

The State: Origins and Fundamentals

Lecture 4

What is a “state”?



What is a “state”?



Max Weber

*entity that possesses a **monopoly** on the legitimate
use of **physical force***



Violence an Anarchy

Common elements of **Olson's (pre-historic)** and Tilly's
(**pre-modern**) representations

Yet, each **causal
mechanism** is **different**.

Analytical Differences

- **Olson (economist):**
“The **starting point** for the theory is that no society can work satisfactorily if it does not have a peaceful order and usually other public goods as well.” (p. 567)
- He begins with a **premise**.

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“**The argument grows from historical work** on the formation of national states in Western Europe, especially on the growth of the French state from 1600 onward.” (p. 170)
- **Begins by noticing some empirical regularities.**

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Inductive or deductive?

Mancur Olson

- There are **two stages**, and two **corresponding main characters**:

1. **Pre-social / Pre-state**:

- **State of anarchy**. Depending on the size of population, there will be peace (small), or war (large).
- **Roving Bandit**. Engage in “occasional plunder.”

Mancur Olson

- There are **two stages**, and two **corresponding main characters**:

2. **Social / State:**

- **Political State**. System of institutions (taxation) is implemented.
- **Stationary Bandit**. Engages in security provision.

**“governments are in
the business of selling
protection ... whether
people want it or not.”**

Roving Bandits

- Nomadic **thieves**.
- Don't grow, cultivate, produce anything:
they steal them from others.



Stationary Bandits

- Sedentary **thieves**.
- Instead of stealing from others, **they let people grow, cultivate, and produce**, in exchange of another type of **theft: taxation**.



Both are Bandits



Roving



Stationary

Both want your money



Roving



Stationary



Roving

?



Stationary

How do we explain this **transition**?



Roving

?



Stationary

How do we explain this **transition**?

Is it **rational** to stay a roving bandit?

“The **rational, self-interested leader** of a **band of roving bandits** is led, as though by an **invisible hand**, to settle down, wear a crown, and replace anarchy with government.”

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 **Incentives**



Roving
expensive, uncertain.



Stationary
certain.

power can be given to succession.

“is **not** like the **wolf** that preys on the **elk**, **but more like the rancher** who makes sure that his cattle are **protected** and given water.”

Origins of State Power

- **“Ain't pretty.”**

1. Violence: two types.

1. **Anarchic: bad for business:** [economist].

War -> uncertainty, no incentives to cultivate anything.

2. **Monopolized: good for business.**

Peace -> Fosters innovation, production

Ex.: **Why is the Stationary Bandit Concerned about Keeping you Alive?**

Your money/taxes.

2. **Constructed by force/violence FIRST, and by “legitimacy” SECOND.**
“history is written by the winners, not losers.” [contrast this with Weber]

Charles Tilly

- More **historical** account. Not that “**abstract**” as Olson’s.
- **Violence/War**, as a **necessary condition**, plays a huge role in the theory.

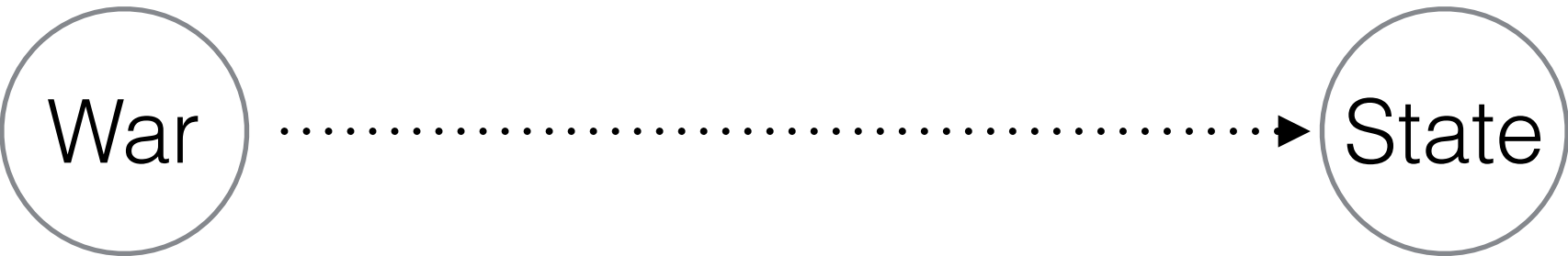


“War made the state and the state made war.”

