

## 2 European Cities and States

### ABSENT EUROPE

A thousand years ago, Europe did not exist. A decade before the Millennium, the roughly thirty million people who lived at the western end of the Eurasian land mass had no compelling reason to think of themselves as a single set of people, connected by history and common fate. Nor did they. The disintegration of the Roman Empire, it is true, had left a significant part of what we now call Europe connected by roads, trade, religion, and collective memory. But that once-Roman world omitted much of the area east of the Rhine and north of the Black Sea. Nor was the late empire exclusively European; it had extended all around the Mediterranean into Asia and Africa.

From the viewpoint of trade and cultural contact, Millennial "Europe" broke into three or four loosely connected clusters: an eastern band corresponding roughly to today's European Russia, which maintained strong connections to Byzantium and to the major trade routes across Asia; a Mediterranean shared by Muslims, Christians, and Jews that was even more strongly linked to the great metropolises of the Middle East and Asia; a post-Roman system of cities, towns, roads, and rivers that was densest in an arc from central Italy to Flanders, but radiated into Germany and France; perhaps a distinct northern cluster including Scandinavia and the British Isles. (Many of these labels, to be sure, commit the crime of anachronism; short of adopting a ponderous set of geographic conventions, we have no alternative to using such designations as "Germany" and "British Isles" with a loud warning that they do not imply political or cultural connectedness.)

In the year 990 Muslim dominions controlled a major share of the Roman Empire's former space: all of the Mediterranean's southern shores and most of the Iberian peninsula, not to mention numerous Mediterranean islands and a

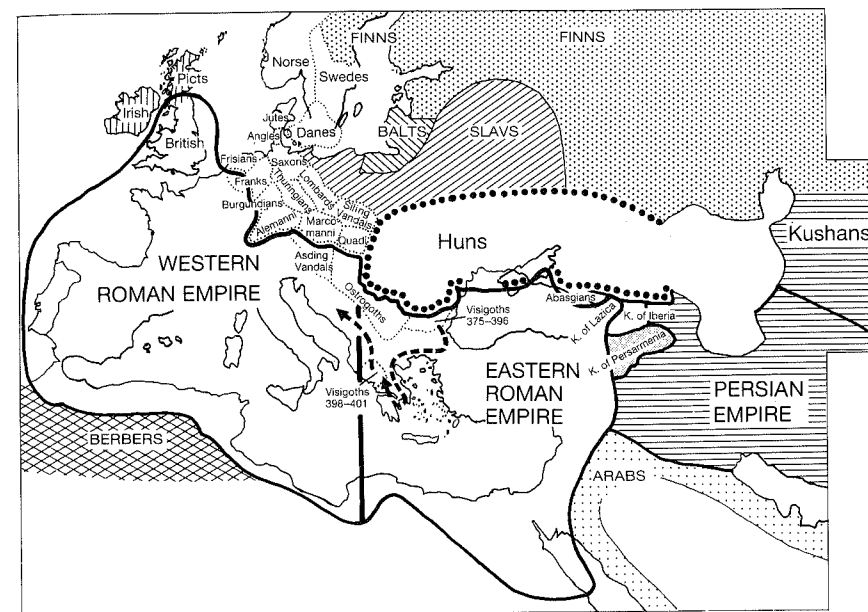


Figure 2.1 Europe in AD 406 (adapted from Colin McEvedy, *The Penguin Atlas of Medieval History*, Penguin Books, 1961).

few points along its northern coast. A loosely linked Byzantine empire extended from eastern Italy to the Black Sea's eastern end, while to its north an even more indefinite Russian state stretched to the Baltic. A Danish kingdom wielded power from the western Baltic over to the British Isles, while shifting Polish, Bohemian, and Hungarian principalities controlled the territory south of the Baltic. To their west lay a Saxon empire, claimant to the heritage of Charlemagne, while still farther in the same direction Hugh Capet ruled the kingdom of France.

None of these half-familiar place names, however, should disguise the enormous fragmentation of sovereignty then prevailing throughout the territory that would become Europe. The emperors, kings, princes, dukes, caliphs, sultans, and other potentates of AD 990 prevailed as conquerors, tribute-takers, and rentiers, not as heads of state that durably and densely regulated life within their realms. Inside their jurisdictions, furthermore, rivals and ostensible subordinates commonly used armed force on behalf of their own interests while paying little attention to the interests of their nominal sovereigns. Private armies

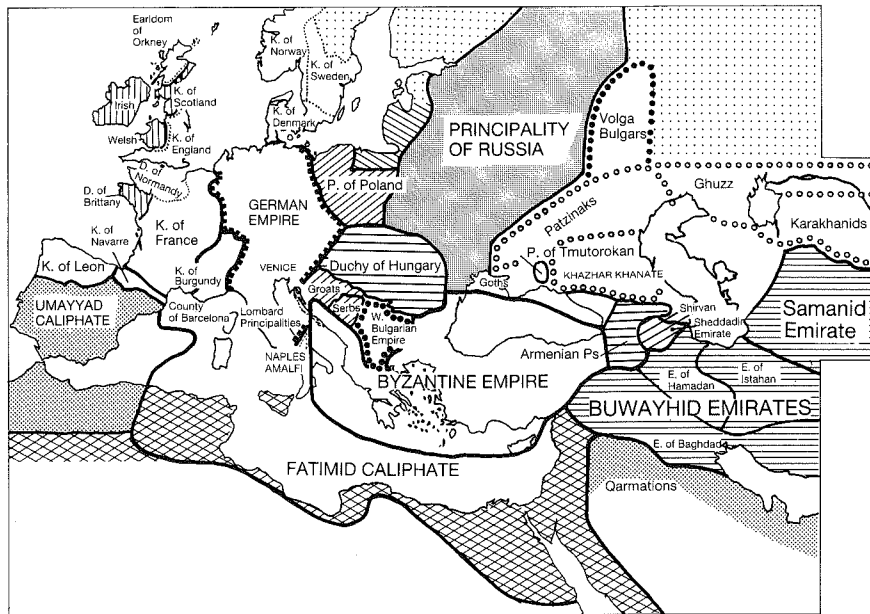


Figure 2.2 Europe in AD 998 (adapted from Colin McEvedy, *The Penguin Atlas of Medieval History*, Penguin Books, 1961).

proliferated through much of the continent. Nothing like a centralized national state existed anywhere in Europe.

Within the ring formed by these sprawling, ephemeral states sovereignty fragmented even more, as hundreds of principalities, bishoprics, city-states, and other authorities exercised overlapping control in the small hinterlands of their capitals. At the Millennium the pope, the Byzantine emperor and the Holy Roman emperor claimed most of the Italian peninsula, but in fact almost every important city and its hinterland operated as a political free agent. (In AD 1200, the Italian peninsula alone hosted two or three hundred distinct city-states: Waley 1969: 11.) Except for the relative urbanization of Muslim lands, the correlation between size of states and density of cities was negative: where cities swarmed, sovereignty crumbled.

Soon a rough chronology of changes in cities and states over the last thousand years will start to fall into place. In the meantime, however, let us settle for an arbitrary comparison at 500-year intervals, just to get a sense of how much changed. By 1490, the map and the reality had altered greatly. Armed Christians were driving Muslim rulers from their last major territory on the continent's western half – Granada. An Islamic Ottoman empire had displaced the Christian Byzantines between the Adriatic and Persia. The Ottomans were grinding away at Venetian power in the eastern Mediterranean and advancing into the Balkans. (In alliance with threatened Granada, they

were also pursuing their first adventures in the western Mediterranean.) After centuries during which European wars had remained regional, and only an occasional crusade had involved the transalpine states militarily in the Mediterranean, furthermore, the kings of France and Spain were beginning to struggle for hegemony in Italy.



Figure 2.3 Europe in AD 1478 (adapted from Colin McEvedy, *The Penguin Atlas of Medieval History*, Penguin Books, 1961).

Around Europe's periphery, in 1490, stood rulers who dominated substantial territories: not only the Ottoman Empire, but also Hungary, Poland, Lithuania, Muscovy, the lands of the Teutonic Order, the Scandinavian Union, England, France, Spain, Portugal, Naples. Those powers lived largely from rents and tributes, and ruled through regional magnates who enjoyed great autonomy within their own terrains; the magnates frequently resisted or even rejected royal power. Yet the great kings and dukes of 1490 were, on the whole, consolidating and extending their domains.

