

The Historical Processes of Colonization and State Development

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and State Development

PhD Dissertation

Politica

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ISBN: 978-87-7335-302-8

Cover: Svend Siune

Print: Fællestrykkeriet, Aarhus University

Layout: Annette Bruun Andersen

Submitted August 31, 2022

The public defense takes place November 25, 2022

Published November 2022

Forlaget Politica

c/o Department of Political Science

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Acknowledgements

Many people have contributed to this dissertation. My supervisors, Jørgen Møller and Anne Mette Kjær, have been an incredible support throughout my three years. I could always count on excellent feedback from both of you. My main supervisor, Jørgen Møller, deserves special thanks. Jørgen has always been ready to help me with every aspect of my project. His constant help has shaped not only the development of my project but also me as a researcher. Jørgen's tremendous knowledge of theory and history has always impressed me. Without it, my project would not have been the same. My co-supervisor, Anne Mette Kjær, has also been an immense support. I have greatly benefited from Mette's extensive knowledge of African politics, both past and present. Thank you both for the countless discussions about writing, research ideas and more broadly, life in academia.

I also want to thank the members of the International Relations section. All of you have been fantastic colleagues who have ensured an excellent working environment both personally and academically. You have managed to create an open and supportive environment, which made the PhD journey a wonderful adventure. Thank you very much for that and all the invaluable comments many of you have provided on earlier drafts of my articles. Moreover, being part of the PhD group at Aarhus University has been a great experience. Over the years, I have had the pleasure of sharing an office with some lovely people, including Laurits, Kristian, Liv and Ida. Thank you for the many great talks and for making it worthwhile coming to work. I would also like to thank Gert Tinggaard Svendsen for our walks around Aarhus and numerous exciting discussions on everything from game theory to Vikings.

In the spring of 2022, I had the pleasure of visiting Andrej Kokkonen at the University of Gothenburg. I owe my deepest gratitude to Andrej, who introduced me to many interesting researchers and overall made my stay in Gothenburg a delightful experience. Andrej not only introduced me to an outstanding new research environment but also provided invaluable comments that my dissertation has benefitted immensely from. His ability to comment on everything from theory and method to his-

torical context is unparalleled. Thank you for taking good care of me academically and socially.

Finally, I want to thank Mom, Dad and Nanna. Thank you for being my rock and anchor when times were tough. Your continuing support means everything to me. I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Aarhus, August 2022

Anders Gammelholm Wieland

Preface

This report summarizes the dissertation “The Historical Processes of Colonization and State Development” It consists of this summary and the following four self-contained articles.

Article 1: The Transatlantic Slave Trade and Political Instability in African Polities, 1200-1900

Article 2: The Survival of West Africa’s Indigenous States

Article 3: The Economic Legacy of Early Democracy

Article 4: The Long-Run Effects of Weak States: Evidence from the Viking Settlement of Eastern England

This summary positions the main research question and provides a theoretical, methodological and empirical framework that are employed across the four articles. In order to help the reader keep track of the papers in the dissertation, I assign a three-letter subscript to each paper based on its main focus every time an article is mentioned in the summary:

Article	Main focus
<i>Article 1</i> _(STA)	State <u>s</u> tability
<i>Article 2</i> _(SUR)	State <u>s</u> urvival
<i>Article 3</i> _(REG)	Effects of political <u>r</u> egimes
<i>Article 4</i> _(EFF)	<u>E</u> ffects of weak states

Chapter 1

Introduction

The state is the largest and most powerful social organization in the world today. It is involved in all major societal decisions, whether social, economic or political. Many people today grumble about the state's demands for taxation, complain that it is encroaching on our private lives or display frustration over its often impersonal and sluggish bureaucracy. However, we can hardly envisage life without the state. The roads we drive on, the schools we are taught in and the protection we receive against violence are all due to the organization of the state. Even though the state is ever-present in today's world, we have come to take it for granted.

However, there are fundamental differences in the capacities of states around the globe. On the one hand, some societies have managed to create powerful and capable states. Such countries, mainly those in the Western part of the globe, benefit immensely from strong state institutions. Their citizens have higher standards of living, enjoy security from random violence and generally experience less oppression from governments. On the other hand, there are also societies that lack these important institutions. Most of these developing countries struggle to stimulate long-run development, prevent widespread instability and promote democratic rights (e.g. Bardhan, 2016; Johnson and Koyama, 2017; Fearon and Laitin, 2003; Acemoglu and Robinson, 2012; Schumpeter, 1942; Huntington, 1968; Fukuyama, 2005). Understanding where this important variation in state institutions comes from is not only important to political science but to the international community in general.

The starting point for this dissertation is that to understand variation in state institutions across the world, we first need to take a step back into history. Social science research emphasizes that history can leave persistent marks on the present through primarily three distinct causal channels: geography, culture and institutions (Spolaore and Wacziarg, 2013; Nunn, 2020; Galor, 2022; Koyama and Rubin, 2022; Cirone and Pepinsky, 2022). The focus of this dissertation is on institutions. Institutions constitute the “rules of the game” and are important incentive

structures that shape human interaction. In particular, to understand how historical societies have developed over the span of centuries, we must examine their institutions. To quote Nobel prize winner Douglas North (1990, vii), “History matters. It matters not just because we can learn from the past, but because the present and the future are connected to the past by the continuity of a society’s institutions. Today’s and tomorrow’s choices are shaped by the past. And the past can only be made intelligible as a story of institutional evolution.” If we need history to understand modern states, what is it, then, that societies did in the past that made them able to create strong and centralized state institutions?

One important driving factor of institutional development throughout history has been colonization. Since the first modern humans migrated out of Africa roughly 70,000 years ago, colonization of foreign lands has been an integral part of human existence (Diamond, 1998; Harari, 2015). The most common, and perhaps most notable, colonization process was the one the Europeans initiated in the early fifteenth century. It started with the Portuguese conquest of Ceuta in 1415 and ended in the late twentieth century when most European colonies had gained formal independence. Over the span of these six centuries, major European powers managed to conquer and colonize lands spanning from the Americas in the Western Hemisphere to large parts of Africa and Asia in the east (Abernethy, 2000; Headrick, 2010). An influential strand of literature in social science suggests that European colonization was a critical juncture that fundamentally changed the development of states across the globe (e.g. Acemoglu, Johnson and Robinson, 2002; Acemoglu and Robinson, 2012; La Porta et al., 1997; Engerman and Sokoloff, 2002; Feyrer and Sacerdote, 2009; Huillery, 2009; Dell, 2010; Hariri, 2012; Michalopoulos and Papaioannou, 2016).

However, centuries before the Europeans went out to colonize large parts of the globe, the European continent experienced its own internal colonization process (e.g. Bartlett, 2014). A long range of different historical processes have characterized this internal colonization of Europe, ranging from the Greek city-states’ colonization of the Mediterranean Sea beginning in the eleventh century BCE (e.g. Ober, 2016) to the later medieval crusades against the Baltic, Finnic and West Slavic peoples around the southern and eastern shores of the Baltic Sea (e.g. Christiansen, 1998). Another important European colonization was the one that the Vikings initiated. In the late eighth century, Scandinavian warriors began to carry out small-scale raids throughout Europe. Over time, these smaller raids developed into actual military conquests that became the foundation of various Viking colonies. This dissertation fo-

Table 1.1: The structure of the dissertation

I	II	III	IV
State stability	State survival	Effects of political regimes	Effects of states
<i>Article 1</i> _(STA)	<i>Article 2</i> _(SUR)	<i>Article 3</i> _(REG)	<i>Article 4</i> _(EFF)

cuses on the Viking colonization of England, arguably the largest and most noteworthy of them all. For example, scholars estimate that a minimum of 35,000 Vikings migrated out of Scandinavia and settled in the newly conquered areas of England (Kershaw and Røyrvik, 2016). This massive Viking colonization constituted a turning point in English history as it fundamentally altered the institutional structure of England (e.g. Sawyer, 1971; Forte, Oram and Pedersen, 2005; Varberg, 2020).

