilding more generally. A broad consensus now exists among those active in this field on a number of points concerning the European case. In the first instance, further support has been provided for Weber's contention that what set the early modern West apart from other great civilizations was the combination of a distinctive kind of polity – the exceptionally penetrative sovereign, territorial state[8] – and a dynamic market economy which

[5] Charles Tilly, "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime," in: Evans et al., *Bringing the State Back In*, pp. 169–191; Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital and European States A.D. 990–1990* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990); John A. Hall, *Powers and Liberties* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986); Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power. Volume I: A History of Power from the Beginning to A.D. 1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); see also his earlier article: "State and Society 1130–1815: An Analysis of English State Finances," *Political Power and Social Theory*, vol. 1 (1980), pp. 165–208; Aristide Zolberg, "Strategic Interaction and the Formation of Modern States: France and England," in: Ali Kazancigil (ed.), *The State in Global Perspective* (London: Gower, 1986), pp. 72–106; Margaret Levi, *Of Rule and Revenue* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988); Brian Downing, "Constitutionalism, Warfare, and Political Change in Early Modern Europe," *Theory and Society*, vol. 17, no. 1 (January 1988), pp. 7–56; idem, *The Military Revolution and Political Change: Origins of Democracy and Autocracy in Early Modern Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992); Robert Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); Hendrik Spruyt, *The Sovereign State and Its Competitors* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

[6] Stephen Krasner, "Approaches to the State: Alternative Conceptions and Historical Dynamics," *Comparative Politics*, vol. 16, no. 2 (January 1984), pp. 223–246; idem, "Sovereignty: An Institutional Perspective," *Comparative Political Studies*, vol. 21, no. 1 (April 1988), pp. 66–94; Ruth Berins Collier and David Collier, *Shaping the Political Arena* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), pp. 27–39; Douglass North and Robert Paul Thomas, *The Rise of the Western World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973); Douglass North, *Structure and Change in Economic History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1981); idem, *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

[7] Otto Hintze, *The Historical Essays of Otto Hintze*, Felix Gilbert (ed.) (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975).

[8] Following Spruyt, *Sovereign State*, I have chosen to use the terms "sovereign, territorial state" or just "territorial state" to designate the qualitatively new kind of polity which came to full maturity in early modern Europe. Alternative terms used by other authors include "organic state" (John Hall, Michael Mann), "national state" (Charles Tilly, Patricia Crone), "nation-state" (Douglass North, E. L. Jones), and "modern state" (much of the German historical literature). However, these other terms carry with

permitted a breakthrough to self-sustaining growth and hence escape from periodic Malthusian crises. Wide agreement can also be found on the factors which led to this unique Western outcome: a favorable geographic and ecological setting, a multiplicity of competing political units, and the unifying and restraining force of Christianity.[9] Various models have been proposed which detail how these factors interacted to produce a set of features shared by all medieval and early modern polities.[10] Furthermore, it is now generally accepted that the territorial state triumphed over other possible political forms (empire, city-state, lordship) because of the superior fighting ability which it derived from access to both urban capital and coercive authority over peasant taxpayers and army recruits.[11]

Finally, a number of authors have taken up the task which is of greatest relevance to political science, namely, developing a general theory of statebuilding in medieval and early modern Europe capable of explaining variations in political regime and administrative and financial infrastructure within the dominant form of the territorial state, which accounted for nearly all of the continent's polities at the end of the early modern period.[12] These authors have argued convincingly that war, sometimes in combination with other factors, was the principal force behind attempts by rulers both to alter political systems and to expand and rationalize state apparatuses in the interest of military competitiveness.

Yet the theories proposed to explain variations in outcome have remained unsatisfactory for a number of reasons. First, this literature has paid too little attention to the role played by different kinds of representative institutions in the failure or triumph of royal plans to introduce

them misleading overtones linked to their use in another literature to refer to the very different 19th- and early 20th-century European state. On the usage of "modern state" to refer to a quantitatively new kind of polity which came to full maturity across the continent around 1500, see: Werner Näf, "Frühformen des 'modernen Staates' im Spätmittelalter," in: Hans Hofmann (ed.), *Die Entstehung des Modernen Staates* (Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1967), pp. 101–114.

[9] See: Hall, *Powers and Liberties*; Mann, *Sources*, vol. I; E. L. Jones. *The European Miracle*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); and Patricia Crone, *Pre-Industrial Societies* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989).

[10] Norbert Elias, *Ueber den Prozess der Zivilisation*, 2 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1976) [originally published in 1939]; Poggi, *Development of the Modern State*; idem, *The State: Its Nature, Development and Prospects* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990); Mann, *Sources*, vol. I.

[11] Tilly, *Formation*; idem, *Coercion, Capital*; Rokkan, "Cities, States"; idem, "Dimensions of State Formation"; idem, "Territories, Nations, Parties"; Spruyt, *Sovereign State*.

[12] In addition to the works of Tilly, Mann, Downing, Anderson, and Zolberg cited above, see also the classic essays of Otto Hintze found in Gilbert (ed.), *Historical Essays of Otto Hintze*, and the more extensive collection found in: Otto Hintze, *Staat und Verfassung*, ed. Gerhard Oestreich (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970).

absolutism and in the subsequent development of state infrastructures. Second, these theories have proved too willing to link one kind of political regime with only one kind of state apparatus – absolutism with "bureaucracy" and constitutionalism/parliamentarism with the absence thereof – when in fact, as will be shown below, constitutionalism could just as well be associated with bureaucracy and absolutism with nonbureaucratic forms of administration. Finally, such theories have underplayed the prevalence of dysfunctional, "patrimonial" institutional arrangements like the sale and traffic in offices within the apparatuses of many early states, and have thus underestimated the substantial difficulties involved in constructing proto-modern bureaucracies in response to geomilitary pressures. One of the principal reasons for these shortcomings has been that case selection has often proved to be too narrow to encompass the full range of early modern outcomes in both the political and the administrative sphere.

This book proposes a new general theory of statebuilding in medieval and early modern Europe which seeks to avoid such shortcomings by considering the widest possible range of cases, from England in the west to Hungary and Poland in the east, and from Sweden and Denmark in the north to the states of Iberia and Italy in the south.[13] It

[13] Before proceeding further, I should say a bit more about the logic underlying case selection in this book. In an effort to hold constant as many independent variables as possible, I have limited the scope of this analysis to "western Christendom," or the area of the European continent which was Catholic during the middle ages and Catholic or Protestant thereafter. As the work of authors like John Hall, Patricia Crone, and E. L. Jones mentioned above has shown, this area – which would include all of present-day western and central Europe as far east as Poland, Hungary, and Slovakia, but exclude Russia, Ukraine, the Balkans, and Turkey – exhibited a high degree of cultural, social, and, to a lesser extent, economic homogeneity prior to 1500, a homogeneity which persisted even after the Reformation destroyed the unity of the western Church. For this reason, unless otherwise specified, "Europe" throughout the remainder of the text will mean "western Christendom" in the sense just defined.

Following this same principle of maximizing underlying commonalities, I will also seek to account for political and institutional variations among polities of a roughly similar kind, namely territorial states. This means excluding the three city-republics of Italy (Venice, Genoa, and Lucca) and the city-states of Germany from the analysis because their internal organization, and hence their developmental trajectory, was entirely different from that of all other European states. The same is also true of the more than 200 "midget states" and 1,500 autonomous territories of the imperial knights found within the 18th-century Holy Roman Empire which possessed the character of overblown private estates; and of the Swiss Confederation and the Dutch Republic, both of which were confederal entities in which sovereignty rested with the constituent territories (cantons or provinces) rather than with the center.

Having eliminated these nonterritorial states, only about thirty-odd cases remain, depending on how many of the smaller German polities are included. Thus, the following states are considered in this analysis, even if sometimes only in a minimal way: England/Britain, France, Portugal, Spain, Savoy, Tuscany, Naples, Denmark-Norway, Sweden-Finland, Poland, Hungary, Brandenburg-Prussia, Austria, Saxony, Bavaria,

argues that three factors – the organization of local government during the first few centuries after state formation; the timing of the onset of sustained geopolitical competition; and the independent influence of strong representative assemblies on administrative and financial institutions – can account for most of the variation in political regimes and state infrastructures found across the continent on the eve of the French Revolution. In the remainder of this introductory chapter, I will present this argument in greater detail by first re-specifying the full range of 18th-century outcomes to take into account a wider case selection. I will then evaluate the ability of current theories to explain these outcomes before presenting my own alternative argument in three steps.

EARLY MODERN STATES: FOUR TYPES

For almost a century, it has been conventional to think of the development of the European state in terms of two models. One, usually associated with France or Germany, is characterized by absolutist rule and a large state bureaucracy and defense establishment. The other, most often linked to Britain, features constitutional or parliamentary government and administration through local justices of the peace without much in the way of a central bureaucracy or standing armed forces. Bureaucratic absolutism is thus counterposed to a parliamentary night-watchman state.

