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0521484278 - Birth of the Leviathan: Building States and Regimes in Medieval and Early Modern Europe

Thomas Ertman

Excerpt

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## 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

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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*.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> Perry Anderson's seminal *Lineages of the Absolutist State* appeared in 1974.<sup>3</sup>

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.<sup>4</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> 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).

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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 Batchelder and Herman Freudenberg, "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).

<sup>4</sup> 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.

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important new books and articles with an historical focus on European political development.<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup> 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.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> – and a dynamic market economy which

<sup>5</sup> 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).

<sup>6</sup> 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).

<sup>7</sup> Otto Hintze, *The Historical Essays of Otto Hintze*, Felix Gilbert (ed.) (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975).

<sup>8</sup> 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

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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.<sup>9</sup> 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.<sup>10</sup> 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.<sup>11</sup>

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.<sup>12</sup> 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.

<sup>9</sup> 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).

<sup>10</sup> 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.

<sup>11</sup> Tilly, *Formation*; idem, *Coercion, Capital*; Rokkan, "Cities, States"; idem, "Dimensions of State Formation"; idem, "Territories, Nations, Parties"; Spruyt, *Sovereign State*.

<sup>12</sup> 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).

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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.<sup>13</sup> It

<sup>13</sup> 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<sup>14</sup> 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.

<sup>14</sup> 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.



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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.<sup>15</sup> 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,<sup>16</sup> 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

<sup>15</sup> 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.

<sup>16</sup> 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.

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“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.<sup>17</sup> 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

<sup>17</sup> 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.<sup>18</sup>

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.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, and in sharp contrast to the situation which obtained in their central and northern European counterparts, the infrastructures of Latin Europe's<sup>20</sup> 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.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>18</sup> 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.

<sup>19</sup> 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.

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

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

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[More information](#)Table 1. *Outcomes to Be Explained: States of 18th-Century Western Christendom Classified by Political Regime and Infrastructural Type*

		Political regime	
		<i>Absolutist</i>	<i>Constitutional</i>
Character of state infrastructure	<i>Patrimonial</i>	France, Spain, Portugal, Tuscany, Naples, Savoy, Papal States (Latin Europe)	Poland, Hungary
	<i>Bureaucratic</i>	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.<sup>22</sup>

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).

<sup>22</sup> 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.