This dissertation consists of this summary and the following four self-contained articles, illustrated in Table 1.1. The main aim of the dissertation is to employ colonization processes by Europeans inside and outside of Europe to understand and examine the emergence, development and long-run consequences of historical states. I do so in two ways. First, I theoretically develop a framework that brings in colonization as the main explanatory factor of the emergence, development and consequences of historical states. Second, the dissertation enlists new data on different colonization processes and combines it with extensive information on the development of state institutions over the span of centuries. This allows for an empirical examination of how colonization has shaped the occurrence, development and consequences of historical states across different time periods and regions of the world.

In the first part of the dissertation, *Article 1*_(STA) examines the political stability of premodern states. The article attempts to explain political instability in precolonial Africa. Centuries before the formal colonization of the continent in the late nineteenth century, Africa consisted of a vast number of precolonial states. Some managed to establish organized and centralized state institutions while other acephalous societies lacked state-like institutions. As in other parts of the world, politics between rulers and elites played an important role in the development of political stability in precolonial Africa. *Article 1*_(STA) focuses on how stable and durable ruler-elite relations can break down. It develops a theoretical framework that explains the political equilibrium that stabilizes ruler-elite relations, and how negative shocks to coercive power can change the political logic that previously held this equilibrium together. Under a durable political equilibrium, rulers can remain in power because they possess the coercive means to resist coups from other elites.

However, negative shocks that significantly diminish the coercive power of the ruler at the expense of the elite can provide a window of opportunity for potential challengers to remove the weakened ruler via coups.

To examine this argument, *Article 1*_(STA) focuses on one of the largest shocks the African continent experienced before colonial rule: the transatlantic slave trade. In 1680, a sudden massive increased demand for African slaves occurred. This increasing demand for enslaved people had widespread consequences for political stability in precolonial Africa because it provided African elites with the coercive means to replace rulers. In exchange for enslaved Africans, elite actors requested and received a massive influx of European firearms. This new weapon technology fundamentally increased the coercive power of elites at the expense of rulers, which enabled them to exploit the weakening position of the ruler to initiate coups. I demonstrate this argument by exploiting variation in the location of European slave ports and combine it with information on ruler tenure of over 2,500 African rulers spanning from 1200 to 1900. I then present empirical evidence that African rulers after the massive shock in 1680 had shorter tenures in power if they were situated in the vicinity of slave ports.

In the second part of the dissertation, *Article 2*_(SUR) attempts to explain why some precolonial African states survived European colonial rule while others were destroyed in the process. African countries are complex entities with a long range of traditional institutions that have deep roots in the precolonial era. Why is it that some regions within Africa are characterized by many different traditional institutions and others have very few or none at all? *Article 2*_(SUR) suggests that to understand the survival of indigenous African states, we need to examine how local colonial power was spatially distributed. While most of the colonial power was centered around early colonial forts, it diminished in concentric circles into the hinterlands. I argue that African states near these colonial power sources were dismantled because Europeans had the military infrastructure to tear down indigenous institutions and build their own colonial institutions. However, in the hinterlands, colonial power was very weak, which made it difficult and costly to replace indigenous institutions. Instead, colonizers kept them intact and ruled indirectly through native rulers. I examine this argument by collecting new data on colonial forts in West Africa. I then combine this with detailed data on over 100 indigenous West African states. I empirically demonstrate that African polities after colonization were more likely to be destroyed by Europeans if they were situated near colonial forts.

In the third part, *Article 3_(REG)* examines the long-run effects of pre-colonial democratic institutions on modern development. For most of history, states have had different political regimes. In some historical states, authority and resources were the ruler's personal affair. Such absolute rulers had vast power, which they could use as they saw fit. In other premodern states, the actions of rulers were significantly constrained by popular assemblies controlled by elites. In these societies, rulers had to seek consent from other powerful elites in order to exercise the power of the state. What kind of economic legacies did these institutions of constraints leave on the modern world?

Article 3_(REG) utilizes the theoretical argument from *Article 2_(SUR)* to propose that early democracy only affects modern development in places where it persisted through the colonial era and into the modern period. While colonial power was strongest in areas around the colonial capitals, this power gradually became weaker out into the hinterlands. This made it easier for the Europeans to impose direct colonial rule around the capitals. However, it was often very difficult and costly to rule the hinterlands directly. Instead, the Europeans relied on indirect colonial rule in these areas. The hinterlands therefore experienced limited colonial influence, which made it difficult for the Europeans to impose any real change there. Many precolonial democracies in the hinterlands were therefore more likely to survive European colonization. Over time, political structures in the hinterlands promoted long-run development because they created incentives to promote growth-enhancing policies. Combining ethnographic data on early democracy with fine-grained data on local development, I document an economic legacy of early democracy in the precolonial, colonial and modern periods.

In the fourth and final part of the dissertation, *Article 4_(EFF)* examines the long-run economic and political effects of state development. The article argues that historically weak states have stunted long-run development because such societies lacked the institutional capacity to prevent widespread violence from occurring. However, weak premodern states also secured political liberty for society. Strong and centralized coercive institutions have historically provided rulers and elites with political authority to control and dominate society. Whenever such institutions are weakened, it significantly diminishes the political power of rulers vis-a-vis their societies. A fundamental negative shock to state institutions can therefore provide societal actors with a unique opportunity to exploit weaker rulers and fight for better political rights.

However, estimating the causal effects of weak states can be an extremely difficult task. State formation over the span of centuries is

shaped by a myriad of endogenous and unobservable factors. Not taking this complex set of factors into account makes it very difficult to estimate the long-run dynamics of states. In an ideal setting, we would like to estimate the exogenous effect of weak states on economic and political outcomes. This is obviously challenging since most state formation processes are not exogenous.

Article 4_(EFF) proposes that the Viking colonization of medieval England can help us obtain exogenous variation in state institutions. After a long and intense invasion, the Vikings finally managed to conquer and colonize most of eastern England in 878. Immediately after the conquest, the Vikings began to settle in large numbers. The large Viking settlement became a touchstone that profoundly transformed the institutional framework of England. Accordingly, the Viking settlement resulted in the collapse of previously centralized kingdoms, which were replaced with a weak and fragmented power structure. Some years after the initial settlement, a treaty between the English and the Vikings was signed. The treaty formalized the boundaries of the English kingdom and the Viking territory, the so-called Danelaw. The main logic of the natural experiment in *Article 4_(EFF)* is to examine smaller administrative units that are sufficiently close to the Danelaw border, making the assignment of weak state institutions as-if random. Historical sources and quantitative tests confirm the validity of the design. The Danelaw border was established by two equally powerful kings and drawn based on random features in the landscape. It aligned with no other important borders in medieval England. Finally, any migration along the border was prohibited and enforced by both parties. Using historically unique data on over 16,000 medieval administrative units, *Article 4_(EFF)* shows that administrative units within the Danelaw experienced less development and also had more inclusive political rights compared to administrative units on the English side of the border.