One of the most important points of the present book is to expose this as a false dichotomy. I do so by breaking down the state into two component dimensions, one related to government or regime type and the other to the character of the state apparatus. Two different kinds of political regimes can be found among the territorial states of 18th-century Europe, the absolutist and the constitutional. In an absolutist regime, the ruler unites both executive and legislative powers in his or her own person; whereas in a constitutional regime[14] the legislative prerogative is shared by the ruler and a representative assembly. This

Württemberg, Hannover, Hessen-Kassel, Mecklenburg-Schwerin, Baden, the Palatinate, Cologne, Trier, Mainz, Würzburg, Münster, Bamberg, Eichstätt, Augsburg, and Salzburg.

For methodological guidelines, I have drawn principally upon: Theda Skocpol and Margaret Somers, "The Uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry," in: Theda Skocpol, *Social Revolutions in the Modern World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 72–95; and David Collier, "The Comparative Method," in: Ada Finifter (ed.), *Political Science: The State of the Discipline II* (Washington: American Political Science Association, 1993), pp. 105–119.

[14] This is the term used by Michael Mann and it seems preferable to Hintze's "parliamentarism," since the latter is most commonly employed to refer to a 19th- and 20th-century form of government which differed substantially from that found in most non-absolutist states of the early modern period. Fortescue's contemporary category "limited monarchy" (see next footnote) is more accurate, but also more cumbersome.

contrast was recognized at a very early date by contemporary commentators. Thus in 1476, the English statesman and political theorist Sir John Fortescue distinguished in his tract *The Governance of England: Otherwise Called the Difference between an Absolute and a Limited Monarchy* between states (like France) in which the king "mey rule his people bi suche lawes as he makyth hym self" and those (like England) in which the king "may not rule his people bi other lawes than such as thai assenten unto." For Jean Bodin, writing a century later, a sovereign's exclusive possession of the power of legislation was the defining feature of absolutism.[15] Using this criterion, 18th-century France, Spain, Portugal, Savoy, Tuscany, Naples, Denmark, and the German principalities – all of whose rulers enjoyed such a legislative prerogative – must be classified as absolutist; whereas Britain, Hungary, Poland, and Sweden,[16] where no new laws could be made without the approval of a national representative assembly, can all be considered constitutional.

It is more difficult to classify states according to the character of their infrastructures, the second dimension of variation, because of what at first glance seems like the bewildering multiplicity of organizational forms found in this area. Following Max Weber, I will differentiate between patrimonial and bureaucratic infrastructures.

As is well known, Weber was especially interested in the dynamic of development within state apparatuses. In *Economy and Society* and other writings, he identifies a particular pattern of conflict and change within the patrimonial states associated with many of the world's great civilizations, including the medieval and early modern West. For Weber, a constant struggle between patrimonial rulers and various elite groups (nobles, clerics, educated laymen, financiers) over the control of the

[15] Sir John Fortescue, *The Governance of England: Otherwise Called the Difference between an Absolute and a Limited Monarchy*, edited by Charles Plummer (Oxford: Clarendon, 1885), p. 109; Jean Bodin, *Les Six Livres de la République* (Aalen: Scientia Verlag, 1977), p. 221.

[16] Sweden poses some difficulties of classification along this dimension. Throughout most of the 18th century, from 1719 to 1772, the country was ruled by a constitutional form of government in which the four-chamber Riksdag, Sweden's national representative assembly, was as powerful as, if not even more powerful than, the contemporaneous British Parliament. After 1772, however, King Gustav III succeeded in greatly reducing those powers, and the period between 1772 and 1809 is sometimes referred to as one of "absolutism" in Sweden. Yet it should be emphasized that until at least 1789 Riksdag approval was still necessary – in fact as well as in theory – for new laws and new taxes, and hence it does not seem reasonable to classify the country as "absolutist" even for these decades. In the discussion in Chapter 6 below, I will, however, seek to explain both why a constitutional regime emerged in Sweden and why that regime proved less durable than that of the British. For a concise discussion of Swedish constitutional practices and changes during this period, see: Michael Metcalf (ed.), *The Riksdag: A History of the Swedish Parliament* (New York: St. Martin's, 1987), pp. 112–164.

"means of administration" lies at the heart of the statebuilding process in these polities.

That statebuilding process begins when the small staff of a ruler's household is no longer capable of carrying out all of the tasks of governing. A more extensive administrative apparatus must be constructed which can no longer be supervised directly by the ruler or manned solely by his personal dependents.[17] Establishing such an organization requires the cooperation of those groups in society which possess the resources necessary for infrastructural expansion, namely administrative, financial, and military expertise, ready cash, and the personal authority associated with high social standing. These groups in turn seek to negotiate or extract terms of service which will protect and/or extend their privileges, status, and income in the face of the potentially unlimited and arbitrary authority of the patrimonial monarch or prince. The best way to do this is to gain security of tenure and some control over the choice of a successor in one's office, so as to permit that office to be passed on to a family member or client.

In some cases, an elite group in fact succeeds in transforming the administrative positions it occupies into the group's private patrimony rather than that of the ruler. What results is a kind of state apparatus which Weber clumsily refers to as "stereotyped" (or, as Bendix translates it, "typified") patrimonial administration (*stereotypisierte Patrimonialverwaltung*). The "appropriation" at the heart of this apparatus can take a variety of forms, depending on the elite group involved: "proprietary officeholding," where government officials gain legally recognized property rights over their administrative positions; tax farming and other kinds of "enterprising," in which private businessmen take over various state functions and run them for their own profit; and "local patrimonialism," where elites (usually landed nobles, but sometimes also urban oligarchs), acting through local government offices which they collectively monopolize, extend the authority which they already exercise over their own dependents to all inhabitants of a given region.

In certain other circumstances, which Weber unfortunately never specifies but upon which I hope to cast some light in this book, rulers successfully resist the appropriating designs of their elite staffs and retain the right to remove officials at will. If such rulers then use the powers they have retained to create a formal hierarchy of positions and

[17] Max Weber, *Economy and Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), pp. 1010–1064, 1085–1090; idem, "Politics as a Vocation," in: H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (eds.), *From Max Weber* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), pp. 77–128, here at pp. 80–82. See also Reinhard Bendix, *Max Weber: An Intellectual Portrait* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), pp. 341–356. The discussion which follows is based on these sources.

fill those positions with candidates possessing special educational qualifications, then the groundwork will have been laid for the eventual emergence of a modern, rational-legal bureaucracy. However, such a bureaucracy can only become a full-fledged reality when the possibility of arbitrary intervention on the part of the ruler has been eliminated by the introduction of a set of standard operating procedures subject to the strictures of a formalized, impersonal administrative law.

State infrastructures approximating the Weberian ideal-type of the modern bureaucracy first made their appearance in Europe prior to the French Revolution, though they were only perfected in the course of the 19th century. It is often claimed that the continent's absolutist political regimes pioneered the construction of such proto-modern bureaucracies, but the specialized historical literature has demonstrated that this is only partially true. In the absolutist polities of the German territorial states and post-1660 Denmark, hierarchically organized infrastructures manned by highly educated officials without any proprietary claims to their positions were indeed in place by the 18th century, and tax farming was all but unknown in these countries.[18]

However, proto-modern bureaucracies were to be found not only in absolutist Germany and Denmark, but in constitutional Sweden and Britain as well, though the latter also possessed remnants of proprietary officeholding in certain government departments such as the Exchequer and the royal household.[19] Furthermore, and in sharp contrast to the situation which obtained in their central and northern European counterparts, the infrastructures of Latin Europe's[20] absolutist states (France, Spain, Portugal, Savoy, Tuscany, Naples) were clearly patrimonial in character. Not only did proprietary officeholding – often in its most pronounced form (full heritability of office) – dominate across this entire region, but tax farmers and other private businessmen fully controlled these countries' financial affairs.[21]

[18] Michael Stolleis, "Grundzüge der Beamtenethik," in: idem, *Staat und Staatsräson in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1990), pp. 197–231; Birgit Bjerre Jensen, *Udnaevnelsesretten i Enevaeldens Magtpolitiske System 1660–1730* (Copenhagen: Riksarkivet/G. E. C. Gads Forlag, 1987), pp. 328–330 and passim. Further references can be found in Chapters 5 and 6 below.

[19] John Brewer, *The Sinews of Power* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), pp. 69–70 and passim. For a more extended discussion of the significance of John Brewer's findings for attempts to understand political development in early modern Europe, see my: "*The Sinews of Power* and European State-building Theory," in: Lawrence Stone (ed.), *An Imperial State at War* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 33–51.

[20] I employ "Latin Europe" throughout this book as a collective term encompassing France, the southern Netherlands, and the Iberian and Italian peninsulas.

[21] In general, see the two recent comparative collections: Klaus Malettke, *Aemterkäuflichkeit: Aspekte Sozialer Mobilität im Europäischen Vergleich (17. und 18. Jahrhundert)* (Berlin: Colloquium Verlag, 1980); and Ilja Mieck (ed.), *Aemterhandel im Spätmittelalter und im*

Table 1. *Outcomes to Be Explained: States of 18th-Century Western Christendom Classified by Political Regime and Infrastructural Type*

		Political regime	
		Absolutist	*Constitutional*
Character of state infrastructure	*Patrimonial*	France, Spain, Portugal, Tuscany, Naples, Savoy, Papal States (Latin Europe)	Poland, Hungary
	Bureaucratic	German Territorial States, Denmark	Britain, Sweden

Finally, the great non-absolutist kingdoms of east-central Europe – Hungary and Poland – exhibited yet another variation. Unlike constitutionalist Britain and Sweden, they did not construct proto-modern bureaucracies, but rather by the end of the early modern period had come to possess infrastructures organized along local patrimonialist lines. In practical terms this meant that organs of local government staffed exclusively by nonprofessional members of the local nobility carried out nearly all government functions, including the administration of justice, tax assessment and collection, and military recruiting.[22]

The polities of early modern Europe considered in this book can thus be grouped into four distinct types according to different combinations of political regime and state infrastructure (see Table 1).