Inside the broken circle of larger states, then, Europe remained a land of intensely fragmented sovereignty. A scattered Habsburg empire, it is true, was beginning to reach across the continent, while Venice dominated an important arc of the Adriatic. But the zone from northern Italy to Flanders, and east to the uncertain borders of Hungary and Poland, broke into hundreds of formally independent principalities, duchies, bishoprics, city-states, and other political

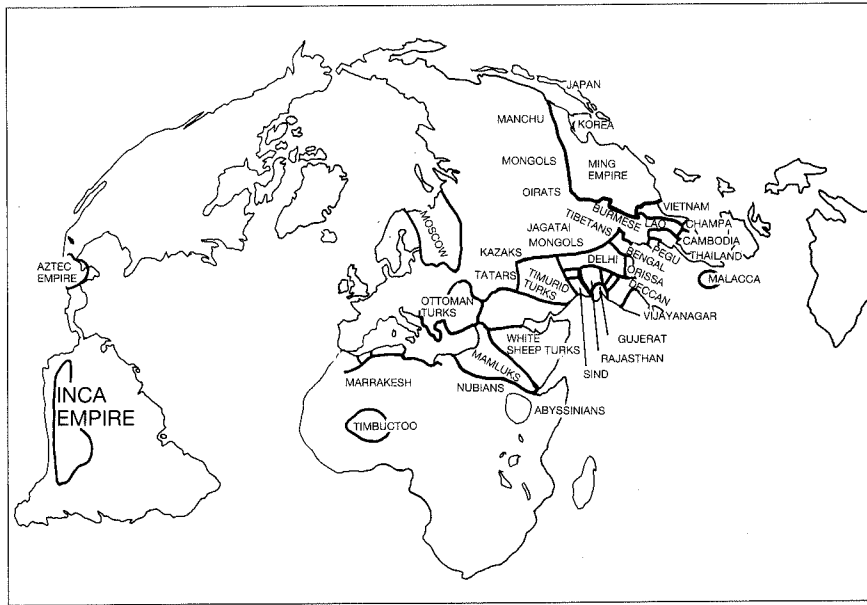


Figure 2.4 The world in AD 1490 (adapted from Colin McEvedy, *The Penguin Atlas of Modern History to 1815*, Penguin Books, 1972).

entities that generally could use force only in the immediate hinterlands of their capitals; south Germany alone included 69 free cities in addition to its multiple bishoprics, duchies, and principalities (Brady 1985: 10). "In spite of the border which a cartographer can draw around the area which opinion in the mid-fifteenth century accepted as within the Holy Roman Empire, that is the chiefly Germanic zone between France and Hungary, and Denmark and northern Italy," muses J. R. Hale, "he cannot colour in the multitude of cities, princely enclaves and militant ecclesiastical territories that saw themselves as actually or potentially independent, without giving the reader an impression that he is suffering from a disease of the retina" (Hale 1985: 14). Europe's 80 million people divided into something like 500 states, would-be states, statelets, and statelike organizations.

By 1990, another five centuries later, Europeans had greatly extended the work of consolidation. Six hundred million people now lived within the continent's perimeter. No Muslim state remained on the continent, although a powerful Islamic world thrived contentiously to the south and southeast of Europe and impressive residues of Muslim culture survived in Spain, the Balkans, and Turkey. A giant Russian state had taken shape on the east and

stretched all the way to the Arctic and the Pacific, while a spacious Turkey crossed the Asian border to the southeast. Much of the continent had settled into states that occupied at least 40,000 square miles, not including colonies and dependencies: Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Finland, France, each of the two Germanies, Greece, Italy, Norway, Poland, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the USSR. Microstates such as Luxembourg and Andorra, although larger than many of the political entities that existed in 1490, had become curiosities. Depending on the rules for counting, the whole of Europe divided into a mere 25 to 28 states.

It took a long time for national states – relatively centralized, differentiated, and autonomous organizations successfully claiming priority in the use of force within large, contiguous, and clearly bounded territories – to dominate the European map. In 990 nothing about the world of manors, local lords, military raiders, fortified villages, trading towns, city-states, and monasteries foretold a consolidation into national states. In 1490 the future remained open; despite the frequent use of the word "kingdom," empires of one sort or another



Figure 2.5 Europe in AD 1990.

claimed most of the European landscape, and federations remained viable in some parts of the continent. Some time after 1490 Europeans foreclosed those alternative opportunities, and set off decisively toward the creation of a system consisting almost entirely of relatively autonomous national states.

States, on the other hand, diminished in number and increased in area. In order to draw the changing map, we must apply the term "state" generously, to include any organization that commanded substantial means of coercion and successfully claimed durable priority over all other users of coercion within at least one clearly bounded territory. In the year 990 relatively large Muslim states dominated much of the western Mediterranean, including southern Spain and Africa's north coast. Other sizeable states included the kingdom of France, the Saxon empire, the Danish kingdom, Kievan Russia, Poland, Hungary, Bohemia, and the Byzantine Empire. On the whole, the rulers of these political entities drew tribute from the territories nominally under their control. But outside their home regions they barely administered their supposed domains, and saw their authority continually contested by rival potentates, including their own putative agents and vassals.

Consider Hungary, a state that grew from conquest by Magyars, one of many armed nomadic peoples who invaded Europe from the Eurasian steppe. During the tenth century, the bulk of the Magyars migrated from the Volga and overwhelmed the smaller number of tilling and forest-dwelling Slavs who inhabited the Carpathian Basin, which we now call Hungary (Pamlenyi 1975: 21-5). Once they moved west of the Carpathians, the shortage of natural pasture forced any predatory nomads to withdraw, thin their numbers, or dismount (Lindner 1981). After a century of marauding, the now-Christianized Hungarians settled increasingly into agriculture inside a territory almost without cities.

Their agricultural base did not prevent the Hungarian nobility from warring with their neighbors, struggling over the royal succession, or playing the European game of marriages and alliances. Their control of armed force, furthermore, permitted them to drive slaves and freemen alike toward a common serfdom. Towns grew up as feudal agriculture prospered, mines exported metals to the rest of Europe, and the region's trade routes knitted together with those of central and western Europe. German capital came to dominate Hungarian commerce and industry. Hungary's towns, however, remained tightly subordinate to their noble lords until, during the fifteenth century, the crown began to exert control over them.

During the later fifteenth century, King Janos Hunyadi and his son, King Matthias Corvinus built a relatively centralized and effective war machine, fighting off both the warlike Turks to their southeast and the hungry Habsburgs to their west. With the death of Matthias, however, the nobility counter-attacked, depriving his successor Ladislas of the means to keep his own army. In 1514 the effort to mount yet another crusade against the Turks incited a

huge peasant rebellion, whose repression in turn definitively reduced the peasantry to servitude and abolished their right to change masters. In the struggle among magnates that accompanied the settlement of the peasant war, lawyer Istvan Verböczi set down the nobles' view of Hungarian customs, including the retributive laws against the peasantry and the provisions that

nobles enjoyed immunity from arrest without prior legal judgment, were subject only to a legally crowned king, paid no taxes whatsoever, and could be required to render military service only for the defense of the realm. Finally, the right of rebellion was guaranteed against any king who infringed upon the rights of the nobility in any way.

(McNeill 1975 [1964]: 17)

Verböczi's treatise became the standard authority for Hungarian law and "the bible of the nobility" (Pamlenyi 1975: 117). By 1526, Hungary had not one but two elected kings, and the two were at war with each other. Small wonder that in the following half-century Turks were able to capture half the territory of Hungary! In that era, clearly, large states were not necessarily strong states.

#### STATES AND COERCION

By 1490 Muslims were retreating from their last Iberian outpost, Granada, but building a substantial empire around the eastern Mediterranean and making inroads to the Balkans. States fielding large armies and extending some judicial and fiscal control over good-sized territories were beginning to appear around Europe's edges, and city-states were arming for land war as never before. The European map of 1490 assigns large areas to England, Sweden, Poland, Russia, and the Ottoman Empire, but also marks off dozens of duchies, principalities, archbishoprics, city-states, and other miniature states.

How many European states we distinguish depends on contestable decisions bearing on the very nature of the era's states: whether the 13 Swiss cantons (as of 1513) and the 84 free cities of the Ottoman Empire (as of 1521) count as separate entities, whether such technically autonomous dependencies of Aragon and Castile as Catalonia and Granada deserve recognition, whether the entire patchwork of the Low Countries constituted a single state (or only part of a state) under Habsburg hegemony, whether the tributary states under Ottoman control belonged individually to the European state system of the time. No plausible set of definitions yields fewer than 80 distinct units or more than 500. We might arbitrarily take 200 as the median number. The roughly 200 formally autonomous European political entities of the time controlled an average of 9,500 square miles, roughly the size of today's El Salvador, Lesotho, and Qatar.