In what follows, this dissertation summary discusses all of these issues in greater detail. Chapter 2 defines the dissertation's key concepts: the state, political regimes and colonization. Chapter 3 presents the theoretical framework that explains the stability, survival and long-run consequences of historical states. Chapter 4 reviews the empirical strategies employed in the dissertation. Chapter 5 introduces the main data sources on historical state development and colonization. Chapter 6 presents the main empirical findings. Finally, Chapter 7 concludes and discusses the main theoretical and empirical lessons that can be drawn from the dissertation.

Chapter 2

Conceptualization

Chapter 2 defines the key concepts of the dissertation. It starts by reviewing the three most central capacities rulers attempt to construct when building strong states: extractive, coercive and administrative capacity. I then define what separates premodern states from their modern counterparts and illustrate how they differed on extractive, coercive and administrative capacity. Chapter 2 also explores how historical states had very different political regimes. Here, I present a distinction between early democracy and autocracy. Lastly, the chapter discusses different conceptualizations of colonization. I distinguish between formal and informal processes of colonization and utilize the history of the African continent to exemplify the differences between them.

2.1 The State

Human life is unfeasible in the absence of some minimal political order. Without stable rules governing human interactions, generalized mistrust, exploitation and violence will prevail. For most of human history, the state has been an institutional framework that has secured a stable and durable political order.

The most prominent conceptualizations of the state revolve around securing and controlling violence within a political domain. For example, over one hundred years ago, Max Weber (2012, 78) offered the canonical definition of the state as "a human community that (successfully) claims the *monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force* within a given territory." However, since Weber (2012) offered his definition of the state, political science has expanded our understanding of what statehood entails. Scholars now propose that building strong and powerful states requires the strengthening of three types of state capacities: *extractive*, *coercive* and *administrative* capacities (e.g. Hendrix, 2010; Berwick and Christia, 2018; Brambor et al., 2019; Hanson and Sigman, 2021).

Extractive capacity refers to the state's ability to collect and gather revenue through taxation. It is often considered by scholars to be the most fundamental aspect of state capacity because it secures the finances that enable all aspects of the state's functions, whether this is the construction of a bureaucracy, military forces or other public goods. Many social science scholars emphasize extraction as important for the development of state capacity (e.g. North, 1981; Levi, 1989; Tilly, 1990; Herbst, 2000; Besley and Persson, 2011; Dincecco, 2013). For example, in his seminal work on African state development, Herbst (2000, 113) suggests that there is no better way to conceptualize "a state's reach than its ability to collect taxes. If a state does not effectively control a territory, it certainly will not be able to collect taxes in a sustained and efficient manner." The famous economic historian Douglas North (1981, 23) also defined the state as an entity that extracts revenue through taxation in exchange for protection. Similarly, Levi (1989, 1) views taxation as the fundamental aspect of states and even equates the history of taxation with the history of the state.

Coercive capacity denotes the state's ability to use actual force or the threat of force to gain compliance from societal actors. The use of coercion involves the domination of society. Society should be understood in a broad sense as either regular citizens or prominent political elites. Coercive capacity entails building strong and powerful armed forces, such as large standing armies or internal police forces, which can be employed to prevent theft, suppress rebellions or protect the polity against external enemies. The idea of coercive capacity is highly inspired by Weber's (2012) canonical definition of the state. However, other scholars also view coercion as one of the central elements of state institutions (Mann, 1984; North, Wallis and Weingast, 2009). For example, Tilly (1990, 1) refers to states "as coercion-wielding organizations that [...] exercise clear priority in some respects over all other organizations within substantial territories." Mann (1984, 55) also speaks of states that exercise "some degree of authoritative, binding rule-making backed up by some organized physical force." Similarly, Giddens (1985, 20) characterizes states as "able to mobilize the means of violence to sustain that rule."

Administrative capacity draws attention to public administrations or officials that facilitate and support the management of a political entity. This type of state capacity is related to Weber's (2012) understanding that another hallmark of states is the existence of a bureaucracy that supports the ruler in coordinating and administering society. The fundamental tasks of states, whether this is prevention of violence, tax collection or military conscription, all require accurate information about a

polity's population and territory. Building such informational capacity necessitates the existence of institutions and state administrators that can collect and manage information about citizens. In recent years, social science has increasingly been focusing on this so-called "legibility" perspective—i.e. the breadth and depth of the state's knowledge about its citizens and their activities (e.g. Lee and Zhang, 2017; Brambor et al., 2020). For example, in his path-breaking work on state development, Scott (1998) argues that a key component of the state involved making local practices "legible" to state officials. According to Scott (1998), legibility implies that the state obtains information about local activities and that this information is gathered in standardized forms, such as through cadastral maps, birth certificates or property registers.

However, since the first signs of proto-states over six thousand years ago, the state as an institutional structure has undergone fundamental transformations in its size, function and strength. Capturing the historical development of the state under one broad conceptualization can be challenging due to the many changes the state has undergone in the last six millennia. Instead, social science scholars have broadly distinguished between two type of states: *premodern* and *modern* states.

The modern state rests on Weber's (2012) canonical idea of monopoly of violence. Weber's (2012) definition of the state thus attempts to capture the modern territorial state, which has emerged within Europe during the last five hundred years, and only became a reality in the beginning of the nineteenth century. The modern territorial state was a fundamental human invention that signified an important breakthrough with regard to previous state institutions.

Premodern states are fundamentally different. Mann (1984) describes premodern states as *capstone governments*. In such societies, the public administration of the state was often too underdeveloped and weak to truly penetrate and control society. In Mann's (1984) perspective, capstone governments were tied together by a small network of political elites within a loosely defined political territory. Along similar lines, North, Wallis and Weingast's (2009) distinguish between *natural states* and *open access states*.¹ Natural states emerged with the agricultural revolution thousands of years ago. Such early and premodern states were characterized by personal relationships between powerful individuals who possessed the privilege to form other organizations such as firms, clubs or associations. Open access states, on the other hand, saw the light

¹North, Wallis and Weingast (2009) also mention the foraging order as the first and most primitive type of human organization. This characterizes the hunter-gatherer society where small groups of humans live together without any formal rules or social stratification.

of day with the advent of the industrial revolution in the eighteenth century. Societies structured as open access states employ impersonal categories of individuals, and the ability to operate and form organizations is open to anyone who met a set of minimal and impersonal criteria (see also Spruyt, 2002).

Premodern states differed from modern states in terms of their extractive, coercive and administrative capacities. In relation to extractive capacity, modern states are able to collect vast amounts of revenue that would be unfathomable for rulers of premodern states (e.g. Bang, 2015; Stasavage, 2020). For instance, it is extremely rare that premodern states before the eighteenth century were able to extract taxes that exceeded five percent of their GDP (e.g. Bean, 1973; Mann, 1984). Similar to contemporary states, premodern states taxed a diverse set of things, but the underlying tax structure mainly consisted of taxing three elements: people (using forced labor or poll taxes), land or its production (in kind or in money) and trade (via customs on external borders and different types of internal sales) (see Kiser and Karceski, 2017, for an overview of premodern taxation).

One of the central differences between premodern and modern states was how taxes were collected. Modern states have developed complex and sophisticated bureaucracies that can efficiently collect revenue from society. In premodern times, polities lacked such developed institutions. Instead, rulers often outsourced taxation to local elites who paid for the privilege to levy taxes on societal actors. In exchange for the elites' right to tax, rulers required fixed lump sum payments every time taxes were due (see Johnson and Koyama, 2014; Afosa, 1985, for tax farming in Europe and West Africa).