War

War

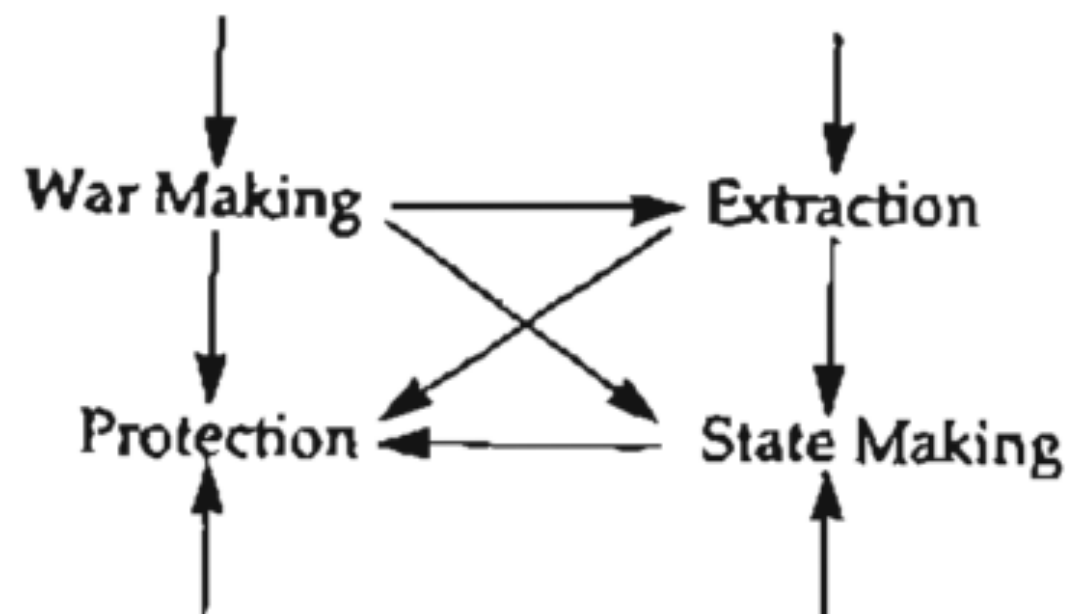
State





How can **destruction** (war)
lead to state-**making**?





In an idealized sequence, a great lord made war so effectively as to become dominant in a substantial territory, but that war making led to increased extraction of the means of war – men, arms, food, lodging, transportation, supplies, and/or the money to buy them – from the population within that territory. The building up of war-making capacity likewise increased the capacity to extract. The very activity of extraction, if successful, entailed the elimination, neutralization, or cooptation of the great lord's local rivals; thus, it led to state making. As a by-product, it created organization in the form of tax-collection agencies, police forces, courts, exchequers, account keepers; thus it again led to state making. To a lesser extent, war making likewise led to state making through the expansion of military organization itself, as a standing army, war industries, supporting bureaucracies, and (rather later) schools grew up within the state apparatus. All of these structures checked potential rivals and opponents. In the course of making war, extracting resources, and building up the state apparatus, the managers of states formed alliances with specific social classes. The members of those classes loaned resources, provided technical services, or helped ensure the compliance of the rest of the population, all in return for a measure of protection against their own rivals and enemies. As a result of these multiple strategic choices, a distinctive state apparatus grew up within each major section of Europe.



“War, state apparatus,
taxation, and borrowing
advanced in tight cadence”

Origins of State Power

- **The state is product of the need for survival:**
Wars (exogenous shocks) trigger a series **domestic** (endogenous) mechanisms (crown-bourgeoisie alliance, development of fiscal apparatus, etc.) that equipped states to survive wars.
- In this regard, the **state is a byproduct of external conflict.**

Wrapping Up

- States were **not** product of a social contract.
 1. Olson: **The state was intentionally formed** by a violent entrepreneur, who systematized a form of theft (taxation) in exchange of security.
 2. Tilly: **The state was formed as a byproduct** of external conflict.
 3. Considerations of **social welfare, social justice, or democracy**, don't (fully) conform with this views.