COMPETING EXPLANATIONS

Five authors – the historian Otto Hintze, the historical sociologists Charles Tilly, Michael Mann, and Perry Anderson, and the political scientist Brian Downing – have developed broad-ranging theories concerning statebuilding in medieval and early modern Europe which offer competing explanations for variations in political regime and in the

16. Jahrhundert (Berlin: Colloquium Verlag, 1984); as well as the older study by K. W. Swart, *Sale of Offices in the 17th Century* (Utrecht: HES Publishers, 1980). See also the pathbreaking work on the French case: Daniel Dessert, *Argent, Pouvoir et Société au Grand Siècle* (Paris: Fayard, 1984).

[22] Heinrich Marczali, *Ungarische Verfassungsgeschichte* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1910), pp. 93–103, 112–113; Stanislaus Kutrzeba, *Grundriss der Polnischen Verfassungsgeschichte* (Berlin: Puttkammer & Mühlbrecht, 1912), pp. 60, 113, 121, 131, 134–136, 139–140, 174, 183–190. For further references, see Chapter 6 below.

character of administrative and financial infrastructures. I now turn to a more detailed analysis of these competing explanations, evaluating them both relative to one another and in light of their ability to account for the outcomes specified in Table 1.

At the beginning of his article "Military Organization and the Organization of the State" (1906), Otto Hintze contends that: "It is one-sided, exaggerated and therefore false to consider class conflict the only driving force in history. Conflict between nations has been far more important; and throughout the ages pressure from without has been a determining influence on internal structure."[23] In another piece from the same period entitled "Power Politics and Government Organization," he applies this perspective directly to the study of European political development:

> The different systems of government and administration found among the large European states can be traced back in the main to two types, one of which can be called the English and the other the continental. . . . [The principal difference between them] consists in the fact that on the continent military absolutism with a bureaucratic administration emerges, while in England . . . the older line of development continues . . . and leads to what we usually term parliamentarism and self-government. What then is the cause of this pronounced institutional differentiation? . . . The reason lies above all in the fact that on the continent compelling political imperatives held sway which led to the development of militarism, absolutism and bureaucracy, whereas such pressures were not present in England. . . . It was above all geographic position that had its effects.[24]

This passage represents a classic statement of a widely held, dualistic view of European statebuilding. Thus Hintze views this process as having two divergent outcomes – absolutist government and a bureaucratically organized state infrastructure on the continent, and parliamentary government and nonbureaucratic administration through local notables like justices of the peace ("self-government") in England – and he links these to the degree of sustained military pressure from land forces experienced by particular countries. This pressure is in turn a function of a country's geographic position (more or less exposed) within an historically specific state system in which geopolitical competition normally took the form of war and preparations for war. Put another way, Hintze's argument can be reduced to the following proposition: the greater the degree of geographic exposure to which a given medieval

[23] Otto Hintze, "Military Organization and the Organization of the State," in: idem, *Historical Essays*, pp. 178–215, here at p. 183.

[24] Otto Hintze, "Machtpolitik und Regierungsverfassung," in: idem, *Staat und Verfassung*, pp. 424–456, here at pp. 427–428.

or early modern state was subjected, the greater the threat of land warfare; and the greater the threat of land warfare, the greater the likelihood that the ruler of the state in question would successfully undermine representative institutions and local self-government and create an absolutist state backed by a standing army and a professional bureaucracy in order to meet that land threat.

Elegant and parsimonious as it is, Hintze's theory contains two serious deficiencies. First, the relationship he posits between geographic exposure and absolutism on the one hand and geographic isolation and constitutionalism on the other is contradicted by a number of important cases. Thus Hungary and Poland were geographically exposed and subject to extensive military pressure over many centuries from, respectively, the Turks and the Russians, and yet both retained political regimes that were decidedly constitutional. Conversely, Spain was protected from the rest of the continent by the formidable barrier of the Pyrenees and still developed in an absolutist direction.

Second, despite its continuing appeal to many writers on European political development, Hintze's assertion that only absolutist states built bureaucracies and only constitutionalist polities employed nonbureaucratic forms of administration is simply not borne out by the facts. Thus the research of Geoffrey Holmes and John Brewer has shown that while 18th-century Britain did indeed make use – as Hintze claimed – of a highly developed system of participatory local government centered on the county, the hundred, and the borough, it *also* possessed a bureaucratically organized fiscal and administrative infrastructure which was larger in both absolute and per capita terms than that of Frederick the Great's Prussia.[25] Moreover, Brewer has characterized the British Excise

[25] Thus Holmes estimates that the English government employed some 12,000 full-time civil servants in the 1720s and 16,000 in the 1760s. Both figures exclude Scottish officials. As such, they are almost certainly underestimates of the total size of the British state apparatus (excluding Ireland). See Geoffrey Holmes, *Augustan England* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1982), p. 255. See also Brewer, *Sinews*, pp. 36, 65–67.

According to the calculations of Hubert Johnson, the entire Prussian bureaucracy, including local officials like the *Landräte*, numbered no more than 3,100 during the reign of Frederick the Great (1740–1786). See: Hubert Johnson, *Frederick the Great and His Officials* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), pp. 283–288. Since the population of Prussia at the time of Frederick's death was approximately 5.8 million, this implies a per capita total of one official for every 1,871 inhabitants. Using the almost certainly low figure of 16,000 officials and a population total for England, Wales, and Scotland of 8.8 million for the same period yields a comparable British result of one official for every 550 inhabitants. For population figures, see: Walther Hubatsch, *Friedrich der Grosse und die Preussische Verwaltung*, 2nd ed. (Köln: Grote, 1982), p. 233; E. A. Wrigley and R. S. Schofield, *The Population History of England, 1541–1871* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), p. 529; Phyllis Deane and W. A. Cole, *British Economic Growth 1688–1959*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), p. 6. It should be emphasized here that because complete records of government personnel no longer exist, all of these numbers represent orders of magnitude.

as having "more closely approximated . . . Max Weber's ideal of bureaucracy than any other government agency in eighteenth-century Europe."[26]

If Britain is an example of a constitutionalist polity which succeeded in constructing a bureaucratic infrastructure, then France, Spain, Portugal, and the Italian territorial states represent the opposite case: states with absolutist regimes which, despite constant exposure to military pressure, failed in their attempts to build proto-modern bureaucracies and were left instead with much less effective patrimonial infrastructures dominated by proprietary officeholding, "inside" finance, and tax farming.

More recently, Charles Tilly, Michael Mann, and Brian Downing have proposed theories which attempt to develop a more complex understanding of the way in which the pressures of war called forth the construction of different kinds of state institutions. In his well-known essay "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime," Tilly writes: "Variations in the difficulty of collecting taxes, in the expense of the particular kind of armed force adopted, in the amount of war making required to hold off competitors, and so on resulted in the principal variations in the forms of European states."[27] Tilly later goes on to elaborate on what he means by "variations in the difficulty of collecting taxes":

> In the case of extraction, the smaller the pool of resources and the less commercialized the economy, other things being equal, the more difficult was the work of extracting resources to sustain war and other government activities; hence, the more extensive was the fiscal apparatus. . . . On the whole, taxes on land were expensive to collect as compared with taxes on trade, especially large flows of trade past easily controlled checkpoints.[28]

He then uses the divergent cases of Brandenburg-Prussia and England to spell out the practical implications of this new argument for the size and character of state apparatuses:

> Brandenburg-Prussia was the classic case of high cost for available resources. The Prussian effort to build an army matching those of its larger Continental neighbors created an immense structure. . . . England illustrated the corollary of that proposition [concerning the ease of resource extraction], with a relatively large and commercialized pool of resources drawn on by a relatively small fiscal apparatus.[29]

Thus while Tilly accepts Hintze's stress on the importance of war and preparations for war as a catalyst for "state making," he calls into question

[26] Brewer, *Sinews*, p. 68. [27] Tilly, "War Making," p. 172.

[28] Ibid., p. 182. This point is echoed in *Coercion, Capital* (p. 60): "In the absence of ready capital . . . rulers built massive apparatuses to squeeze resources from a reluctant citizenry."

[29] Tilly, "War Making," p. 182.

the tight link between the degree of military pressure experienced by a given country and the size and bureaucratic character of the state apparatus built in response to that pressure. Drawing on the work of Gabriel Ardant, Tilly argues instead that the ready availability of easily taxable resources could act as an intervening variable. In effect, a polity could avoid bureaucratization and perhaps also absolutism in the wake of sustained military pressure if, as a result of a high level of economic development, it had access to abundant commercial revenues.