Police and military forces are the most prominent features of coercive capacity. Such means of violence have changed significantly throughout history. In modern states, the police are the most immediately identifiable agents of the state. In today's world, the police force performs fundamental tasks, such as preventing theft and violence and generally maintaining law and order. However, the police is a new institutional innovation. It first emerged in the late 1820s with the creation of the London Metropolitan Police and then quickly spread across the globe. In premodern states, no formal police forces existed, and instead policing was often a private issue. Centuries ago, keeping public order and apprehending criminals were official responsibilities of local communities and not the state. For example, in medieval England, tithings (smaller local communities) were obliged to pursue offenders and keep them in custody when crimes were committed. If the tithing was not successful

in apprehending such lawbreakers, then the monarch issued a collective fine upon the whole community (Ansell and Lindvall, 2020, chap. 3).

Armed military forces established for the protection of the polity against its external enemies have also undergone fundamental transformations. Military forces in most modern states are standing armies. Such armies are permanently accessible to governments and consist of full-time soldiers who are paid fixed salaries. In premodern states, decentralization and low tax revenue made it difficult and costly for rulers to build professional armies. While some societies had some form of standing armies,² these rarely ever made up the entire army. Instead, premodern standing armies consisted of the ruler's personal militia, which competed with other potential actors for the right to use violence. Historically, political elites and their retainers were the only ones who possessed the political privileges and economic means to acquire the necessary military equipment (e.g. horses, armors, swords) to specialize in the act of violence. Whenever premodern rulers wished to engage in warfare, the mobilization of such powerful potentates was a necessary prerequisite for a successful military campaign (Tilly, 1990; Reid, 2012).

Administrative capacity has taken many forms throughout human history. Weber (2012) famously distinguishes between two distinct public administrations: *patrimonial* and *bureaucratic* infrastructures. One central characteristic of premodern states was their patrimonial administration.³ Before the arrival of modern states, public administrations were essentially made up of the ruler's royal household. In that regard, there existed no substantial distinction between private and public authority. The authority and resources of the state were the ruler's personal affair. Moreover, the offices of royal households were hereditary positions that were mainly administrated by close relatives and loyal supporters of the sovereign (Tilly, 1990; Ertman, 1997; Downing, 1988; Wilks, 1975).

In modern societies, public administrations are based on bureaucratic infrastructures, which are significantly different from patrimonial administrations. In bureaucratic administrations, there exists a clear difference between private and public authority. Modern rulers and bureaucrats cannot exploit the authority vested in public offices to promote their own economic and political needs. In contrast to premodern administrations, bureaucratic offices are not hereditary positions occupied by the head of state's closest relatives, but instead characterized

²See for example the janissaries in the Ottoman Empire (e.g. Finer, 1997).

³Some contemporary developing countries also exhibit traits of patrimonial infrastructures, although in a somewhat more modern fashion (see e.g. Bratton and van de Walle, 1997; Fukuyama, 2011).

by merit-based recruitment and promotion procedures (Ertman, 1997; Finer, 1997; Weber, 2012).

The conceptualization of the premodern and modern state I have presented so far consists of three broad capacities: extractive, coercive and administrative capacities. Such capacities varied significantly between premodern and modern states. I also wish to introduce *state centralization* and *state stability* as two other important aspects of premodern states. Both of them play central roles in the articles of this dissertation.

State centralization refers to the accumulation and consolidation of political power under the control of a central authority—for example, a monarch, sultan or unified ruling coalition—within an existing polity (e.g. Olson, 1993; Boix, 2015; Scott, 2017; Bó and Mazzuca, 2022). State centralization is one the most fundamental aspects of the state. Before any extractive, coercive or administrative capacities can be fully developed, political power has to be centralized around the ruler of a polity.

Tilly (1990) also viewed state centralization as a defining trait of the premodern state. According to Tilly's (1990), state centralization characterizes a transition from indirect to direct rule. Under forms of indirect rule, central authorities delegate considerable administrative authority to local potentates, who secure political order over their respective regions while continuing to remain loyal to the central ruler. Indirect rule thus enables local elites to consolidate independent coercive powers that can potentially be utilized to threaten the centralized authority of the ruler. In contrast, under direct rule, administrative authority is solely concentrated in a central state administration. Societies controlled via direct rule deploy state administrators who possess no independent coercive power and can easily be removed from office by the ruler (e.g. Mamdani, 1996; Lange, 2009; Gerring et al., 2011; Garfias and Sellars, 2021).

This dissertation examines the long-run effects of state centralization. *Article 2*_(SUR) and *Article 3*_(REG) examine variations in state centralization that emerged with European colonization. European colonizers relied on a complex mix of indirect and direct forms of rule. In some places, Europeans tore down already existing indigenous institutions and replaced them with their own colonial administrations. In other areas, colonizers decided to keep indigenous institutions and rule indirectly through native intermediaries (Young, 1994; Mamdani, 1996; Herbst, 2000; Lange, 2009).

*Article 4*_(EFF) utilizes variation in state centralization that occurred with the Viking colonization of eastern England. Prior to the Viking conquest, three centralized kingdoms—Northumbria, Mercia and East Anglia—governed eastern England. Instead of focusing on state central-

ization around the ruler, *Article 4_(EFF)* looks at how strong and centralized local authority was regardless of whether it was exercised by the Crown, noblemen or clergy.

State stability is instrumental for state development. It refers to stable and durable ruler-elite relations. Ever since the first premodern states emerged millennia ago, rulers had to shore up support from other powerful individuals in order to govern society. No rulers in premodern times, or even today, possessed the power or the ability to build the state apparatus by themselves. Some kind of productive cooperation from other individuals is always required. Only when such relations among elites and rulers are fruitful and productive can powerful and capable premodern states begin to emerge (e.g. Kurrild-Klitgaard, 2000; Blaydes and Chaney, 2013; Kokkonen and Sundell, 2014; Wang, 2018; Kokkonen et al., 2021; Kokkonen, Møller and Sundell, 2022).

As Mancur Olson (1993) has pointed out, rulers who cannot trust the elite to remain loyal have few incentives to make long-run investments in state institutions. For example, rulers who expect that elites may challenge their regimes can only expect to stay on the throne for a short time. Under such circumstances, rulers have strong incentives not to invest in state institutions because they are likely not going to receive the gains from these investments. Instead, rulers are incentivized to enrich themselves as much as possible while they remain in power. As such, rulers with a short time horizon often become roving bandits who steal and expropriate production from society, leading to less state development. However, rulers who know that the elite will continue to support the regime can expect to be in office for longer periods of time. This promotes state building via taxation on people and trades because rulers know that the benefits from taxation will be there for them in the future.

Article 1_(STA) examines the conditions that produce hostile ruler-elite relations in precolonial African states. It focuses on the massive increase in demand for African slaves that occurred in 1680. It then links the rise of the transatlantic slave trade to shorter ruler duration (time rulers spend on the throne). After the increased demand for slaves in 1680, African rulers spent considerably less time on the throne because of negative economic and political incentives that encouraged elites to challenge and remove rulers. Over time, this hostile environment between rulers and elites significantly weakened state formation by reducing incentives to promote state-like institutions, such as administrative structures and systems of taxation.

2.2 Political Regimes

For most of human history, states have varied in size, strength and function. Some societies managed to create powerful institutions that spanned vast amounts of land, while smaller stateless societies had no centralized institutions. However, historical polities also differed on the type of regimes that governed the state. For example, Mazzuca (2010) draws on the work of Weber and separates states from regimes. The author defines the state by *exercise of power* while the regime is understood as *access to power*. The exercise of power is strongly linked to the state, as the previous section clearly demonstrated. However, control over the state apparatus is regulated via the regime.