Europe's population of approximately 62 million in 1490 divided up into an average of some 310,000 persons per state. Of course, averages obscure enormous variations: scores of Europe's smaller states and their populations

would have fitted easily into Russia's vast territory. Nevertheless, Europe was beginning to consolidate into territorially distinct states organized around permanent military establishments, and military superiority was starting to give the larger states better chances of survival.

Only starting, to be sure. In 1490, armies consisted largely of mercenaries hired by the campaign, clients of great lords, and citizen militias. Standing armies had displaced urban militias in France and Burgundy, but few other realms. Tribute and personal rents still bulked large in royal revenues. Within the larger states, communities, guilds, churches, and regional magnates retained large areas of immunity and self-government. Administration chiefly concerned military, judicial and fiscal affairs. Europe's central zone continued to teem with tiny jurisdictions. Since city-states, leagues of cities, dynastic empires, principalities having only nominal bonds to larger monarchies or empires, and ecclesiastical entities such as the Teutonic Order all coexisted (however contentiously) on the continent, it was not clear that national states as we know them would become Europe's dominant organizations. Not until the nineteenth century, with Napoleon's conquests and the subsequent unifications of Germany and Italy, would almost all of Europe consolidate into mutually exclusive states having permanent, professional armed forces and exercising substantial control over people in areas of 40,000 square miles or more.

Over the next four centuries, many war settlements and a few deliberate federations drastically reduced the number of European states. During the nineteenth century, the number stabilized. At the beginning of 1848, for instance, Europe hosted from 20 to 100 states, depending on how one counts the 35 members of the German Confederation, the 17 papal states, the 22 technically autonomous segments of Switzerland, and a few dependent but formally distinct units such as Luxembourg and Norway: in the *Almanach de Gotha*, that directory of nobles and statesmen, the full alphabetical list then began with tiny Anhalt-Bernburg, Anhalt-Dessau and Anhalt-Köthen before getting to more substantial Austria, Baden, and Bavaria.

Major consolidations occurred with the formation of the German Empire and the kingdom of Italy. By the start of 1890, the roster of states had declined to about 30, of which nine were members of the German Empire. At the end of 1918, the count stood at around 25 separate states. Although boundaries changed significantly with the settlements of World Wars I and II, the number and size of European states did not change dramatically during the twentieth century. If, following Small and Singer, we count only those states large enough to make an independent military difference, we actually detect a slight reversal of the long-term trend: 21 contenders at the end of the Napoleonic Wars, 26 in 1848, 29 (now including Malta, Cyprus, and Iceland) in 1980 (Small and Singer 1982: 47-50).

In contrast to the 9,500 square miles of 1490, the 30 states of 1890 controlled an average of 63,000 square miles, which put them in the class of

today's Nicaragua, Syria, and Tunisia. Instead of the 310,000 inhabitants of 1490, the average state of 1890 had about 7.7 million. Imagined as circles, states rose from an average radius of 55 miles to 142 miles. At a 55-mile radius, direct control of the hinterland by a single city's rulers was often feasible; at 142 miles, no one governed without a specialized apparatus of surveillance and intervention. Although such microstates as Andorra (175 square miles), Liechtenstein (61), San Marino (24) and even Monaco (0.7) survived the great consolidation, furthermore, inequalities of size declined radically over time.

Generally speaking, the last part of Europe to consolidate into substantial national states was the city-state band running from northern Italy, around the Alps, and down the Rhine to the Low Countries. The successive creations of Germany and Italy brought those prosperous but cantankerous little municipalities and their hinterlands under national control. It is as if Europeans discovered that under the conditions prevailing since 1790 or so, a viable state required a radius of at least 100 miles, and could not easily dominate more than a 250-mile radius.

#### CITIES AND CAPITAL

To see the geographic pattern more clearly, we should distinguish between city systems and systems of states. Europe's systems of cities represented the changing relations among concentrations of capital, its systems of states the changing relations among concentrations of coercion. European cities formed a loose hierarchy of commercial and industrial precedence within which at any point in time a few clusters of cities (usually grouped around a single hegemonic center) clearly dominated the rest. (The European hierarchy, to be sure, formed only part of a vaster urban network that reached far into Asia at the start of the period, and extended to Africa and the Americas as time went on.) In Fernand Braudel's useful simplification, Venice, Antwerp, Genoa, Amsterdam, London, and New York successively topped the European system of cities from the fourteenth century to the twentieth.

For dominance, the crucial matter was not so much size as centrality in the European network of trade, production, and capital accumulation. Nevertheless, the concentrations of capital and urban population corresponded closely enough for the dominant *cluster* of cities to be always also one of the largest. Using a rank-size criterion and some rather arbitrary blocking out of boundaries, J. C. Russell delineates medieval regions centering on Florence, Palermo, Venice, Milan, Augsburg, Dijon, Cologne, Prague, Magdeburg, Lübeck, Ghent, London, Dublin, Paris, Toulouse, Montpellier, Barcelona, Córdoba, Toledo, and Lisbon. The cities were denser and the regions correspondingly smaller in the band from Florence to Ghent, especially at its Italian end; as gauged by the

total population of their ten largest cities, the regions of Venice (357,000), Milan (337,000), and Florence (296,000) led the pack (Russell 1972: 235). In 1490, Jan de Vries' more precise computation of "urban potential" singles out regions centering approximately on Antwerp, Milan, and Naples as the peaks of the European urban system, while in 1790 the one zone around London (including areas across the English Channel) clearly predominated (de Vries 1984: 160-4).

City system and state system spread very unevenly, and in contrasting ways, across the European map. In the year 990, cities were small and scattered almost everywhere north of the Alps. They were nevertheless denser, and relations among them more intense, in a band extending north from Bologna and Pisa across the Alps to Ghent, Bruges, and London. Secondary zones of urban concentration appeared in southern Spain and southern Italy. The Mediterranean lands hosted significantly more cities than those bordering the Atlantic or the Baltic. Europe's two largest cities were then Constantinople and Córdoba, not only major centers of trade but seats respectively of the Byzantine Empire and the Umayyad caliphate; each had a population approaching half a million (Chandler and Fox 1974: 11). Over the next millennium the central band remained Europe's most intensely urban zone, but it widened, and its center of gravity shifted northward toward the great Atlantic ports. From 1300 onward, the band of connected cities north of the Alps grew disproportionately.

The presence or absence of urban clusters made a profound difference to regional social life, and significantly shaped the possibilities for state formation. Under the conditions of production and transportation prevailing in Europe before the nineteenth century, substantial cities stimulated cash-crop agriculture in tributary areas reaching many miles into the countryside. Commercial agriculture, in its turn, generally promoted the prosperity of merchants, larger peasants, and smaller landlords while reducing the ability of great landholders to dominate the people in their rural surroundings. (A significant exception occurred, however, where the city's ruling class also held extensive land in the hinterland, as was frequently the case in Italian city-states; there the peasantry felt the full weight of lordly control.)

In addition, cities deeply affected the demography of surrounding regions. Until recently, most European cities experienced natural decrease: their death rates exceeded their birth rates. As a result, even stagnant cities drew considerable numbers of migrants from nearby towns and villages, while growing cities generated large migrant streams. The streams were much larger than the urban deficit of births plus the urban rate of growth, since all migration systems involved a great deal of movement back and forth; peddlers, merchants, servants, and artisans frequently oscillated between city and country from year to year or season to season. The net flow from country to city usually included more women than men, with the result that sex ratios (males per 100 females) ran characteristically high in the countryside and low in the city. Thus the city

imprinted itself on the very opportunities for marriage of villagers in its surroundings.

The commercial and demographic impact of cities made a significant difference to state formation. Let us leave aside momentarily the importance of urban ruling classes and city-based capitalists as supporters or opponents of efforts to expand state power; they will get plenty of attention later on. The existence of intensive rural-urban trade provided an opportunity for rulers to collect revenues through customs and excise taxes, while the relatively commercialized economy made it easier for monarchs to bypass great landlords as they extended royal power to towns and villages.