The broader significance of Tilly's argument is twofold. First, it provides a more sophisticated explanation than that of Hintze by bringing together both geopolitical and, in a broad sense, economic factors (available revenue sources, in turn determined by the relative weight of agriculture and commerce within a given economy) to account for the distribution of large bureaucratic state apparatuses across the continent at the end of the early modern period. Second, it hints at a link between regime type (absolutist/non-absolutist) and the relative abundance of different revenue sources (commercial or land taxes) that Michael Mann and Brian Downing bring out more explicitly.

Both the first volume of Mann's *The Sources of Social Power* and Downing's *The Military Revolution and Political Change* advance further the line of argument put forward by Hintze as later modified and amended by Tilly. Mann incorporates Tilly's claim that the kind of revenue upon which a state depended to meet geopolitical exigencies also helped determine the size and character of its infrastructure. He then goes on to link these different extractive strategies to particular kinds of political regimes, arguing that absolutist states employed centralized bureaucracies to "mobilize" in a coercive manner monetary and manpower resources held by a recalcitrant rural population, while more economically developed, constitutional states like England could tax commerce and the wealth of landed elites without the need for such a bureaucracy.[30] In another publication, Mann makes this point about England in an even more direct manner: "At the other extreme, a rich trading country like England could maintain great power status without reaching a high level of tax extraction and therefore, without a standing army."[31]

While Mann's discussion of variation within European statebuilding is confined to just a few sections of his massive *The Sources of Social Power*, Brian Downing has expounded similar ideas at much greater length in his monograph *The Military Revolution and Political Change*. This book, which draws on the writings of both Tilly and Mann, presents in its most

[30] Mann, *Sources*, vol. I, pp. 456, 476, 479.

[31] Mann, "State and Society," p. 196. Mann explicitly acknowledges his theoretical debt to Tilly in *Sources*, vol. I, p. 433.

developed form a "fiscal-military" alternative to Hintze's purely geopolitical theory of European statebuilding. Downing summarizes his conclusions as follows:

> To put the argument in its barest form, medieval European states had numerous institutions, procedures, and arrangements that, when combined with light amounts of domestic mobilization of human and economic resources for war, provided the basis for democracy in ensuing centuries. Conversely, constitutional countries confronted by a dangerous international situation mandating extensive domestic resource mobilization suffered the destruction of constitutionalism and the rise of military-bureaucratic absolutism.[32]

Though the position outlined above is very close to that of Mann, Downing takes the latter's work one step further by claiming that two other revenue sources in addition to abundant commercial wealth – income extracted from conquered territories and foreign subsidies – could also prevent the "extensive domestic resource mobilization" and ensuing "military bureaucratic absolutism" which was, so both authors believe, the necessary fate of those states dependent entirely on revenue from land taxes.

Though the theories of Tilly, Mann, and Downing are in some respects more sophisticated and richer in detail than that of Hintze, they suffer from some of the same deficiencies as the German historian's work. Thus in their writings as well the cases of Hungary and Poland remain unexplained. Almost entirely lacking in commercial resources, both states should have become absolutist and bureaucratic, but in fact they remained constitutional and nonbureaucratic. The logic of these theories would also lead one to predict that Spain and Portugal, which derived substantial incomes during the crucial "centuries of absolutism" from their American and Asian colonies, would have been able to preserve non-absolutist forms of government, but of course they did not.

Furthermore, like Hintze, the authors under consideration all tend to link one kind of early modern political regime with one kind of infrastructure – absolutism with bureaucracy and constitutionalism with the relative absence thereof – though the argument employed is somewhat different. According to Tilly, Mann, and Downing, absolutist states were those which, under geopolitical pressure, had to rely on land tax receipts to finance their standing armies and, because taxes on land were supposedly difficult to extract from recalcitrant rural populations, such states were forced to construct "bulky bureaucracies" in order to carry out this task. Non-absolutist states, which derived their income

[32] Downing, *Military Revolution*, p. 9.

largely from taxes on commerce or their equivalents like foreign subsidies or payments extorted from occupied territories which were allegedly easy to collect, could dispense with such bureaucracies. Thus while the underlying logic is somewhat different, these theorists' predictions concerning variations in state infrastructure are in the end nearly identical with those of Hintze, and equally problematic.

The reason for this, as John Brewer's work has shown, is that the assumption that taxes on commerce were easy to collect and taxes on land difficult is erroneous. Far from requiring a minimum apparatus, the collection of commercial revenues in fact demanded a large number of well-trained personnel with advanced computational skills and a detailed knowledge both of numerous commodities and of an array of complex regulations. On the other hand, land taxes were not difficult to administer, because central governments could dispense with the time-consuming business of wealth or income assessments and instead simply demand fixed amounts from each local area. It then fell to government officials or local notables to apportion this tax burden among the populace in any way which the latter seemed willing to tolerate, and to appoint the nonprofessional village collectors who were obliged to extract the sums involved from their neighbors. While states which derived substantial income from land taxes like France and Castile might well have possessed very large fiscal apparatuses, this had more to do with the proliferation of venal offices than with any difficulties involved in collecting such taxes, as the relatively small number of British and Prussian officials involved in land tax administration indicates.[33]

Perry Anderson, in his two works *Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism*[34] and *Lineages of the Absolutist State* has provided yet another general theory of European statebuilding, one which attempts to combine an awareness of the significance of geopolitical competition shared by all of the authors mentioned above with a new emphasis on socioeconomic formations and on the legacies of the past in bringing about divergent political regimes and infrastructures. In *Lineages*, Anderson identifies three kinds of outcomes to the process of early modern statebuilding: a milder form of absolutism found in western and southern Europe (France, Spain) characterized in the administrative sphere by the sale of offices; a small number of cases (England, the Dutch Republic) in

[33] Thus, during the second half of the 18th century, the British were employing between 6,000 and 8,000 staff in departments concerned with commercial taxes, while the central office coordinating the activities of the amateur land tax commissioners in the counties numbered just 14 persons. Also, the contemporaneous Prussia of Frederick the Great employed no more than 500–600 officials at all levels of government to collect its very substantial land taxes. Brewer, *Sinews*, p. 66; Johnson, *Frederick the Great*, pp. 283–288; W. R. Ward, "The Office for Taxes, 1665–1798," *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, vol. 25, no. 72 (November 1952), pp. 204–212, here at p. 208.

[34] Perry Anderson, *Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism* (London: New Left Books, 1974).

which absolutism was swept away by a precocious "bourgeois revolution"; and finally a harsher, more militarized eastern version of absolutism without the sale of offices found in Brandenburg-Prussia, Austria, and (outside of our universe of cases) Russia.

Anderson traces these divergent outcomes to what he calls the "uneven development of Europe"[35] rooted in the fact that some parts of the continent (latter-day England, France, Iberia, Italy, and southern Germany) had been part of the western Roman Empire prior to the middle ages, whereas others (the remainder of Germany, Scandinavia, eastern Europe) were in effect areas of new settlement. In the former, feudalism emerged independently out of a fusion between Roman and Germanic institutions, leaving a landscape characterized in the 13th century by parcelized sovereignty, autonomous towns, and serf-based agriculture. In the "colonial" east, however, royal authority was stronger, towns weaker, and peasants generally free.

The great crisis of the 14th century, triggered by the disappearance of uncultivated lands and resultant overpopulation in the west, deepened the differences between the two regions. In the western part of the continent, this crisis further weakened serf-based agriculture and noble landlords while strengthening both the towns and royal authority, leading eventually to the creation of royal absolutism as a means of maintaining the basic conditions of reproduction for the feudal aristocracy. Absolutism accomplished this task in two ways. First, it increased the land and people available for noble exploitation through an aggressive program of foreign conquest; and second, it employed the armed forces and bureaucracy created under pressure from military competitors to protect elite property rights.[36] Furthermore, a rising bourgeoisie was "bought off" and "feudalized" through the sale of offices within the growing state apparatus. In England and Holland, however, where commercial development was particularly strong, this bourgeoisie could not be tamed and eventually overthrew absolutism through revolution (the English Civil War and the Revolt of the Netherlands, respectively).[37]

In eastern Europe, by contrast, it was the weakening of the towns and of the independent peasantry as a result of the 14th-century crisis imported from the west which first permitted the local nobility to introduce serfdom at precisely the moment when it was beginning to disappear in western Europe.[38] During the next major exogenous economic crisis, that of the 17th century, military pressure generated primarily by a newly expansionist Sweden forced rulers in Brandenburg-Prussia,

[35] Anderson, *Passages*, p. 213.
[36] Anderson, *Passages*, pp. 154–155, 197–209; idem, *Lineages*, pp. 18–31, 51–54.
[37] Anderson, *Lineages*, pp. 11, 33–35, 94–95, 142.
[38] Anderson, *Passages*, pp. 213–214, 246–254, 263–264.