An influential strand of research has been devoted to understanding the origins and effects of Europe's early political regimes (DeLong and Shleifer, 1993; Acemoglu, Johnson and Robinson, 2005b; Van Zanden, Buringh and Bosker, 2012; Bosker, Buringh and van Zanden, 2013; Stasavage, 2014; Puga and Trefler, 2014; Cox, 2017; Wahl, 2018; Doucette, N.d.). In some kingdoms, strong and independent parliamentary institutions constrained the power of the monarch. In other early European societies, rulers were considered absolute and experienced minimal constraints on their ability to exercise power. I follow David Stasavage (2020) and call the former societies early democracies and the latter early autocracies. While parliaments were a characteristic feature of Europe, they were not uniquely European. Many similar institutions emerged all around the globe at various points in history. Research on historical regimes outside of Europe has been largely overlooked by social science thus far (see for a few exceptions Giuliano and Nunn, 2013; Madsen, Raschky and Skali, 2015; Bentzen, Hariri and Robinson, 2017; Stasavage, 2020; Ahmed and Stasavage, 2020).

For most of human history, the majority of societies were early autocracies. In these societies, rulers often inherited their positions of power based on their noble birth. In polities outside the European continent, political power was normally inherited through two lineages: patrilineal or matrilineal. In patrilineal societies, political offices were inherited through the father's bloodline, while power instead passed on through the mother's ancestors in matrilineal societies (Baldwin, 2015). It was not only the right to the throne that was limited to a few privileged individuals; the way power could be exerted was also entirely up to the autocrat. To wield this absolute power, these autocrats were often aided by subordinates that the ruler had the right to select and control (Stasavage, 2020).

Things were different in early democracies. One important element of early democracy was that rulers were required to seek consent from a council before making decisions that affected society. Such councils could take many different forms. For the most part, the council consisted of powerful individuals that the ruler needed to consult before any major decision. Members of the councils were usually powerful elites independent from the ruler. In this sense, rulers were unable to remove councilors that proved to be a hindrance against the consolidation of centralized power. Similarly, rulers lacked the basic authority to add favorable and supportive members to the council. The independent position of councilors was made possible by their own political, economic and military power bases, which could be mobilized to challenge the ruler if necessary. The council also often possessed veto power over important decisions. For example, levying taxes on society, going to war against external enemies or approving of a new ruler were usually aspects that councilors had the veto power to oppose (Stasavage, 2020).

Whenever rulers of early democracies wished to rise to a position of power, they were often required to obtain the consent of the council. This consent could take various forms. In many societies, rulers were primarily selected through elections. Although such elections were not free and fair in the modern sense, they were nevertheless proto-democratic and highly inclusive for their time. In other early democracies, the selection of rulers was less inclusive. Here, political power was simply inherited. It was often due to their noble birth that rulers inherited the position of power (Muhlberger and Paine, 1993).

Many often view the institutional framework of ancient Athens as the world's first democracy. However, some aspects of the Athenian democracy are in fact fundamentally different from early democracy. The central feature of ancient Athens' democracy was the meetings of the national assembly, the so-called *Ecclesia*. Unlike early democracies, the *Ecclesia* was not comprised of a few selected individuals; rather, any adult citizen could partake in the meetings. The functions of the *Ecclesia* were broad, and included electing state officials, legislating new laws and prosecuting criminal offences (Stasavage, 2020, 30-34). In this respect, Athenian democracy was direct, which meant that citizens had direct influence over policy-making. However, in early democracies, citizens never directly affected governance. Instead, powerful elites who viewed themselves as representatives of different societal groups exercised authority on their behalves.

Early democracy is, obviously, also different from modern democracy. Although scholars continue to debate how modern democracy

should be defined, many usually associate it with a political system where representatives are elected in competitive elections under universal suffrage (e.g. Przeworski et al., 2000). Early democracy had features that resembled modern democracy, but it notably lacked the broad political participation of the entire population. Nor did the assemblies possess the same formal legal structure as parliaments today. They frequently lacked any formal legal authority, and their location was often never predetermined (Muhlberger and Paine, 1993; Stasavage, 2020).

Early democracy emerged in many different parts of the world. Although precolonial African societies were often believed to be autocratic and oppressive, many underexplored early democracies existed on the African continent. One prominent example is the Kingdom of Dahomey, located within present-day Benin. Dahomey was established in the early seventeenth century as the transatlantic slave trade was slowly beginning to emerge. As in most centralized societies, the king was the most powerful individual. However, the authority of the monarch was constrained by the Great Council. It comprised of over 300 members, each representing different groups in society, ranging from powerful ministers, regional elites, wealthy merchants to minor officials. The Great Council routinely met once a year in the capital city of Abomey, where elites traveled to the capital to discuss the most important political issues of the day. Because the council was the supreme decision-making body of the kingdom, the king and his close advisors also normally postponed decisions of great importance, such as matters on taxation or warfare, until the council convened each year (Yoder, 1974).⁴

Article 3_(REG) examines variation in early democracy across the developing world in order to examine its effects on contemporary development. I explore how ethnic groups selected their local leaders in the precolonial era. In particular, I look at whether ethnic groups selected leaders through elections or other formal means of consensus. There is substantial variation in early democracy across the developing world. Early democracy emerged independent from European influence on all continents around the globe. See Section 5.3 for more information and the locations of early democracies.

⁴See also, for example, the kingdoms of Benin (Osadolor, 2001), Ashanti (Wilks, 1975), Oyo (Law, 1991) and Kongo (Hilton, 1985) for similar institutions.

2.3 Colonization

This section conceptualizes colonization as a process in which a foreign power imposes formal or informal control over another geographically different territory for its own benefit. I distinguish between formal and informal colonization processes and utilize the history of the African continent to illustrate how they differ from each other. Lastly, the section introduces two classifications of European colonies.

Colonization is a challenging concept to define properly and objectively. It is a term one uses at considerable risk for two reasons. First, colonization has been defined in many diverse ways. Understandings of colonization are different among political scientists, sociologists and historians (e.g. Hobson, 1902; Horvath, 1972; Doyle, 1986; Abernethy, 2000; Parsons, 2012; Bang, Bayly and Scheidel, 2021). Second, colonization is also difficult to define because it has powerful emotional and normative connotations to many people. Numerous contemporary political, social and economic issues spur from colonial tragedies, such as the slave trades, forced labor institutions or genocides of indigenous people. It can be demanding to unpack such sensitive concepts and assign them descriptive meanings. However, abandoning objective definitions of colonization poses its own set of empirical issues. In this case, we become unable to scrutinize the origins, development and consequences of such an important political phenomenon.

A useful conceptualization of colonization has been proposed by Abernethy (2000, 22), who views it as a “set of formal policies, informal practices, and ideologies employed by a metropole to retain control of a colony and to benefit from control.” There are primarily two things to unpack from this definition. First, the central process of colonization entails the establishment of a colony. I view colonies as political entities that are formally or informally controlled by a geographically different political entity, called the metropole (e.g. Hobson, 1902; Horvath, 1972; Doyle, 1986; Abernethy, 2000; Parsons, 2012; Bang, Bayly and Scheidel, 2021). Colonization is then understood as a particular process where actors from a political entity, which can be everything from modern European powers to ancient city-states, leave their homeland and establish either formal or informal control over another political entity.