Relations between city and country, furthermore, affected the potential supply of soldiers: would they be the serfs and tenants of rural magnates, mercenaries from regions of high mobility and low nuptiality, urban militias, or landless workers swept up by pressing squads? Opportunities for taxation, the power of landlords, and the supply of troops deeply affected how states took shape. Through food supply, migration, trade, communications, and opportunities for employment, large urban clusters stamped their mark on the social life in surrounding regions, and thereby influenced the strategies of rulers who attempted to extend state power into those regions. Periods of urban growth only accentuated these effects.

With some risk, and great disregard of regional variation, we can divide European urban growth since 1000 into five phases: a period of considerable expansion to about 1350; a time of depression and then of trendless fluctuation between 1350 and 1500; a sixteenth-century acceleration; a seventeenth-century slowdown, and finally an enormous acceleration after 1750 (Hohenberg and Lees 1985: 7-9). The devastating fourteenth-century spread of plague marks the transition from the first phase to the second, Iberian navigation to America the start of the third phase, the growth of cottage industry after 1600 the launching of the fourth; the implosion of capital, manufacturing, services, and trade into cities the movement from the fourth to the fifth.

From the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, many European regions, including the hinterlands of Milan, Lyon, and Manchester, experienced protoindustrialization: the multiplication of small manufacturing units, including households, and of small merchants who linked them with distant markets. During that great industrial expansion, capital went to labor rather than vice versa; rural labor proletarianized, in the sense of shifting decisively toward work for wages using means of production owned by capitalists, but remained in households and small shops. Capital then accumulated grandly, but did not concentrate enormously. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries an inverse movement occurred: capital imploded, manufacturing and workers moved to cities, and vast areas of the countryside deindustrialized. Increasingly, manufacturers located where they could minimize the costs of getting to their raw materials and to the markets for their goods, assuming correctly that

workers would come to them at someone else's expense. The last burst of concentration greatly accelerated European urbanization, and produced the civified continent we know today.

Cities grew with the European population as a whole, and the number of urban places therefore multiplied even when the urban share of the population was constant; on present evidence, we simply do not know whether the European population actually became more urban before 1350. In any case, the proportion living in cities did not rise dramatically until the nineteenth century. According to the best available estimates, the share in places of 10,000 people or more ran at around 5 percent in 990, 6 percent in 1490, 10 percent in 1790, and 30 percent in 1890, as compared with nearly 60 percent today (Bairoch 1985: 182, 282; de Vries 1984: 29-48).

The timetable of urbanization reflected the history of European capital. For centuries, the bulk of Europe's liquid capital lay in the hands of small merchants who worked scattered through the continent, either trading goods produced elsewhere or guiding manufacturing by formally independent producers in villages, towns, and small cities. Great capitalists like those of Genoa, Augsburg and Antwerp played a crucial part in linking Europe together and with the rest of the world, but held only a small share of all the capital that was in motion.

Before 1490, the scattered evidence makes it difficult to offer any more detailed quantitative statements. Paul Bairoch's estimates and Jan de Vries's recent compilation of evidence concerning European urbanization since 1500 nevertheless make possible some simple but telling computations. Table 2.1 shows the trivial long-run rate of urban growth before 1490, the acceleration of the sixteenth century, the slowdown of the seventeenth, and the exceptional urbanization after 1790. By 1980, the barrier of 10,000 had lost its meaning (hence the speculative numbers in the table), and a full 390 cities had 100,000 inhabitants or more. In fact, the 1980 statistics locate 34.6 percent of the population in cities of at least 100,000. The great acceleration of urban growth arrived after 1790, with the nineteenth-century concentration of capital,

Table 2.1 Urbanization from 990 to 1980 in Europe west of Russia

	990	1490	1590	1690	1790	1890	1980
number of cities of 10,000 or more	111	154	220	224	364	1709	5000?
population in cities of 10,000 or more (millions)	2.6	3.4	5.9	7.5	12.2	66.9	250?
annual percent rate of growth since previous date	—	0.1	0.6	0.2	0.5	1.7	1.5?
percentage of population in cities of 10,000 +	4.9	5.6	7.6	9.2	10.0	29.0	55?
square miles per city (thousands)	17.1	12.3	8.6	8.5	5.2	1.1	0.4?

Source: de Vries 1984: 29-48, Bairoch 1985: 182

increase in scale of workplaces, and creation of mass transport. But through most of the period after 1490, the exclusive hinterlands available to most cities were shrinking in size.

#### CITY-STATE INTERACTION

The diverging trends of cities and states changed some critical ratios. In AD 990, with thousands of statelike units, Europe may well have had only one city of 10,000 for every twenty or thirty "states." In 1490, one such city existed for every one or two states. In 1890, the mythical average state had about sixty cities of 10,000 or more. That change alone implied fundamental alterations in the relations between rulers and ruled: altered techniques of control, altered fiscal strategies, altered demands for services, altered politics.

Cities shape the destinies of states chiefly by serving as containers and distribution points for capital. By means of capital, urban ruling classes extend their influence through the urban hinterland and across far-flung trading networks. But cities vary in how much capital their oligarchies control; seventeenth-century Amsterdam made once-glorious Bruges look puny. The fact that cities are loci of capital accumulation, furthermore, gives their political authorities access to capital, credit, and control over hinterlands that, if seized or co-opted, can serve the ends of monarchs as well. Adam Smith stated the central fact forcefully:

A country abounding with merchants and manufacturers . . . necessarily abounds with a set of people who have it at all times in their power to advance, if they choose to do so, a very large sum of money to government.

(Smith 1910 [1778]: II, 392)

*If they choose to do so:* behind that qualifier hide centuries of contention between capitalists and kings. Yet Adam Smith was absolutely right to stress the financial advantages of states that operated in regions of abundant capital.

States themselves operate chiefly as containers and deployers of coercive means, especially armed force. Nowadays the development of welfare states, of regulatory states, of states that spend a great deal of their effort intervening in economic affairs, has mitigated and obscured the centrality of coercion. Over the millennium of European history we are surveying, however, military expenditure has usually consumed the majority of state budgets, and armed forces have typically constituted the largest single branch of government.

Differences between the geographies of European state formation and city-building presented an acute problem for any would-be ruler. Borrowing from Paul Hohenberg and Lynn Lees, we can make a rough distinction between cities as *central places* and as points in *urban networks*; all cities belong to both systems, but the relative importance of the two sets of relations varies



dramatically from one city to another (Hohenberg and Lees 1985: chapter 2). The hierarchical central place system mediates the flow of ordinary goods such as food and clothing among the settlements of a contiguous region; raw materials and rough goods tend to move up the hierarchy of central places toward larger settlements that serve more extensive markets, while fine and specialized goods – especially those produced outside the regional system – tend to move downward from larger places to smaller ones. Over much of the history we are examining, primary producers, local merchants, peddlers, and recurrent public markets brought a major part of the goods sold to their consumers.

Urban networks, on the other hand, link higher-level centers in separate regional systems, sometimes removed from each other by thousands of kilometers. Although timber, wheat, salt, and wine traveled great distances in Europe well before 1500, urban networks long specialized in the exchange of light, expensive goods such as spices and silks. Merchants and financiers with substantial capital at their disposal figured importantly in Europe's urban networks. For centuries, what Philip Curtin calls trade diasporas had a crucial role; geographically dispersed mercantile groups such as Jews, Armenians, or Genoese, who shared language, religion, kinship, and (sometimes) geographic origin reduced the uncertainties of international trade by extending each other credit, market information, and preferential treatment (Curtin 1984). Even where trade diasporas did not make the crucial links among distant centers, dispersed merchants commonly maintained acquaintance with their colleagues by means of voyages, personal correspondence, maintenance of local representatives, and contact with mutual acquaintances.

A coercion-wielding ruler can, with a certain amount of effort, capture the entire territory of one or more central-place hierarchies, and even reshape a hierarchy to correspond approximately with the limits of his state; by the sixteenth century, a rough correspondence had emerged between England and the central-place system of London, between France and the central-place system of Paris. But it is rare and difficult to match a state to the contours of a long-distance urban network. Federations such as the Hanseatic League and maritime empires such as those of Venice and Portugal came close for a time, but always found themselves competing or bargaining with territorial rulers who laid claim on one or another of their trading outposts; the consolidation of an Ottoman empire athwart Venice's most lucrative trade routes doomed the spectacular mercantile empire Venetians had stitched together during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Territorial states whose merchants devoted themselves to long-distance trade, on the other hand, always found themselves confronted with powerful economic actors whose external relations they could never entirely control, and who found it relatively easy to escape with their capital to another business site if the ruler's demands became unbearable. The long-lasting discrepancy between the geographies of coercion and of capital

guaranteed that the social relations organized around them would evolve in distinctive ways.