Austria, and Russia to establish bureaucratic-absolutist regimes to counter this external threat. The highly militarized and centralized form assumed by these states was conditioned by the need to prop up – in the interest of the nobility – a depressed, serf-based, agricultural system facing the danger of widespread peasant flight. At the same time, the absence of a significant commercial class made it possible to avoid the sale of offices and construct more modern bureaucracies in this region.[39]

Thus, as will be apparent from this summary, war also plays a central role in Anderson's model of European political development despite its nominally neo-Marxist framework, a result he justifies by arguing that feudalism "was a mode of production founded on extra-economic coercion: conquest, not commerce, was its primary form of expansion."[40] Yet the very ubiquity of military competition within feudalism means that war cannot in itself account for the divergent features of the western and eastern absolutist state; rather, this role falls to variations in socioeconomic structure (absence/presence of serfdom, relative strength of bourgeoisie/towns), themselves largely rooted in differences in prior historical experience (presence/absence of a direct Roman inheritance).

Despite its sweep and eloquence, Perry Anderson's analytic history of the West from the fall of Rome to the French Revolution is also beset by a number of difficulties. Like all of the other authors discussed, Anderson is unable to do justice to the Hungarian and Polish cases. Thus the same two factors which he employs to explain political outcomes in Brandenburg-Prussia and Austria – an underdeveloped economy characterized by serf-based agriculture and weak towns, and an acute security threat from more militarily advanced states – were equally present in both Hungary and Poland. Yet the kind of government and infrastructure which the latter two countries came to possess – a particularly pronounced variant of constitutionalism and a non-bureaucratic infrastructure built around local patrimonialism – were as far removed as possible from the militarized, bureaucratic absolutism of their Germanic neighbors.

Furthermore, Anderson presents no convincing general explanation as to why the commercial classes in England and the Dutch Republic proved so much stronger than those in France and Spain, thereby permitting the first two states to throw off absolutism. Also, like the other authors mentioned earlier, he overlooks the existence of a large, nonproprietary bureaucracy in 18th-century Britain. Finally, his explanation for differences in infrastructure between western and eastern absolutism – the relative strength of the "demand" side for offices as determined by the presence or absence of a strong commercial bourgeoisie – is

[39] Anderson, *Lineages*, pp. 195–200, 202–208, 212, 217. [40] Ibid., p. 197.

ultimately unsatisfactory, because this would imply that the more economically advanced "western" areas of Germany would have developed apparatuses closer to those of France and Spain than those of "eastern" Prussia and Austria. This, however, was not the case.

EXPLAINING VARIATIONS IN EARLY MODERN STATES: THE ARGUMENT

The works discussed above, when taken together, have greatly advanced our understanding of the process of political development among the territorial states of medieval and early modern Europe. They have confirmed the overriding importance of both autonomous economic networks and geopolitical competition to the expansion and internal specialization of the individual European states. Yet the arguments presented in these works have in the end proved unable to explain the full range of outcomes of the process of European statebuilding. Hence a new theory of that process is necessary, one that can account in a more satisfactory way for the distribution of political regimes and state infrastructures found across the continent on the eve of the French and Industrial Revolutions. In sketching the outlines of just such a theory below, I first address the problem of political regimes, then infrastructures, and finally examine the independent influence of representative assemblies on infrastructural development.

Political Regimes

Explaining variations in political regime at the end of the early modern period means accounting for the strength or weakness of particular representative institutions, since it was the powers still held by such institutions which determined whether a given government was headed by a ruler who was relatively constrained (constitutionalism) or unconstrained (absolutism) in his behavior. In effect, this requires explaining why a given national representative assembly was strong enough to resist the endemic attempts by monarchs to monopolize legislative and other powers. The only recent author to address this question directly, H. G. Koenigsberger, declared with some exasperation at the end of his article "Dominium Regale or Dominium Politicum et Regale?": "The blunt truth is that no one has yet come up with an answer to [this] problem, that is, with anything approaching a satisfactory overall theory. I am not able to do this, either."[41] What is more, Koenigsberger remained skeptical

[41] Helmuth G. Koenigsberger, "Dominium regale or dominium politicum et regale? Monarchies and Parliaments in Early Modern Europe," in: Karl Bosl (ed.), *Der Moderne Parlamentarismus und seine Grundlagen in der Ständischen Repräsentation* (Berlin: Ducker & Humblot, 1977), pp. 43–68, here at p. 48.

about whether it would *ever* be possible to develop a general theory to explain variations in the strength of representative institutions.

But before succumbing to despair, we should take note of the fact that, as Koenigsberger himself mentions, one person at least offers the beginnings of such a theory, and that person was none other than Otto Hintze. During the 1920s and early 1930s, following his retirement from the University of Berlin, Hintze turned his attention increasingly to the representative assemblies of medieval and early modern Europe, a subject which he had neglected prior to World War I. His new interest may have been prompted by the difficulties that the Hungarian and Polish cases posed for his earlier, geopolitical theory[42] or perhaps it was inspired by the advent of the parliamentary Weimar Republic. For our purposes, the most important result of this new line of research was the short essay "Typologie der ständischen Verfassungen des Abendlandes" ("A Typology of the Representative Regimes of the West"), first published in 1930.[43]

In this essay, Hintze argues that the parliaments or "Estates" of the medieval and early modern West can be divided into two basic (ideal-) types, the "two-chamber" and the "tricurial," according to the system of representation they employed.[44] Into the former category he places the

[42] This supposition is supported by the presence among Hintze's papers of a long, unpublished study on Polish constitutional development written during the 1920s. Part of this study has now appeared under the title, "Verfassungsgeschichte Polens vom 16. bis 18. Jahrhundert," in: Hintze, *Staat und Verfassung*, pp. 511–562.

[43] Otto Hintze, "Typologie der ständischen Verfassungen des Abendlandes," in: idem, *Staat und Verfassung*, pp. 120–139. Other essays by Hintze from the 1920s and early 1930s which touch on this topic are: "Die Wurzeln der Kreisverfassung in den Ländern des nordöstlichen Deutschland" (1923), in: ibid., pp. 186–215; "Staatenbildung und Kommunalverwaltung" (1924), in: ibid., pp. 216–241; and "Weltgeschichtliche Bedingungen der Repräsentativverfassung" (1931), in: ibid., pp. 140–185. Only the last of these is contained in the Gilbert volume (pp. 302–353), translated as: "The Preconditions of Representative Government in the Context of World History." For a more extended discussion of Hintze's typology of representative institutions and of critical responses to it, see my essay: "Explaining Variation in Early Modern State Structure: The Cases of England and the German Territorial States," in: John Brewer and Eckhart Hellmuth (eds.), *Rethinking Leviathan: The British and German States of the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

[44] It is important to stress here that Hintze saw this distinction between "two chamber" and "tricurial" assemblies as *ideal-typical*; i.e., he did not mean to claim that all of the real world assemblies which he assigned to the first category actually possessed two chambers. In fact, as Hintze explicitly states, the division into two chambers was a later development that never came to pass in either Scotland or in medieval Sweden and Denmark. Likewise, it is well known that many "tri-curial" German assemblies came to possess only two chambers due to the disappearance of one or other of the three traditional estates. Yet, Hintze would argue, this variation in the number of chambers in no way affected the *internal organization* of the chambers, which is the real difference he is seeking to highlight through his typology. Given this fact, Hintze's choice of terminology is rather unfortunate.

representative assemblies of, among other states, England, Poland, Hungary, and the Scandinavian countries; and into the latter those of the German territorial states, France, Aragon, Catalonia, Valencia, Naples, and Sicily.[45] What distinguishes these two types of assemblies from one another is not so much the number of chambers they possess as the *internal structure* of those chambers. "Two-chamber" or territorially based bodies like the English Parliament were characterized by an upper house in which members of the higher nobility and clergy sat together, and a lower house made up of chosen representatives of rurally based organs of local government (the counties or their equivalent) and of the self-governing towns. On the other hand, assemblies in the "tricurial" or estate-based system found throughout the German territories and Latin Europe were divided into three or more chambers, each of which contained representatives (or indeed all members appearing personally) of one, and only one, legally privileged status group or estate such as the nobility, the clergy, and the burghers of the self-governing towns.

Hintze's basic contention in his essay is that the territorially based assemblies or parliaments were structurally stronger, and hence better able to resist the blandishments of ambitious rulers, than were status-group-based assemblies or Estates. He does not spell out why this might be so, but at least two reasons come to mind. First, because Estate-based assemblies were by definition strictly divided along status-group lines, the overriding concern of each of the individual chambers which composed such assemblies was to protect and, if possible, extend group-specific privileges. This made it very difficult for the chambers to cooperate among themselves in defense of the rights of the assembly as a whole vis-à-vis its royal master. Conversely, this situation encouraged rulers to negotiate directly with the individual chambers and strike bilateral deals with them. In fact, as we shall see, the chambers were often more than willing to give up rights of co-legislation or even co-taxation as long as the social and economic privileges of their respective status groups were guaranteed.

By contrast, the bicameral or territorially based assemblies were not divided along status-group lines. On the contrary, members of the different orders were mixed together in both chambers: higher aristocrats, clergy, and (in Poland and Hungary) officeholders in the upper house; and greater and lesser nobles, townsmen, and non-noble landowners (England) in the lower house. Furthermore, members of the upper house were frequently bound to their lower-house colleagues through ties of family, patronage, and locality. As a result, it proved far more difficult than in the case of the Estate-based assemblies for

[45] Hintze, "Typologie," pp. 124–125.

monarchs to play one chamber off against the other and thereby weaken the representative body's ability to resist its ruler's ambitions. Put another way, the structure of the territorially based parliaments encouraged cooperation at the level of the entire assembly, whereas in the status-based Estates such cooperation took place at the level of the individual chamber, with detrimental consequences for the future of the assembly as a whole (though not necessarily for its constituent status groups).