Second, colonization entails some kind of formal or informal control over a colony. Crucially, colonization cannot be fully comprehended without some understanding of power (see for example Dahl, 1961; Bachrach and Baratz, 1962; Lukes, 1974, for three seminal studies on power). The concept of power necessitates a relation among people. It

exists only when two or more parties interact (Abernethy, 2000, 29). Robert Dahl (1961, 203) has famously described power as when “*A* has power over *B* to the extent that he can get *B* to do something that *B* would not otherwise do.” In relation to the definition of colonization, the metropole then has power over a colony when it, through some means, can get the colony to do something it otherwise would not have done.

Moreover, it can be useful to conceptually separate between formal and informal colonization. Formal colonization requires a military and political conquest over another political entity. Only then does the colonial state formally claim the right to make authoritative decisions affecting the colony’s domestic affairs and external relations. Whenever formal colonization takes place, the colony loses its previous recognition as a sovereign state by other major actors in the interstate system. The colonial state often reinforces its control over the colony by establishing administrative and military structures that enable extraction of resources and domination of the indigenous people (Abernethy, 2000, 20). However, colonization can also transpire through informal domination. Under informal colonization, the colonial state never formally controls the territory or the decision-making process of the colony. Instead, the colonizer acquires its desired outcomes through informal domination. This influence can rest on the possible threat of military action or it could take the form of persuasion through trades, which enable colonizers to informally acquire economic resources or other desired outcomes. In this sense, less powerful polities voluntarily subordinate themselves to an informal colonizer in order to acquire either economic resources, status or military protection. Sometimes this informal control can become so dominant that other societies end up delivering outcomes they otherwise may not have (Parsons, 2012, 10).

The history of Africa nicely illustrates the key difference between informal and formal colonization. While formal colonization occurred in the late nineteenth century, Africa experienced an informal colonization centuries before Europeans formally conquered the continent. In the early fourteenth century, Europeans began to explore the African coastline (Headrick, 2010, chap. 1). When Europeans ventured down the coastline, they started founding small informal colonies, which consisted of military forts and factories (Lawrence, 1963). From such small outposts, Europeans established relationships with African rulers who possessed sufficiently developed institutions to facilitate trade (Hilton, 1985; Vansina, 1990). This launched the beginning of the infamous transatlantic trade. The early period of the trades between Europeans and Africans mostly consisted of the exchange of material goods. For

example, certain European merchandise such as luxurious textile materials and metal goods were primarily traded for Africa's natural resources, mainly ivory, animal species and gold (Manning, 1990; Law, 1991; Thomas, 1997; Lovejoy, 2000). However, with indigenous people increasingly dying of European diseases in the New World, colonizers in the Americas began demanding a new labor force to work on sugar plantations. The solution for Europeans was African slaves. This sparked the darkest and most brutal period in Africa's history: the transatlantic slave trade.⁵ Europeans' increased demand for African slaves initiated the rise of violence, lawlessness and banditry as African warlords began to raid villages and towns in order to acquire enslaved people for European merchants.

The informal colonization of Africa that emerged with the slave trade had massive consequences for the continent. Throughout history, Africa has always been characterized by very low population density, effectively meaning that people were the most valuable assets in Africa. Why would Africans export people, their most valuable assets, to Europeans? In his seminal study on African development, Walter Rodney (1972) argues that Africans were forced to deliver captives due to informal colonization by Europeans. Many African rulers initially opposed the slave trade. However, Europeans exploited the import of firearms to play African polities against each other. The introduction of firearms initiated an arms race between monarchs and other power holders. Rulers and elites who were not willing to participate in slave trading to acquire firearms often significantly reduced their power and influence (Reid, 2012). Rodney (1972, 92-93) provides an interesting example from Dahomey in modern-day Benin. In the 1720s, Dahomey began to oppose slave trading because it recognized the massive internal instability it created. For a few years, Dahomey successfully terminated slave trading in its territory. As a response to Dahomey, European slave traders began to sponsor other African polities with firearms, which could be used against Dahomey. Anxious about the increased firepower of its neighbors, Dahomey agreed to resume slave trading with Europeans in 1730. This illustrates the informal power Europeans had over Africans. Even though many rulers opposed the export of people, the military and economic power of the Europeans, in the words of Dahl (1961), made Africans do something that they would not have done otherwise.

⁵Besides the well-known transatlantic slave trade, Africa also suffered from three less well-known, smaller slave trades: the Indian, Red Sea, and trans-Saharan trades (Law, 1991, chap. 1).

While smaller European colonies had controlled the coastline for centuries, the formal colonization of the African interior started around 1860 and lasted for roughly 50 years.⁶ During this 50-year period, Europeans signed hundreds of bilateral and multilateral agreements with indigenous monarchs and chiefs, effectively splitting the continent into different European colonies. The most important event that came to symbolize the colonization of Africa was the Berlin Conference, which took place between 1884 and 1885 (Michalopoulos and Papaioannou, 2020). While the conference was primarily established to deal with the increasing tension between European powers in Africa, it also laid down the rules for how the so-called “Scramble for Africa” should be conducted over the subsequent years. In 1910, almost all of Africa had been carved out by European colonial powers (Chamberlain, 2010, 53). For the next 40 years, African monarchs, chiefs and locals on the ground became part of the vast colonial empires of Europe.

Social science scholars have proposed different ways to classify European colonies. The first type concerns demographics and distinguishes between settler and non-settler colonies. This distinction refers to how many people from the metropole settled in the colony. In settler colonies, numerous citizens from the metropole migrated to the colony, while few or no metropolitan inhabitants resided permanently in non-settler colonies (e.g. Horvath, 1972; Abernethy, 2000; Veracini, 2010).⁷ This separation is also related to Acemoglu, Johnson and Robinson’s (2001) influential claim that Europeans created extractive and inclusive colonial states. Acemoglu, Johnson and Robinson (2001) argue that the form of colonial rule was shaped by the initial disease environment that the European settlers faced. In temperate areas, such as North America and Australia, mortality rates were low enough so that the European colonizers could establish settlements on a larger scale. As a consequence of European settlement, these areas developed inclusive institutions characterized by representative democracies and strong protection of property rights. However, in areas where the mortality rate was high, Europeans did not settle but instead developed extractive institutions, whose main purpose was to exploit the economic and natural resources of the colony (see also Acemoglu, Johnson and Robinson, 2005a; Acemoglu and Robinson, 2012).

⁶It should be noted that the colonization of South Africa started sooner, in 1652 by Dutch and subsequent British settlers (Abernethy, 2000).

⁷Austin (2008) also distinguishes between four different types of African colonies: (i) settler-plantation colonies with large European communities; (ii) settler-concession colonies with a smaller-to-medium European presence; (iii) non-settler peasant colonies with unfavorable agricultural conditions; (iv) non-settler colonies based on agriculture.

Another important distinction is between direct and indirect colonial rule (see Section 2.1 for more information). In relation to the European colonial adventure, Frederick Lugard, an influential British administrator, introduced the modern form of indirect rule in Nigeria, where the British depended on the politically centralized Muslim kingdoms as part of the colonial administration. In many British protectorates and colonies, colonizers ruled the hinterlands through local chiefs and headmen. On the other hand, in French-administered areas, the colonial state primarily attempted to centralize political power and rule the hinterlands with European administrators or by educating a small and privileged local elite (Whittlesey, 1937; Crowder, 1964; Mamdani, 1996). Crowder (1964) concisely summarizes the difference between British and French colonial rule: "The British system depended on the advisory relationship between the political officer and the native authority, usually a chief, heading a local government unit that corresponded to a pre-colonial political unit. The French system placed the chief in an entirely subordinate role to the political officer."