Over Europe as a whole, alterations in state control of capital and of coercion between AD 900 and the present have followed two parallel arcs. At first, during the age of *patrimonialism*, European monarchs generally extracted what capital they needed as tribute or rent from lands and populations that lay under their immediate control – often within stringent contractual limits on the amounts they could demand. In the time of *brokerage* (especially between 1400 and 1700 or so), they relied heavily on formally independent capitalists for loans, for management of revenue-producing enterprises, and for collection of taxes. By the eighteenth century, however, the time of *nationalization* had come; many sovereigns were incorporating the fiscal apparatus directly into the state structure, and drastically curtailing the involvement of independent contractors. The last century or so, the age of *specialization*, has brought a sharper separation of fiscal from military organization and an increasing involvement of states in the oversight of fixed capital.

On the side of coercion, a similar evolution took place. During the period of patrimonialism, monarchs drew armed force from retainers, vassals, and militias who owed them personal service – but again within significant contractual limits. In the age of brokerage (again especially between 1400 and 1700) they turned increasingly to mercenary forces supplied to them by contractors who retained considerable freedom of action. Next, during nationalization, sovereigns absorbed armies and navies directly into the state's administrative structure, eventually turning away from foreign mercenaries and hiring or conscripting the bulk of their troops from their own citizenries. Since the mid-nineteenth century, in a phase of specialization, European states have consolidated the system of citizen militias backed by large civilian bureaucracies, and split off police forces specialized in the use of coercion outside of war.

By the nineteenth century, most European states had internalized both armed forces and fiscal mechanisms; they thus reduced the governmental roles of tax farmers, military contractors, and other independent middlemen. Their rulers then continued to bargain with capitalists and other classes for credit, revenues, manpower, and the necessities of war. Bargaining, in its turn, created numerous new claims on the state: pensions, payments to the poor, public education, city planning, and much more. In the process, states changed from magnified war machines into multiple-purpose organizations. Their efforts to control coercion and capital continued, but in the company of a wide variety of regulatory, compensatory, distributive, and protective activities.

Before the nineteenth century, states differed markedly in the relative timing and intensity of the two main processes of change. The Dutch state rented large armies and navies for a century or more, adopted state management of finances precociously, yet long remained beholden to the capitalists of Amsterdam and other commercial cities. At moments, indeed, the Dutch state dissolved into the



governments of its major municipalities. In Castile, on the other hand, land forces – often hired outside of Spain – prevailed; there the monarchy captured the credit of merchants by turning them into rentiers and by relying on colonial revenues for their reimbursement. Portugal, Poland, Italian city-states, and the states of the Holy Roman Empire followed other combinations of the two arcs, and thereby created distinctly different state structures.

#### STATE PHYSIOLOGIES

Why did European states follow such different trajectories, yet almost all head in the direction of greater concentration with respect to capital and coercion? Two secrets account for most of the complexity. The first is the continuous, aggressive competition for trade and territory among changing states of unequal size, which made war a driving force in European history. The second lies in what Gabriel Ardant called the “physiology” of states: the processes by which they acquire and allocate the means of carrying on their major activities. For most of the history that concerns us here, the crucial means were especially coercive, the means of war. Coercive means obviously played a part in warmaking (attacking external rivals), statemaking (attacking internal rivals), and protection (attacking the enemies of the state’s clients). Coercive means also came into play in a state’s exercise of extraction (drawing the means of state activity from its subject population) and adjudication (settling disputes among members of that population). Only when it came to production and distribution were coercive means not major supports of the state’s activity – and even there the degree of coercion varied from state to state. Where states established their own monopolies over the production of salt, arms, or tobacco products, for example, they typically did so by force of arms; contraband usually becomes contraband when rulers decide to monopolize the distribution of the commodity in question.

Coercive means combine weapons with men who know how to use them. (I do mean *men*; in Western experience, women have played an amazingly small part in the construction and use of coercive organization, a fact that surely helps account for their subordinate position within states.) Agents of states have an easier time concentrating coercion, and keeping others from doing so, to the extent that (a) production of weapons involves esoteric knowledge, rare materials, or substantial capital, (b) few groups have the independent capacity to mobilize large numbers of men and (c) few people know the secrets of combining weapons with men. Over the long run, the rulers of European states took advantage of all these conditions to move toward monopolies of the larger concentrations of coercive means within their territories: armies, police forces, weapons, prisons, and courts.

States used concentrated coercion in a number of different ways. During the first few centuries after AD 990, kings rarely had much more armed force under their direct control than did their chief followers. The logistics of feeding and maintaining armed men made the establishment of standing armies prohibitively expensive. A royal army normally consisted of the king’s small permanent force plus troops who came only temporarily from civilian life at his followers’ call. The king’s presence reinforced the personal connections among warriors: “It was a general rule that the king should command in person every important campaign. Age did not matter; Otto III was 11 when he led his army against the Saxons (991) and Henry IV 13 when he went to war against the Hungarians in 1063” (Contamine 1984: 39). Royal armies on the move lived largely from requisition (which was theoretically to be repaid from the royal treasury) and plunder (which was not); the distinction, to be sure, remained unclear for centuries.

Cities commonly organized citizen militias which guarded walls, patrolled streets, intervened in public conflicts, and now and then fought battles against enemies of city or of the kingdom. Spanish municipal militias were exceptional; they played the central part in the conquest of Muslim Iberia by Christian kings, a fact reflected in the great powers vested in the noble-dominated municipalities after the Reconquista, and in the crystallization of the distinction between *caballero* (horseman) and *peón* (foot soldier) into an enduring and general social division (Powers 1988). Elsewhere, kings generally sought to limit the independent armed force at the disposition of townsmen, for the very good reason that townsmen were quite likely to use force in their own interest, including resistance to royal demands.

These various military forces confronted many groups of armed men who did not operate under direct royal control: among others, the retainers of particular lords who were not currently mobilized for royal service, bandits (who were often demobilized soldiers, continuing their plunder without royal assent), and pirates (who frequently worked with royal or civic protection). Accumulations of coercive means were modest but very widely spread; concentration was slight. Even so, rulers were doing more to concentrate coercion than was anyone else.

Eventually states came to operate multiple armed forces, all of them bureaucratized and more or less integrated into the national administration. Even Spain, notorious for the repeated devolution of state powers to its agents and grandees, made repeated efforts to detach its armed forces from their civilian surroundings. Philip II, for example, deliberately placed under direct government control armed forces whose commands had almost been private possessions of grandees during the reign of his father, Charles V. By 1580,

the entire military establishment had been restored to the Crown and was being run by royal ministers; the galleys of Spain, Naples and Sicily, after a brief and unsuccessful return to contracting in 1574–6, were back in *administración*, the provisioning of the Mediterranean fleets and the garrisons of north Africa was controlled by the royal

commissariat in Seville, the arms industries and the saltpetre makers were under strict royal supervision, and the manufacture of gunpowder was a royal monopoly.

(Thompson 1976: 6-7)

During the next half-century the exigencies of financing and administration led Spain back to extensive contracting and local control; nevertheless, the armed forces henceforth operated as distinct, differentiated branches of the national state. Indeed by the nineteenth century the Spanish army acquired such distinctness and autonomy as to intervene repeatedly as a separate force in national politics (Ballbé 1983).

In Spain and elsewhere, a sharp division between armies and navies emerged early, and endured. At a national scale, the division between armies (generally specialized in combatting other armed forces) and police forces (generally specialized in the control of unarmed or lightly-armed individuals and small groups) only became general quite late – in most countries, during the nineteenth century. By that time accumulations of coercive force were large, concentrated, and therefore very unequal. By the nineteenth century, states had succeeded in arming themselves impressively, and in almost disarming their civilian populations.

Figure 2.6 schematizes the relationship between cities and states as an interaction of capital and coercion. Above the diagonal, coercion outran capital; below it, capital outstripped coercion. The distinction applies to individual cities; European ports such as Amsterdam and Barcelona typically wallowed in capital while having relatively thin coercive apparatuses; seats of monarchs such as Berlin and Madrid, on the other hand, stood much higher with respect to coercion than to capital.