A second reason for the greater resilience of the territorially based assemblies was that they were inextricably linked to and rooted in organs of local government. The lower chambers were, after all, made up of representatives directly selected by county or borough assemblies or councils, and such representatives were almost always themselves active participants in local administration. Also, nearly all of the higher nobles represented in the first chamber were, of course, also active in politics in the areas in which their estates were located. Territorially based assemblies thus came to be seen both as an extension of and as an agency for protecting the interests of organs of local government. Such organs themselves already possessed a distinctly participatory complexion, characterized as they were by the interaction between central government officials sent to the localities and members of the local (elite) population who took part in judicial processes, tax assessments, and other government business.

At the same time, local government provided the members of territorially based assemblies with just those resources necessary to mount an effective defense of such assemblies against overweening royal ambition: a ready-made forum in which all of the local political elite could meet and discuss a common course of action; financial resources such as local taxes; and even armed forces in the form of the local militia. Such resources were in fact regularly mobilized to counter real or supposed threats of absolutism on the part of rulers. Prominent examples include the English and Scottish parliamentary revolts against the Stuarts, the repeated elite-led uprisings in Hungary against the Habsburgs, and, more insidiously, the frequent armed noble confederations or *rokoszy* directed against the Polish kings. The same advantages were not enjoyed by the status-based assemblies, for the simple reason that, aside from the link between the representatives of the towns and the municipal councils which sometimes selected them, most of their members possessed no organic connection to any unit of local government other than the individual landed estates of nobles and ecclesiastics.

How can we explain the existence of these two contrasting types of assemblies? Here again Hintze provides little assistance. I argue that the answer lies for the most part in the *divergent experiences* of Latin Europe

and Germany on the one hand and Britain, Scandinavia, Poland, and Hungary on the other during the so-called dark ages between the collapse of the western Roman Empire and the turn of the millennium.[46] In Latin Europe and Germany, leaders of invading Germanic tribes built large-scale states upon the Roman foundations of the *civitas* (city-region), written law codes, an imperial conception of rulership, a highly regulated, noncompetitive market economy, and a caesaro-papist church. Over the coming centuries, as social and economic conditions moved farther and farther away from those that had obtained during antiquity, these foundations became ever weaker as they proved less and less able to provide the basis for political order in an increasingly "medieval" world. The resulting decline in central state authority across Latin Europe and Germany permitted a powerful landed elite of mixed Roman and Germanic origin to appropriate ever more public power and use it to construct autonomous lordly domains centered upon their rural estates.

The failure in Latin Europe and Germany of the Carolingian, Lombard, Visigothic, and Umayyad statebuilding experiments bequeathed a distinctive legacy to the rulers who set about creating a new generation of durable states across these regions between the turn of the millennium and the end of the middle ages: the Capetians of France (1000s/1100s), the Normans of southern Italy (1000s/1100s), the royal houses of *reconquista* Castile, Aragon, Catalonia, Valencia, and Portugal (1000s/1200s) and the hundreds of German noble families who, beginning in the 13th century, sought to construct their own states upon the ruins of the last of the dark age polities, the Ottonian-Salian Holy Roman Empire.[47] In the first instance, the collapse of the large-scale dark age polities encumbered this new generation of state-formers with an extremely fragmented regional and local political landscape, much of

[46] The importance of antecedent historical experiences is also stressed in Perry Anderson's model of European statebuilding, for it was the areas in the west of the continent formerly under Roman rule which first developed specifically feudal forms of dependent labor organization, while the non-Roman areas to the east only imported such forms centuries later. However, this divergence in the socioeconomic sphere, while significant in other respects, cannot explain differences in political regime and state infrastructure found in 18th-century Europe.

[47] It was the periodic weakness of a German imperial power built upon outmoded foundations that provided the opportunity for alternative state forms to arise in medieval central Europe. While local lords constructing new princely states were the primary beneficiaries of German imperial weakness, alternative outcomes were possible in those few areas where other social groups were stronger: city-dwellers in northern Italy and parts of Germany, and both city-dwellers and peasants in the northern Netherlands and Switzerland. These groups took advantage of the power vacuum which arose during the decline of Europe's last dark-age polity and formed city-republics and the republican confederation of Switzerland. This explains the fact that all the alternative state forms found within 18th-century western Christendom were located within the medieval boundaries of the Holy Roman Empire.

which lay under the direct control of noble lords large and small and hence beyond the direct influence of the new central authorities.

The response of these new state-formers was to use royal officials as agents with which to rebuild state authority from the center outward against the opposition of long-established, well-entrenched local elites whose power antedated, often by centuries, that of the new ruling houses (*administrative* pattern of local government). This organizational response to the extreme decentralization of power bequeathed by the dark ages was complemented by an intellectual one as sympathetic churchmen responded to the disorder around them by developing, during the course of the 1000s and 1100s, two new models of sociopolitical order – the theories of feudal hierarchy and of the tripartite society of orders – which would be deployed over the coming centuries as potent ideological weapons by statebuilding rulers in Latin Europe and Germany to reestablish central authority in the face of lordly opposition.[48]

By contrast, very different "starting conditions" confronted leaders who sought to build new states in the previously un- or only lightly inhabited areas along the periphery of western Christendom where their peoples had come to settle in the centuries following the demise of the western Roman Empire. Unencumbered by the legacies of dark age, neo-Roman statebuilding in general and opposition from old entrenched elites in particular – rulers in England, Scotland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Poland, and Hungary worked together with churchmen, native aristocrats, and other fighting men to form a series of durable new polities in the century and a quarter between 954 (English unification) and 1076 (elevation of a Polish duke to royal status by the pope). These kingdoms were all subdivided into a series of smaller, regular territorial units (the county in England, Scotland, and Hungary; *ziemia* in Poland; *härad/herred* and *landskab* in Scandinavia) where the local free male population itself carried out many tasks of governance (dispensing justice, maintaining order, and organizing local defense and revenue collection) with the help of royal officials sent out from the center (*participatory* pattern of local government).

This divergence in the pattern of *local government* found during the first period of life of those European polities which survived into the 18th century was of immense significance for the future course of European political development. It was this factor which helped determine

[48] Georges Duby, *Les Trois Ordres ou l'Imaginaire du Féodalisme* (Paris: Gallimard, 1978), pp. 77–81 et passim; idem, *Le Moyen Âge 987–1460* (Paris: Hachette, 1987), pp. 225–229; Jean-Pierre Poly and Eric Bournazel, *La Mutation Féodale: X^e–XII^e Siècles* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1980), pp. 298–305; Jean Dunbabin, *France in the Making 843–1180* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. 256–259.

the type of representative assembly and ultimately the kind of political regime (absolutist or constitutional) that would emerge centuries later within a given state. Thus when the kings of England, Scotland, Sweden, Hungary, and Poland called national representative bodies into existence during the 1200s, 1300s, and 1400s in order to obtain approval for taxes to meet external military threats, they sought to gain the support of the unitary organs of local government found across their realms by asking the counties (or their equivalents) and the self-governing towns to send delegates to deliberate side by side with the leading churchmen and aristocrats of the realm. While in Scotland and medieval Sweden these county and borough representatives always remained together in a single chamber with the bishops and peers, in England, Hungary, and Poland the two groups soon came to form their own separate chambers, thus creating the kind of bicameral assembly most famously embodied in the English/British Parliament.

In Latin Europe and the German states, however, the character of local government was very different. Instead of the orderly pattern of unitary counties and autonomous boroughs within which local freemen took part in judicial inquiries, discussed matters of collective concern in periodic assemblies, and served in the militia, one finds in these regions overlapping and ill-defined catchment areas in which the business of governance was carried out almost exclusively by officials answerable to the center and their assistants with little or no active role for the local population above the village level. As a consequence, the states of Latin Europe and Germany lacked the unitary, participatory organs of rural local government found in the other areas of the continent. Thus, such organs could not serve as the basis for representation, as was the case with the territorially based assemblies. Rather, the tripartite model of society provided the basis for an Estate- (i.e., status-) based form of assembly with only tenuous connections to local government, with all of the consequences for the future of such bodies that this implied.

State Infrastructures

Though differences in the organization of local government resulting from variations in the pattern of state formation go a long way towards explaining why the rulers of Latin Europe and Germany eventually became absolute while their counterparts in Britain, Sweden, Hungary, and Poland were forced to share power with representative assemblies, they cannot account for the fact that France, Spain, the Italian states, and the two eastern European kingdoms had all by the eve of the French Revolution come to possess patrimonial infrastructures of

various kinds, whereas the German states and Britain had successfully constructed proto-modern bureaucracies. How can we explain this second pattern of outcomes?