However, this dichotomous understanding of the difference between direct and indirect colonial rule is problematic. The binary distinction between direct and indirect colonial rule often becomes empirically blurred, as colonizers tended to apply a mixed approach, where both direct and indirect colonial rule were utilized within the same colony. For example, European colonial states adopted a variety of strategies to adjust to the diverse set of social, economic and geographic circumstances they faced (Frankema and van Waijenburg, 2014). Similarly, the autonomy of native rulers differed significantly, as did their roles as European colonial administrators (Crowder, 1964; Berry, 1992).

Colonization did not start or end with Europeans. Many major and minor civilizations throughout history have been colonizers at some point. Centuries before the modern colonization of the world, the European continent experienced the emergence and fall of various colonies. For example, in the period between the eleventh and sixth centuries BCE, the ancient city-states of Greece established numerous urban colonies around the southern European coastline (e.g. Ober, 2016). By the late sixth century BCE, an astonishing 400,000 Greeks, corresponding to a third of the total population, lived outside the Aegean Sea (e.g. Morris, 2005).⁸ Over a millennium later, medieval monarchs in Europe initiated crusades against non-Christians not only in the Holy Lands but also in Eastern Europe. These crusades and later conquests produced a range of

⁸Chronopoulos et al. (2020) provide empirical evidence that this ancient colonization continues to affect economic outcomes around the Mediterranean Sea today.

Christian colonies in the homelands of the Baltic, Finnic and West Slavic peoples (see Christiansen, 1998).⁹

Another important colonization process was the one that the Vikings initiated. The Viking colonization of medieval Europe consisted of a long range of different colonization processes. For example, the Vikings created flourishing colonies in the British Isles, The Faroe Islands, Iceland, Greenland, Normandy and the Baltic, and they were even the first Europeans to briefly settle in North America. However, the most notable of them all was the colonization of medieval England. Before the first Vikings arrived on the British Isles in 793, England was divided into four kingdoms: Wessex, Mercia, East Anglia and Northumbria. All four kingdoms were politically independent from each other and consisted of early-centralized state institutions. However, during the Viking invasion from 865 to 878, armies of Viking raiders gradually managed to conquer the great kingdoms of Mercia, East Anglia and Northumbria one at a time, leaving Wessex as the last independent English kingdom. When the invasion ended in 878, the Vikings had conquered and colonized large parts of eastern and northern England. It was the laws of the Danes that governed these areas, and therefore they became known as the Danelaw (e.g. Richards, 2000; Carroll, Harrison and Williams, 2014).

The settlement of Danelaw took place over several years. In 874, early on in the invasion of England, the Viking army divided itself into two parts. One part went to Northumbria with Halfdan, the famous son of Ragnar Lodbrok, to settle in the northern part of England. The other part of the army later followed Guthrum and went to settle in East Anglia and parts of Mercia. Across all the areas of the Danelaw, archaeologists have found evidence that the Viking settlement was substantial, with an estimated of 35,000 settled Vikings after the conquest (Kershaw and Røyrvik, 2016).

This division of land among the Vikings had important implications for the institutional development of England. Several historians propose that the Viking settlement was a critical juncture that produced a weak local authority structure in eastern England (Loyn, 1994, 95-98; Richards, 2000, 50-52; Wickham, 2010, 465; Townend, 2014, 95-112). After the collapse of Mercia, East Anglia and Northumbria, Viking rulers needed to reward their loyal followers. They did so by breaking down the previously large and centralized estates of east England into smaller and weaker parcels and handing them out as rewards to loyal supporters. The new Viking landowners emerging from this fragmented estate struc-

⁹Blaydes and Paik (2016) present empirical evidence on the long-run effects of the crusades on premodern economic and political development.

ture were in turn allowed personal authority over these smaller estates (Townend, 2014), which produced a weak and highly decentralized local power structure (Baker and Brookes, 2013; Molyneaux, 2015). Consequently, strong and centralized institutions that had previously been built around powerful estates now became fragmented and replaced by a weaker and decentralized local power structure.

To briefly summarize, this chapter has reviewed different conceptualizations of states, political regimes and colonization. Extractive, coercive and administrative capacities are the key traits that have defined strong and capable premodern states through human history. Premodern states also had different kinds of political regimes. In early democracy, political power was constrained by popular assemblies, while authority was solely vested in the individual ruler in early autocracy. Lastly, the chapter conceptualized colonization as a process in which a foreign power imposes formal or informal control over another geographically different territory for its own benefit.

Chapter 3

Theoretical Framework

Chapter 3 presents the theoretical framework of the dissertation. It is divided into four parts, each presenting the theoretical arguments of the four self-contained articles. The first part presents a theoretical framework that explains the political logic that creates a stable equilibrium in ruler-elite relations and how negative shocks to the coercive power of the ruler can make that equilibrium collapse. The second part explains why some indigenous African institutions survived colonial rule while others were destroyed in the process. The third part argues that precolonial forms of early democracy became important for long-run development in areas far from colonial capitals. The fourth part presents theoretical arguments for the long-run dynamics of premodern states on economic and political development.

3.1 Political Stability of Precolonial African Institutions

Why do some rulers experience longevity in political office while others only manage to remain on the throne for a few years? Prominent scholars, ranging from Machiavelli (1988) to Montesquieu (1977) to Tullock (1987), have for centuries wrestled with this timeless question. Within the last two decades, political scientists and economists have devoted rigorous theoretical and empirical effort to studying politics in both modern and historical autocratic societies (e.g. Blaydes and Chaney, 2013; Kokkonen and Sundell, 2014; Kokkonen, Møller and Sundell, 2022; Svolik, 2012; Geddes, Wright and Frantz, 2018; Miller, 2020). To understand changes in ruler-elite relations, I develop a theoretical framework that explains why some autocrats enjoy stability in office and how certain shocks can alter this durable political equilibrium.

Historical societies, obviously, were complex entities consisting of a diverse set of actors. However, the ruler and a class of political elites were

two actors that dominated politics in premodern states. In most premodern states, the ruler was often the most influential actor in terms of social, economic and political power. The primary base of the ruler's power came from his or her authority to extract revenue from society. As described in detail in the previous chapter, the kind and amount of revenue rulers extracted has changed throughout history. In today's world, most state revenue comes from taxation on personal income. However, in premodern times, revenue was a very broad term, ranging from collecting taxes in monetary form to simple tributes consisting of foodstuffs. Rulers built and consolidated extractive, coercive and administrative structures of power by utilizing resources from revenue extraction. Elites in premodern times, meanwhile, were a broad political class that consisted of powerful ministers, regional elites, wealthy merchants and the high clergy. Elites primarily derived political power from the administrative or military offices that the rulers allowed them to occupy, while also possessing some independent economic resources and military power in the form of loyal followers who were often outside the direct influence of the ruler.

For most of history, rulers have generally faced two main threats from within their own regimes: threats from other elites and threats from the masses. While the masses can play a central role in the irregular removal of leaders in contemporary autocracies, the threat from elites is present in virtually all autocracies regardless of place and historical period (e.g. Blaydes and Chaney, 2013; Kokkonen and Sundell, 2014; Kokkonen, Møller and Sundell, 2022). My theoretical framework thus only focuses on threats from elites.