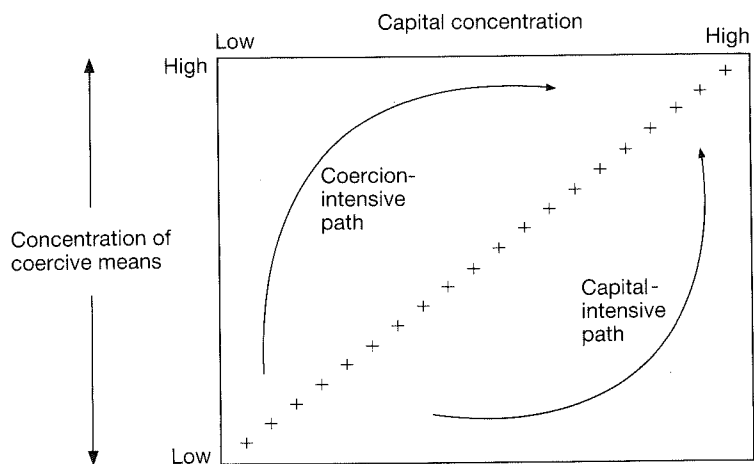


Figure 2.6 Alternative paths of change in concentrated capital and concentrated coercive power in Europe, 1000-1800.

The distinction also applies to the environments of states. The general direction of European change over the millennium undoubtedly ran up the diagonal, toward greater and greater concentrations of both capital and coercion. But different states followed different paths in the same general direction. Brandenburg-Prussia grew up in a coercion-rich, capital-poor environment, and bore the marks of its early environment even when it extended its control to the capitalist cities of the Rhineland. Denmark usually had greater concentrations of capital at its disposal than the rest of Scandinavia, and invested less of its state effort in the building up of military might.

The Teutonic Knights (the Order of St Mary's Hospital at Jerusalem) took an irregular path: from freebooting crusaders in the Holy Land (hence heavily involved in the piratical world of oceanic commerce) at the end of the twelfth century to governors of a large piece of Transylvania during the thirteenth century to conquerors and colonizers of pagan Prussia, where they ruled in the style of great landlords from about 1300 into the sixteenth century. The Knights crossed the line from capital-intensive to coercion-intensive state formation in about thirty years. The Knights of Malta (also known successively as the Knights Hospitallers of St John of Jerusalem and the Knights of Rhodes) likewise zigged and zagged, but ended up in a very different location:

... a religious order born in the Holy Land toward 1100, but almost immediately transformed into a military order in defense of the East's Latin states, then moving to a maritime career in its retreat to Cyprus (1291) and then Rhodes (1309), and finally forced to devote itself full time to that calling at its installation in Malta as a sovereign state under the suzerainty of the King of Sicily in 1530.

(Fontenay 1988a: 362)

By devoting themselves to legalized piracy from their Maltese base, the Knights followed a more capital-intensive course than their onetime neighbors in the Holy Land. Thus we can think of the diagram as a map of the multiple paths taken by different European states in their various interactions with the cities in their territories.

The capital-coercion diagram embodies the argument I sketched in the first chapter: the most powerful rulers in any particular region set the terms of war for all; smaller rulers faced a choice between accommodating themselves to the demands of powerful neighbors and putting exceptional efforts into preparations for war. War and preparations for war involved rulers in extracting the means of war from others who held the essential resources – men, arms, supplies, or money to buy them – and who were reluctant to surrender them without strong pressure or compensation. Within limits set by the demands and rewards of other states, extraction and struggle over the means of war created the central organizational structures of states. The organization of major social classes within a state's territory, and their relations to the state, significantly affected the strategies rulers employed to extract resources, the resistance they met, the

struggle that resulted, the sorts of durable organization that extraction and struggle laid down, and therefore the efficiency of resource extraction.

The organization of major social classes, and their relations to the state varied significantly from Europe's coercion-intensive regions (areas of few cities and agricultural predominance, where direct coercion played a major part in production) to its capital-intensive regions (areas of many cities and commercial predominance, where markets, exchange, and market-oriented production prevailed). The demands major classes made on the state, and their influence over the state, varied correspondingly. The relative success of different extractive strategies, and the strategies rulers actually applied, therefore varied significantly from coercion-intensive to capital-intensive regions.

As a consequence, the organizational forms of states followed distinctly different trajectories in these different parts of Europe. Which sort of state prevailed in a given era and part of Europe varied greatly. Only late in the millennium did national states exercise clear superiority over city-states, empires, and other common European forms of state. Nevertheless, the increasing scale of war and the knitting together of the European state system through commercial, military, and diplomatic interaction eventually gave the warmaking advantage to those states that could field great standing armies; states having access to a combination of large rural populations, capitalists, and relatively commercialized economies won out. They set the terms of war, and their form of state became the predominant one in Europe. Eventually European states converged on that form: the national state.

Within each path marked out in the capital-coercion diagram, earlier steps constrained later ones. If urban ruling classes played important parts in the initial consolidation of a given state (as they did in Holland), long afterward the state bore their imprint in the form of bourgeois institutions. If a state originated in conquest of largely rural populations (as did successive Russian empires) it continued to offer little scope to such cities as grew up in its midst; in such regions, large nobilities grew up as monarchs granted fiscal privileges and substantial local jurisdictions to arms-bearing landlords in return for their intermittent military service.

#### LIAISONS DANGEREUSES

Through most of the last millennium, European cities and states have carried on a series of *liaisons dangereuses*, love-hate affairs in which each became at once indispensable and insufferable to the other. Cities and their capitalists drew indispensable protection for their commercial and industrial activity from the specialists in coercion who ran states, but rightly feared interference in their money-making and diversion of their resources to war, preparation for war, or

payment for past wars. States and military men depended on city-based capitalists for the financial means to recruit and sustain armed force, yet properly worried about the resistance to state power engendered by cities, their commercial interests, and their working classes. Cities and states found the grounds for uneasy bargains in the exchange of protection for access to capital, but until the nineteenth century such bargains remained fragile.

These days it is hard to imagine the seventeenth-century machinations of Messina, Sicily's most mercantile city. Sicily has become such an emblem for backwardness that we easily forget the many centuries of Sicilian glory as a seat of brilliant kingdoms, a breadbasket for the Mediterranean, and an object of competition among great powers. Sicily – once Muslim, and then Norman – had come under Aragonese rule in 1282, and had become a property of Spain with the sixteenth-century formation of a unified monarchy. The merchant-oligarchs of Messina chafed under Spanish rule, which cramped their access to foreign markets, and especially their control over the export of Sicilian silk, in favor of dynastic interests. In 1674, Spain (loosely allied with Holland) was at war with France (loosely allied, for the moment, with England). Messina's leaders closed their gates to Spanish troops, appealed for help to France, England, and the Ottoman Empire, bid for an independent Sicily ruled from Messina by a foreign king, asked for their port to be free of customs, and welcomed a French governor of Sicily with his troops.

After three years, however, the Messinans tired of French occupation as the French lost their enthusiasm for maintaining a military establishment amid a perfidious population. When the French withdrew and the leading families fled, the remaining merchants formed a civic guard and cheered the return of Spanish rule (Mack Smith 1968a: 225–30). In Sicily and elsewhere, state-city compacts broke easily when external events altered the state's military position or the cities' commercial position, and when one side or the other pushed its advantage too far. Rulers and capitalists constantly renegotiated their relative positions.

Not every state-city pair, however, maintained the same relationship. Far from it: the pattern varied sharply from one part of Europe to another, and changed dramatically over the centuries. Venice created its own commercial empire and only later undertook the conquest of mainland territory, Polish lords stunted the growth of their cities, while Paris, for all its rebellions, served the French monarchy well.