I suggest that we look for inspiration to the neighboring discipline of economic history. Alexander Gerschenkron achieved a major breakthrough in that field when he argued that a static understanding of the industrialization process of the kind dominant during the 1950s and 1960s could not in itself account for the significant differences found across the mature industrial economies of the 20th century. Instead, he pointed out that while all states undergoing industrialization did indeed share many common experiences, variations in outcome could only be explained by the timing ("early" or "late") of the onset of that process in a given state relative to all other states.[49] Thus many of the structural features that today distinguish Britain's economy from that of Germany can be traced back to the fact that the former was the first industrializer, and hence faced no comparable competition in many markets, whereas the latter was forced to build up its economy in a world already profoundly altered by Britain's earlier industrialization. I argue that a similar logic also obtained during the process of European statebuilding and that differences in the timing of the onset of sustaining geopolitical competition go a long way towards explaining the character of state infrastructures found across the continent at the end of the 18th century.

To see why this might be so, we first should remember that the work of Hintze, Tilly, Mann, Downing, and Anderson has already conclusively established that war and preparations for war tended to stimulate the creation of ever more sophisticated state institutions across the continent. Yet what this "consensus" overlooks is that while geopolitical competition may have had a crucial impact on the statebuilding process, the onset of such competition was "nonsimultaneous" – that is, it did not affect all states at the same time. This "nonsimultaneity" proved to be of particular significance for three reasons. First, timing mattered because the range of "technical resources" available to statebuilders did not remain invariant across this period. As all the authors mentioned above emphasize, medieval and early modern rulers responded to sustained (as opposed to merely episodic) geopolitical pressures by seeking

[49] The classic statement of this view is Alexander Gerschenkron, "Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective," in: idem, *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1962), pp. 5–30, here at pp. 7–11. For an extended discussion and criticism of Gerschenkron's argument in light of more recent research on European industrialization, see: Clive Trebilcock, *The Industrialization of the Continental Powers 1780–1914* (London: Longman, 1981), pp. 8–20, 421–426 and passim.

to construct larger and more specialized administrative and fiscal apparatuses in order to increase their military capacities. Yet the building blocks with which they attempted to do this – whether in the form of organizational models, legal concepts, or financial techniques – changed greatly between the 12th and 18th centuries thanks to the forward march of "technological progress" in this area.

As a result, states that expanded and differentiated their infrastructures before about 1450 (early statebuilders) often did so using methods and institutional arrangements that became increasingly outmoded and even dysfunctional as the centuries passed, but that proved very difficult to replace due to the power of vested interests with a material and ideological stake in already established institutions.[50] At the same time, states that were not affected by geopolitical competition – and hence did not initiate a similar set of structural changes until after about 1450 (late statebuilders) – possessed the advantage of being able to adopt the latest techniques of administration and finance.

Second, and even more importantly, the supply of expert personnel – administrators and those with financial and military expertise – expanded greatly in the period after 1450 as a result of the proliferation of medieval universities, the growth of commercial and financial markets, and changes in military technology. Prior to 1450, such personnel could exploit their very strong labor market position, owing to the scarcity of their skills, to promote institutional arrangements like proprietary officeholding and tax farming which were much more beneficial to them than to their royal employers. With the tremendous increase in the supply of such personnel in the early modern period, the bargaining position of rulers who built up their state apparatuses later improved substantially, thereby permitting them to resist more effectively pressures toward appropriation. Finally, late statebuilders were also able to learn from the experiences and mistakes of the "pioneers," an advantage that the latter, of course, did not share.

The nonsimultaneous onset of endemic conflict affected the various parts of the continent in different ways. It was in the west and south of Europe that sustained geopolitical competition first arose among the polities of Latin Europe and the newly formed kingdoms of England and Scotland during the course of the 1100s and 1200s, leading rulers there to begin to construct complex, specialized state infrastructures. In the relatively primitive conditions of that period, before the full flowering of the revived Roman law and the medieval universities, the only two

[50] Douglass North has explored the reasons beyond the persistence of inefficient, dysfunctional institutions over many centuries in his book *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance.*

models of large-scale organization available to statebuilding rulers were the feudal and the ecclesiastical. The conceptions of office found at the heart of both organizational models granted quasi-proprietary rights to officeholders from the start, rights that the latter were able to strengthen considerably by exploiting to the full their monopoly of scarce administrative skills.

In a similar way, cash-poor rulers often found themselves at the mercy of the small number of financiers and merchants who possessed liquid assets to lend during this period. Thus while the monarchies of western and southern Europe had all, by the late 15th century, succeeded in constructing impressive fiscal and administrative systems well ahead of their neighbors to the east and north, the price that they paid for this precocity was a substantial loss of effective control to proprietary officeholders, tax farmers, and officeholder-financiers who viewed the state not only as an instrument of princely power but also as a source of income and social standing.

By contrast, similar geopolitical pressures did not impinge upon the late-forming states of Germany and the Northern Netherlands or the older kingdoms of Denmark, Sweden, Hungary, and Poland until centuries later, during the late 1400s and 1500s. As a result, when rulers in these areas first attempted to expand and render more sophisticated their infrastructures, they found themselves in a quite different world, one filled with universities engaged in training large numbers of students in both canon and Roman law, and one with a much more developed commercial economy offering myriad opportunities for borrowing. In addition, they also benefited from the practical examples, both good and bad, furnished by their neighbors to the west and south. These polities were hence in a better position to resist the kinds of large-scale appropriation by officeholders and financiers which plagued statebuilding pioneers like France, the Iberian and Italian states, and England, and to attempt to construct instead proto-modern bureaucracies based upon the separation of office from the person of the officeholder.

The Independent Effect of Parliaments

If differences in the organization of local government and in the timing of the onset of sustained geopolitical competition had been the only two factors influencing the distribution of political regimes and state infrastructural types found across early modern Europe, then one would expect to see the pattern of outcomes shown in Table 2.

A comparison of this table with Table 1, which summarizes the outcomes as specified in the historical literature, raises a number of important points. First, the organization of local government during the initial

Table 2. *Outcomes That Would Have Occurred If the Character of Local Government and Timing Had Been the Only Factors at Work*

		Type of local government during the first period of statebuilding	
		Administrative	*Participatory*
Onset of sustained geopolitical competition	*Pre-1450*	Patrimonial absolutism (Latin Europe)	Patrimonial constitutionalism (Britain)
	Post-1450	Bureaucratic absolutism (German States)	Bureaucratic constitutionalism (Poland, Hungary, Sweden, Denmark)

phase of statebuilding, itself a result of the antecedent experience of state formation, does a good job of predicting the actual distribution of absolutist and constitutional regimes found in the 18th century.[51]

Second, timing alone is sufficient to account for the kinds of state apparatuses found among the absolutist states: patrimonial infrastructures built around proprietary officeholding and tax farming in the case of France, Spain, Portugal, and the Italian principalities; and non-proprietary, proto-modern bureaucracies among the German states and Denmark. However, the predicted results for England and for Hungary and Poland in the sphere of infrastructures are the opposite of those which actually occurred. Since sustained geomilitary pressure came early to England, it should have been left on the eve of the French Revolution with a patrimonial state apparatus, when in fact it possessed, as John Brewer has shown, an extensive proto-modern bureaucracy. Conversely, Hungary and Poland should, as late statebuilders, have constructed such bureaucracies, but in fact never did so. Rather, almost all state functions in these countries had, by the end of the early modern period, been appropriated by noble-controlled organs of local government, thus leaving them with their own novel form of patrimonialism.

How can these unexpected results be explained? The answer lies in the fact that the presence of a powerful national representative institution acted as an independent influence on the pattern of infrastructural development found among constitutional states, deflecting them from

[51] The exception here is Denmark, which enjoyed a participatory pattern of government during the centuries following its formation, yet became an absolutist state after 1660. I will provide a brief explanation for this Danish "exceptionalism" at the end of this introduction, and then again in Chapter 6.

the path they otherwise would have followed had the effects of timing been able to work themselves out unimpeded. Since such assemblies were by definition weak or nonexistent in the absolutist states, they could not play there the role of a third independent variable, which explains why in these cases timing alone does in fact predict infrastructural outcomes quite accurately. To render more concrete what this means, let us look briefly at the cases of England and of Hungary and Poland, before contrasting them with those of the absolutist states of Latin Europe and Germany.[52]

As mentioned earlier, sustained geopolitical competition came to affect England very early, during the course of the 1100s. As a result, that country was among the first to begin to construct a sophisticated state apparatus in order to meet a foreign military threat, in this case one from France. Just as the timing argument outlined above would predict, that apparatus exhibited strong patrimonial tendencies right from the start. However, with the appearance in the late 1200s of Parliament as the representative of the participatory county and borough communities, patrimonial practices like proprietary officeholding and tax farming came under intense criticism. The resulting struggle between royal officials and England's national representative assembly over the character of the growing administrative and financial infrastructure continued intermittently for over three and a half centuries.