Returning to the capital-coercion diagram, we might sketch the stories of a number of different European areas as in figure 2.7. Thus, according to the diagram, the Polish state lived in a coercion-rich, capital-poor environment, and actually faced a decline in the concentrations of both as great nobles seized their shares of coercion and capital. Scandinavian states generally began amid substantial concentrations of coercion, and eventually moved toward higher levels of control over concentrated capital. Small German states, Italian city-states,

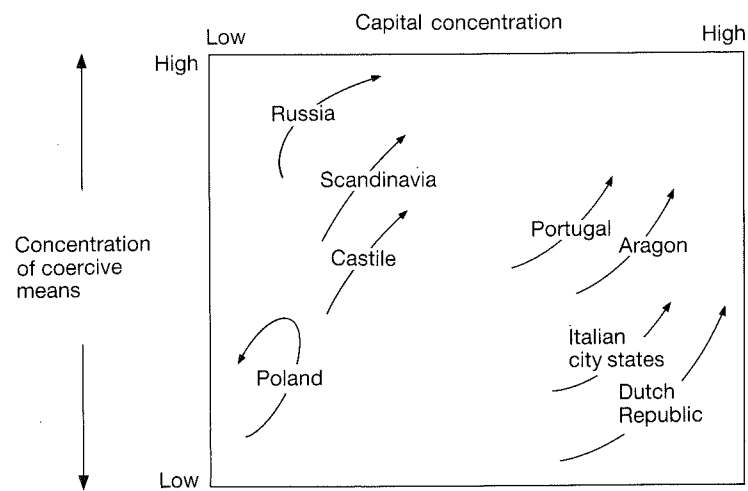


Figure 2.7 Hypothetical trajectories of different states.

and the Dutch Republic, in contrast, began their trajectories in the presence of substantial concentrations of capital but weak, intermittent armed force, only gradually moving toward permanent, concentrated military establishments.

The positions of cities within market hierarchies (international markets, regional markets, exclusively local markets, and so on) correlated approximately with their size, their demographic impact on their hinterlands, the extent of their capital accumulation and their ability to build up and control an extended sphere of influence. These in turn strongly affected the relative attractiveness of different cities as sources of capital for the building of armies and state formation, the autonomy of their ruling classes with respect to would-be and actual statemakers, and the strength of their representative institutions. The higher its market position, on average, the more likely that within their relations with national rulers a city's oligarchy acted as indispensable equals having extensive rights of representation.

As a consequence, major trading cities and city-states mounted more effective resistance to the penetration of national states than did cities in mainly agrarian regions. Most often national states only gained genuine control over major trading cities when the cities had begun to lose their predominant positions in international markets. Even then, important trading cities managed to build into the state apparatus more of their municipal power structures than did local and regional market centers, and their presence in great numbers generally slowed down the formation of national states. In the absence of ready capital, on the other hand, rulers built massive apparatuses to squeeze resources from a reluctant citizenry.

With important exceptions, the Protestant Reformation concentrated in Europe's city-state band, and at first offered a further base for resistance to the authority of centralizing states. The exceptions include Catholic northern Italy, where the Roman church never lost its great influence, as well as Protestant Bohemia and Hungary, profoundly rural areas that were already producing populist variants of Christianity well before the Reformation. In many places, notably England and the Nordic countries, rulers promoted and co-opted their own versions of the Reformation, which established extensive state control over the religious apparatus and close cooperation between clergy and lay officials in local administration. Elsewhere (as in the Netherlands) Protestantism provided an attractive doctrinal basis for resistance to imperial authority, especially authority buttressed by claims of divinely-sanctioned royal privilege. Confronted with the spread of popular Protestantism, a ruler had three choices: embrace it, co-opt it, or fight it.

Within the Holy Roman Empire, the division between officially Protestant and Catholic principalities and the threat that a ruler – seeking either dynastic ends, religious solace, or a ground for resistance to the emperor – would change faith, became constant sources of contention during the sixteenth century. The Treaty of Westphalia, ending the Thirty Years' War in 1648, featured a provision that any ruler who switched faiths would forfeit his or her claim to the crown. From that point on, religious differences remained important in European domestic politics, but declined rapidly as a stake of war.

On the whole, bulky state churches (whether Protestant, Catholic, or Orthodox) came into being where the state itself built large civilian and military bureaucracies in the process of massing armed force. People in areas of concentrated capital generally resisted the imposition of state-prescribed forms of worship as successfully as they blocked the early development of national states.

London and England constitute the obvious challenge to the theoretical opposition of capitalist activity and state power. In England, a substantial state formed relatively early despite the presence of a formidable trading city and maintained a hegemonic state church into the nineteenth century. Note, however, several crucial features of the English experience. The monarchy acquired extensive powers before London became a major international center; in that regard, England resembled Scandinavia more closely than it did the Netherlands. Kinship, trade, and finance, however, gave London's merchants close ties to the country's nobility and gentry; the City of London gained direct representation in Parliament and, through the Livery, a semi-autonomous voice in royal affairs. In those regards, England resembled the Netherlands more closely than it did Scandinavia. From the seventeenth century onward, finally, the state that emerged saw royal power increasingly contained by the joint representative of landowners and bourgeoisie, Parliament. Thus England managed to travel a certain distance on both the major paths to state formation.

## ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF STATE

The experiences of other areas indicate that the focus of bargaining over the wherewithal of war strongly affected the forms of representation that emerged. In Portugal, with strong reliance on overseas trade for royal income, we see few representative institutions of any kind except for the strong presence of Lisbon's municipal government as interlocutor. In sixteenth-century Aragon, we observe Barcelona in a similar relation to the crown; its puissant *Consell de Cent* could bypass the viceroy and speak directly to the king in Madrid, yet it never had the power to dominate the whole of Aragon, much less of all Spain. In Castile, we witness the power invested in the Cortes, an instrument of great landlords and of eighteen cities' oligarchies. On the whole, urban institutions themselves seem to have become part of state structure more readily where capitalists predominated.

States in which capitalists and bourgeois institutions played commanding roles had great advantages when it came to the rapid mobilization of capital for expensive wars. But they remained vulnerable to withdrawals of capital and demands for commercial protection. The Dutch Republic illustrates clearly the costs and benefits of capitalist dominance. On the one hand, the Dutch could easily raise revenues for warfare – in the short run by means of loans from its richer citizens, in the long run by means of customs duties and sales taxes on everything from ivory to spirits ('t Hart 1986, 1989a, 1989b, Schama 1975); they did so without creating much permanent state structure. Large Dutch fleets, including the private navies of the East and West India Companies, converted quickly into a formidable navy. But only when the major provinces (especially Holland) agreed to pay could the republic undertake a war, or any other large effort; they often disagreed. The military advantage of such states varied with the prevailing type of warfare: it was historically great for naval warfare, less so for artillery and cavalry, and a long-term drawback in mass-army tactics.

Permanent military forces reduced (but by no means eliminated) surges in the demand for military means, and thereby increased the advantage of states having long-term credit and large tax bases. States such as Prussia, France, and Britain – often considered models of effective state formation – combined the co-optation of landlords and merchants, built standing armies (and navies) in the time of mass-army tactics from the Thirty Years' War to the Napoleonic Wars, and as a consequence created substantial central bureaucracies. Contrasts among these textbook examples, however, occupied only a narrow band in the whole spectrum of European state formation.

As they mobilized for the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, most European states expanded and centralized. At war's end they all contracted somewhat – if only through the demobilization of the millions of troops who

were under arms by 1815 – but their budgets, personnel, and levels of activity remained much higher than they had been in 1790. War in Europe and abroad continued to provide the greatest stimulus to increases in state expenditure. Yet during the nineteenth century several crucial changes in state formation occurred. The great implosion of capital and labor into cities and towns presented rulers with threats and opportunities they had not previously faced: threats of concentrated working-class collective action, opportunities to extract and control as never before. The scope of state activity broadened immensely throughout Europe; improving navigation, building roads and railroads, policing, creating schools, establishing post offices, regulating relations between capital and labor all became regular activities of states, and occasions to add specialists to the state service. Professional civil services formed and multiplied.

Simultaneously, as rulers bargained directly with their subject populations for massive taxes, military service, and cooperation in state programs, most states took two further steps of profound importance: a movement toward direct rule that reduced the role of local or regional patrons and placed representatives of the national state in every community, and expansion of popular consultation in the form of elections, plebiscites, and legislatures. Together they promoted nationalism both in the sense of popular identification with state ends (for the majority) and (for the minorities) in the sense of resistance to demands for uniformity and integration, resistance in the name of distinctive linguistic and cultural groups. The omnipresent state, the struggles over its rulers and policies, the formation of serious budgetary competitors to the armed forces, and many other features of states we now take for granted emerged in the nineteenth-century absorption of the general population into the state. European states, for all their differences in relations between state and economy, began to converge on a model of bureaucracy, intervention, and control.

The analysis embedded in the capital-coercion diagram shows us multiple paths of state formation and an ultimate convergence on states with high concentrations of both capital and coercion. The analysis helps rephrase and answer the initial question: *What accounts for the great variation in time and space in the kinds of states that have prevailed in Europe since AD 990, and why did European states eventually converge on different variants of the national state?* There are three answers: the relative availability of concentrated capital and concentrated means of coercion in different regions and periods significantly affected the organizational consequences of making war; until recently only those states survived that held their own in war with other states; and finally, over the long run the changing character of war gave the military advantage to states that could draw large, durable military forces from their own populations, which were increasingly national states.

The capital-coercion reasoning also suggests some possible solutions to the historical problems that flow from this general question. *What accounts for the*

*roughly concentric pattern of European state formation? It reflects the uneven spatial distribution of capital, and therefore sets off the relatively large but capital-poor states that ringed the continent from the swarm of smaller, capital-rich statelike entities that proliferated near its center. The contrast distinguishes exterior states, such as Sweden and Russia, that went through their formative years with relatively large concentrations of coercion and relatively small concentrations of capital, from interior states, such as Genoa and Holland, for which the opposite was true, and intermediate states, such as England and France, in which concentrations of capital and of coercion grew up side by side.*

*Why, despite obvious interests to the contrary, did rulers frequently accept the establishment of institutions representing the major classes within their jurisdictions? In fact, rulers attempted to avoid the establishment of institutions representing groups outside their own class, and sometimes succeeded for considerable periods. In the long term, however, those institutions were the price and outcome of bargaining with different members of the subject population for the wherewithal of state activity, especially the means of war. Kings of England did not want a Parliament to form and assume ever-greater power; they conceded to barons, and then to clergy, gentry, and bourgeois, in the course of persuading them to raise the money for warfare.*

*Why did European states vary so much with respect to the incorporation of urban oligarchies and institutions? States that had to contend from the start with urban oligarchies and institutions generally incorporated those oligarchies and institutions into the national structure of power. Representative institutions generally first appeared in Europe when local, regional, or national governments bargained with groups of subjects who had enough power to inhibit the governments' operation but not enough power to take them over (Blockmans 1978). Where the governments in question were more or less autonomous states and the groups of subjects were urban oligarchies, municipal councils and similar institutions commonly became integral elements of the state structure. Where a single city predominated, a very effective form of state – the city-state or city-empire – emerged. The city-state and city-empire lost out, however, once mass armies recruited from the state's own population became crucial to successful warfare.*

*Why did political and commercial power slide from the city-states and city-empires of the Mediterranean to the substantial states and relatively subordinated cities of the Atlantic? They lost out not only because the Atlantic and Baltic trade eclipsed that of the Mediterranean but also because control of massive, permanent armed force became increasingly crucial to a state's success in politics and economics alike. When, in the late sixteenth century, Spain, England, and Holland all started to send large armed vessels into the Mediterranean for trade and piracy (the two were not so distinct), city-states such as Ragusa, Genoa, and Venice found that their previous reliance on speed, connections, and craftiness was no longer enough to evade massive commercial losses. The owners of big*

ships that were suitable for long ocean voyages won out in both commercial and military terms (see Guillerm 1985, Modelski and Thompson 1988).

*Why did city-states, city-empires, federations, and religious organizations lose their importance as prevailing kinds of state in Europe? Two things happened. First, commercialization and capital accumulation in the larger states reduced the advantage enjoyed by small mercantile states, which had previously been able to borrow extensively, tax efficiently, and rely on their own seapower to hold off large landbound states. Second, war eventually changed in a direction that made their small scale and fragmented sovereignty a clear disadvantage, and they lost to large states. Florentine and Milanese republics crumbled under the weight of the fifteenth and sixteenth century's military requirements. Indeed a professional organizer of mercenary armies, Francesco Sforza, became duke of Milan in 1450 before his descendants lost their duchy to France (1499) and then to Spain (1535).*

In Florence, a revived republic lasted until 1530, but then the combined forces of the pope and Emperor Charles V occupied its *contado*, forced a surrender of the city (despite fortifications recommended by a commission headed by Nicolò Macchiavelli and built under the direction of Michelangelo Buonarroti), and installed the Medicis as dukes. With the partial exceptions of Venice and Genoa, which retained some distinction as maritime powers, that era of large armies, heavy artillery, and extensive fortifications relegated all the Italian city-states to extinction, subordination, or perilous survival in the interstices of great powers.

*Why did war shift from conquest for tribute and struggle among armed tribute-takers to sustained battles among massed armies and navies? For essentially the same reasons: with the organizational and technical innovations in warfare of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, states with access to large numbers of men and volumes of capital gained a clear advantage, and either drove back the tribute-takers or forced them into patterns of extraction that built a more durable state structure. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Russian state made the transition as Ivan III and Ivan IV used awards of land to tie bureaucrats and soldiers to long-term service of the state. During the eighteenth century, the ability of populous states such as Great Britain and France to draw mass armies from their own citizens gave them the means to overpower small states.*

If this analysis is correct, it creates its own puzzles: why, for example, the fragmented Holy Roman Empire lasted so long in the midst of consolidating, bellicose monarchies. Why didn't it disappear into the maws of large, powerful states? Again, what logic would have predicted that commercial Novgorod, a trading city whose patricians exercised control over their own large hinterland, would give way to princely Moscow? Geopolitical position and stand-offs among major powers surely played a larger part than my simple formulation implies. They figure importantly in later chapters. Nevertheless, the line of

reasoning summarized in the capital-coercion diagram invites us to rethink European state formation in terms of the interplay of cities and states, and thereby captures some broad regularities in state formation. It clearly improves on the portrayal of English, French, or Prussian state formation (or some generalization of the three) as the core process, and all others as attenuated or failed attempts to follow the same path.

Over the centuries before the nineteenth, however, states had long diverged as they fashioned military forces in situations of very different relations between capital and coercion. Alternative paths of state formation, in their turn, led to different forms of resistance and rebellion, different state structures, and different fiscal systems. If so, standard debates about the transition from feudalism to capitalism and the rise of national states have concentrated too heavily on the experiences of France, England, and a few other massive states, while neglecting a major determinant of the actual character of states. Great landlords overwhelmed both capitalists and kings in Poland, but were practically nonexistent in Holland. The “feudalism” of Florence and its *contado* differed so greatly from the “feudalism” of Hungary that it hardly seems worthwhile to cover them both by the same term.

More than anything else, the relative importance of cities, financiers, and capital in a zone of state formation significantly affected the kinds of states that took shape there. Mobilizing for war had significantly different effects depending on the presence or absence of substantial capital and capitalists. A closer look at the actual operation of European states – the business of the next chapter – will clarify how the availability and form of capital made such a difference to preparation for war, and how war, in its turn, shaped the durable organizational structure of states.

Chapters 3 and 4 will neglect geographic variation within Europe in favor of placing major changes in war, political structure, and domestic struggle firmly in time. Chapters 5 and 6 (on alternative paths of state formation and the evolution of the international state system) will, in contrast, pay great attention to variation among different kinds of states, before chapter 7 confronts European historical experience with the character of state formation in the contemporary world.

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### 3

## How War Made States, and Vice Versa

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#### A BIFURCATION OF VIOLENCE

Despite the current forty-year lull in open war among the world's great powers, the twentieth century has already established itself as the most bellicose in human history. Since 1900, by one careful count, the world has seen 237 new wars – civil and international – whose battles have killed at least 1,000 persons per year; through the year 2000, the grim numbers extrapolate to about 275 wars and 115 million deaths in battle. Civilian deaths could easily equal that total. The bloody nineteenth century brought only 205 such wars and 8 million dead, the warlike eighteenth century a mere 68 wars with 4 million killed (Sivard 1986: 26; see also Uralis 1960). Those numbers translate into death rates per thousand population of about 5 for the eighteenth century, 6 for the nineteenth century, and 46 – eight or nine times as high – for the twentieth. From 1480 to 1800, a significant new international conflict started somewhere every two or three years, from 1800 to 1944 every one or two years, since World War II every fourteen months or so (Beer 1974: 12–15; Small and Singer 1982: 59–60; Cusack and Eberwein 1982). The nuclear age has not slowed the centuries-old trend toward more frequent, deadlier wars.

That Westerners commonly think otherwise probably results from the fact that war has become rarer among the great powers: France, England, Austria, Spain, and the Ottoman Empire in 1500; France, the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union, West Germany, the United States, and China today; other sets in between. Wars directly involving great powers have, on the average, declined in frequency, duration, and number of participating states since the sixteenth century. They have also, in bitter compensation, become much more severe – especially if we count the number of deaths per month or per year (Levy