The importance of Parliament in countering tendencies towards the appropriation of office became clear during the late 1400s and 1500s when the decline of that body in the wake of England's military disengagement from the continent, combined with the replacement of clerics by laymen in many government positions, led to the consolidation and spread of proprietary officeholding. The grip of this and other patrimonial practices on the English state was only permanently overcome when a return to regular, nearly annual meetings of Parliament after 1660 created conditions which allowed reformers within the central government to construct a new, nonproprietary fiscal-military bureaucracy built around the Treasury, the revenue boards, the Navy Board, the Admiralty, and the offices of the secretaries of state and secretary-at-war. Thus by the late 17th century, Parliament was at last able largely to replace the patrimonial infrastructure which early statebuilding had initially bequeathed to England with a new administrative apparatus organized along (proto-) modern bureaucratic lines. In effect, the efforts of that body in the end permitted Britain to move off a path of development which would have culminated in patrimonial constitutionalism and instead to enter onto another leading to *bureaucratic constitutionalism.*

[52] For supporting evidence for the following arguments, see the detailed discussion of the countries in question in the chapters which follow.

If the British Parliament acted to prevent the final triumph of patrimonialism in favor of bureaucracy, strong national representative bodies did just the opposite in Hungary and Poland. In contrast to England, these countries did not come under sustained geopolitical pressure until the late 1400s and 1500s, when the Turks began to menace Hungary and the rise of Muscovy/Russia and Sweden permanently threatened Poland. Because of the late onset of such pressures, Hungarian and Polish rulers found themselves – like their counterparts in Germany – in a position to benefit from the administrative, financial, and military progress made since the 12th century and to build state infrastructures in response to foreign military threats that would be less prone to appropriation.

This is indeed exactly what the king Mátyás Hunyadi (reigned 1458–1490) did in Hungary. During the 1470s and 1480s, he built up a professional army of 28,000 men supported by a nonproprietary bureaucracy staffed by university-educated Humanists. Yet after Mátyás's death in 1490, the Hungarian Diet, acting for the noble-controlled county communities, promptly dismantled this new instrument of royal power and turned over most state functions to local government organs which had now become little more than extended arms of noble power. Similar developments occurred numerous times in Poland from the reign of Sigismund Augustus (1548–1572) through that of Jan Sobieski (1674–1696), with the Sejm (parliament) repeatedly blocking attempts to construct a modern state apparatus that might strengthen royal authority and more effectively defend the country against Russians, Swedes, Turks, and Prussians in favor of retaining most power at the local level, where it could easily be appropriated by the magnates. Thus in both Hungary and Poland, strong national assemblies acted to prevent the bureaucratization that occurred in other late statebuilders such as the German states in order to protect a kind of patrimonialism centered not around proprietary officials and tax farmers, as in Latin Europe, but around continued control by a locally based elite, in this case the landowning nobility. The most tangible consequence of this triumph of *patrimonial constitutionalism* was a decline of military effectiveness in both countries, which led to a partial loss of independence in Hungary and the complete destruction of the state at the hands of its neighbors in Poland.

The reason behind the opposite effect of intervention by representative assemblies in England on the one hand (bureaucratization) and Hungary and Poland on the other (patrimonialization) lies in the fact that because of the early onset of geopolitical competition in the former, a substantial state apparatus with patrimonialist tendencies was already in place *before* the English Parliament ever appeared on the scene in the late 1200s. Since it was already too late to eliminate this apparatus altogether, the goal of representatives in Westminster became to reform

it, a task which required many centuries to accomplish. In Hungary and Poland, by contrast, the onset of sustained geopolitical pressures occurred *after* national representative assemblies were already in place, and those assemblies were hence in a position to block altogether the construction of a bureaucratic infrastructure in response to such pressures.

If powerful representative institutions in England, Hungary, and Poland were capable – each in their own way – of altering the path of infrastructual development dictated by the attempt of rulers to respond to the functional exigencies of geopolitical competition alone, the same was not true of the weaker assemblies of Latin Europe and the German states. Like their English counterpart, the Estates of France, the Iberian peninsula, and Italy also railed against the prevalence of patrimonial practices that were the usual concomitant of early statebuilding. Yet with the exception of the Sicilian *parlamento*, by the late 1600s all such assemblies had been swept away following a period of sustained weakness that had lasted several centuries. As a result, proprietary office-holding and other forms of patrimonial organization only grew stronger, leaving this region the homeland of *patrimonial absolutism* until the French Revolution and beyond.

While many more German Estates survived in some form into the 18th century, this was so only because they had chosen to confine their activities entirely to the administration of certain direct taxes, leaving their rulers free to take advantage of their positions as late statebuilders to construct proto-modern bureaucracies active in all other spheres of government. It was this crucial difference in the character of their infrastructures which distinguished the *bureaucratic absolutist* states of early modern Germany from their patrimonial absolutist cousins in Latin Europe.

It should be stressed here that the four concepts introduced above – bureaucratic constitutionalism, patrimonial constitutionalism, patrimonial absolutism, and bureaucratic absolutism – represent *analytic categories* constructed around only two aspects of 18th-century territorial states: political regime and infrastructural type. Hence I make no claim that they capture all salient features of those states even within the political realm, let alone in any other sphere of life. Furthermore, the "fit" between the categories and the empirical cases also varies even as far as political regime and infrastructure are concerned. Thus ancien régime France and Frederician Prussia were more fully realized examples of, respectively, patrimonial and bureaucratic absolutism than were contemporaneous Spain and Saxony.

Mention should also be made of two cases which are explained less well by the three independent variables I have introduced: those of Denmark and Sweden. Both Scandinavian states arose in areas untouched

by large-scale, dark-ages state formation, and both subsequently developed patterns of local government which were clearly participatory in nature. Also, neither polity was subjected to sustained geopolitical pressure until quite late, during the 1500s. Hence, based on the arguments presented above, one would expect that both countries would have developed in the direction of patrimonial constitutionalism, and indeed they did so for many centuries. By the 1700s, however, Sweden had emerged as a bureaucratic, rather than a patrimonial, constitutional monarchy, and Denmark had made an even more sudden and startling shift towards bureaucratic absolutism.

While the reasons for these deviations will be explored in greater detail in Chapter 6, suffice it to say here that in both cases powerful contingent events conspired to confound expected paths of development. In Sweden, these took the form of the election of the noble Gustav Vasa to the throne in 1523 under circumstances which allowed him to replace the country's old territorially based assembly with a new, four-chamber body (the Riksdag) containing both territorial and status-based elements.[53] While the Riksdag eventually proved strong enough to maintain its powers of co-legislation and co-taxation through most of the early modern period, it could not prevent the construction by successive Vasas of a nonproprietary bureaucracy closely modeled on those of the German states. This development occurred during the course of the late 1500s and 1600s in the wake of Sweden's new involvement in European power politics.

In Denmark, by contrast, it was the progressive destruction of a participatory form of local government beginning in the middle ages through the immigration of German knights granted lands at feudal tenure which stunted the growth of a powerful, territorially based assembly in that country. Such an alteration in the character of local government laid the groundwork for the royal "coup" of 1660 and the subsequent introduction of a bureaucratic absolutism also inspired by German models.[54]

Thus when due account is taken of the ability of strong representative assemblies to influence infrastructural development directly, the

[53] Thus the new Riksdag contained chambers of the nobility, clergy, and the towns just like the Estates of the German states and Latin Europe, but also a fourth chamber of peasants whose representatives were elected by the participatory organs of local government which remained in existence throughout this period. See the detailed discussion on the origins and internal organization of the post-1527 Riksdag in Metcalf, *Riksdag*, pp. 58–60, 66–68, 86–108.

[54] Kersten Krüger, "Absolutismus in Dänemark – ein Modell für Begriffsbildung und Typologie," in: Ernst Hinrichs (ed.), *Absolutismus* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1986), pp. 65–94; Lucien Musset, *Les Peuples Scandinaves au Moyen Âge* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1951), pp. 106, 114–115, 118, 266–267, 278–279.

Table 3. *Actual Outcomes Explained When Account Is Taken of the Influence of Parliaments on Infrastructural Development*

		Type of local government during the first period of statebuilding	
		Administrative	*Participatory*
Onset of sustained geopolitical competition	*Pre-1450*	Patrimonial absolutism (Latin Europe)	Bureaucratic constitutionalism (Britain)
	Post-1450	Bureaucratic absolutism (German States)	Patrimonial constitutionalism (Poland, Hungary)

predicted pattern of 18th-century outcomes summarized in Table 3 closely approximates the actual pattern detailed in Table 1.

The argument presented above will be substantiated and developed in much greater detail in the chapters which follow. Chapters 2 and 3 will analyze the emergence and consolidation of patrimonial absolutism in Latin Europe and its inability to reform itself despite endemic financial crises and military defeats. In Chapter 4, I turn to Britain and show how the patrimonial legacy bequeathed by the early onset of geopolitical competition *was* eventually overcome with the help of a strong, territorially based representative assembly. In Chapter 5, I examine the complex subject of political development in central Europe and discuss the emergence of bureaucratic absolutism among the German states, with particular emphasis on the case of Brandenburg-Prussia. Chapter 6 then addresses the cases of Hungary and Poland, where elites organized both in national parliaments and in the regions appropriated much of the power of central government, an outcome with tragic consequences for Poland. Chapter 6 will also explore why Denmark and Sweden eventually deviated from the path of patrimonial constitutionalism which they initially seemed destined to follow. Finally, in Chapter 7, I will discuss some of the broader theoretical implications of the European statebuilding experience.