The ruler can establish support and loyalty from elites with a combination of repression and reward. First, rulers who have accumulated enough administrative and military resources can confront elites with the dilemma of either supporting the regime or being eliminated from the ruling coalition, thus facing expropriation of property, imprisonment or even death (e.g. Svolik, 2012). Second, rulers can also provide elites with economic rewards in order to secure political support. The prerogative to extract revenue from society provides rulers with resources, which can be redistributed as rent to important political allies (e.g. Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2003). A stable political equilibrium can therefore emerge when rulers are powerful enough to coerce elite allies into compliance and wealthy enough to provide sufficient economic benefits to sustain political support. The result of this political equilibrium is a ruler who is able to stay in power for long periods of time.

In recent years, political scientists have empirically examined historical factors that promote such a stable political equilibrium (e.g. Kurrild-Klitgaard, 2000; Blaydes and Chaney, 2013; Kokkonen and Sundell, 2014; Wang, 2018; Kokkonen et al., 2021; Kokkonen, Møller and Sundell, 2022). For example, Blaydes and Chaney (2013) have demonstrated that the feudal military organization of Western Europe increased political stability among European monarchs. They argue that such feudal military organizations empowered the nobility at the expense of monarchs, thereby facilitating the advent of representative institutions that became the foundation for political stability. Another prominent example is Kokkonen and Sundell (2014), who argue that certain succession rules created political stability among European monarchs. In particular, succession rules on primogeniture were favorable to political stability because they provided security for elites that future benefits from the regime would remain after the successor took office (see also Kokkonen, Møller and Sundell, 2022).

In *Article 1_(SUR)*, I explain why a durable political equilibrium between rulers and elite can collapse. The article focuses on how negative shocks to coercive power can change the political logic that previously held the political equilibrium together. Rulers can remain in power for long periods of time when they possess the coercive means to resist potential challenges from other elites in the forms of coups or civil wars. However, shocks that diminish the coercive capacity of the ruler can provide incentives for elites to seize power by removing the incumbent ruler because they decrease the costs of challenging the centralized authority. In other words, shocks that significantly diminish the power of the ruler vis-a-vis the elite can provide a window of opportunity for potential challengers to remove the weakened ruler via coups.

Article 1_(SUR) focuses on the implications of the transatlantic slave trade, arguably the largest and most significant shock that struck the African continent before the advent of colonial rule. More precisely, the article examines the sudden increased demand for African slaves that occurred in 1680. The sudden and massive demand for enslaved people that occurred with the transatlantic slave trade had widespread consequences for political stability in precolonial Africa. Through this brutal exchange, Europeans provided African elites not only with the means to enslave people on a massive scale, but also provided African elites with the coercive means to replace incumbent rulers. The introduction of firearms into Africa was arguably the most significant technical innovation to arrive from the Atlantic trade (Northrup, 2014, 97). This new weapons technology fundamentally increased the coercive power of elites

at the expense of rulers, which enabled them to exploit the weakening position of the ruler to initiate a coup.

3.2 The Survival of African Indigenous Institutions

In most developed countries, citizens are primarily governed by the state and its sophisticated administrative infrastructure. However, African countries exhibit far greater complexity in their administrative organizations. Despite variation across the continent, African polities have experienced an institutional dualism of power since European colonization in the late nineteenth century. A complex mix of state institutions and traditional structures of power govern African countries today (e.g. Ekeh, 1975; Migdal, 1988; Englebert, 2002; Kohli, 2004; Kyed and Buur, 2007; Holzinger, Kern and Kromrey, 2016; Baldwin and Holzinger, 2019).

Traditional authorities perform a variety of important functions, including dispute settlement, natural resources management and allocation of land (e.g. Ubink, 2008; Logan, 2013; Baldwin, 2015). It is primarily in rural areas far from the national power center in the capital that traditional authorities exert an important influence on social, economic and political issues. Significant policies spanning from the establishment of basic transportation infrastructure, schools and hospitals to conflict resolution can all be issues handled by local traditional leaders and not the state. African traditional authorities are also marked by great diversity. Some traditional leaders are in control of relatively centralized structures of power, while others lack such institutions. Leaders of traditional institutions can include chiefs, kings, headmen, queen mothers, councils of elders and so on (Holzinger, Kern and Kromrey, 2016). The authority of traditional institutions is based on customary law, which had its historical origins in the precolonial era (Baldwin, 2015). In this sense, traditional institutions are deeply rooted in the precolonial past. However, many indigenous institutions experienced fundamental change with European colonization. Colonizers sometimes integrated traditional authorities into the colonial administration and employed indirect rule to govern natives through preexisting institutions. At other times, the Europeans dismantled traditional authorities, to rule directly through their own colonial institutions (e.g. Crowder, 1968; Mamdani, 1996).

Because of differences in colonial rule, there is substantial variation in traditional authorities within contemporary Africa. While some African countries consist of many different traditional structures, oth-

ers have few or none at all. Why then did some indigenous institutions survive colonial rule while others were destroyed in the process?

Two bodies of theory currently dominate research on the survival of indigenous African institutions. First, many social science scholars emphasize the importance of precolonial institutions (e.g. Fortes and Evans-Pritchard, 1940; Hicks, 1961; Tignor, 1971; Gerring et al., 2011; Müller-Crepon, 2020). This strand of literature argues that it was mainly centralized precolonial institutions that survived and became an integral part of the colonial administration. Colonizers kept such powerful institutions as tools for indirect rule, which enabled European powers to govern Africans through native structures of authority. In acephalous, stateless societies, colonizers could not rely on readily available hierarchical institutions. Instead, Europeans established new colonial institutions from which they directly administered native people. For example, in places without sufficiently centralized political structures, colonial powers often invented new “traditional” authorities, known as warrant chiefs. This was a form of direct rule, where these new chiefs became agents of the colonial state (Hicks, 1961; Tignor, 1971).

Second, other scholars draw attention to the identity of the colonizer as another important determinant of the survival of indigenous institutions (e.g. Whittlesey, 1937; Crowder, 1964; Crowder and Ikime, 1970; Crowder, 1968; Hailey, 1945; Miles, 1994; Müller-Crepon, 2020). In particular, this concerns the difference between British and French styles of colonial rule. According to this theory, the British relied on indirect colonial rule, which meant that indigenous rulers became important allies for the colonial state. The British often left native institutions with their preexisting executive, legislative and judiciary powers intact. Such preexisting institutions then became part of the colonial administration. The French, on the other hand, exhibited a tendency to rule their colonies more directly. Instead of collaborating with indigenous rulers, the French strove to establish a uniform system of direct rule based on colonial administrative infrastructures. Many preexisting institutions were therefore dismantled in order to make room for the incoming institutional framework inspired by France.

There are two problems with these explanations. First, while centralized indigenous institutions were an important foundation for indirect rule, many indigenous states were demolished by the British, French or other European empires (Crowder, 1968). For example, the British, the proponents of indirect rule, dismantled the Ashanti kingdom, one of the strongest and most powerful precolonial states at the eve of European colonization in the late nineteenth century. Although the Ashanti king-

dom was revived decades later, its institutions never reached the same prominence as they had in the precolonial era (Tordoff, 1968). Second, theoretical considerations formed using the colonizer's identity are also problematic. This particular theory cannot tell us why colonies with the same colonizer were administered differently. In fact, all European empires in Africa relied on both direct and indirect colonial rule (Mamdani, 1996; Herbst, 2000; Gerring et al., 2011). The British, for instance, heavily relied upon indirect colonial rule in Nigeria, while large parts of South Africa were administered directly through the colonial state. The weaknesses of the current theories call for another explanation of the survival of African indigenous states.

Article 2_(SUR) presents a new theory. The article argues that in order to understand the survival of indigenous states, we need to disaggregate the distribution of early colonial power. Only by understanding where the colonial state was strong and weak locally can we start to explain which traditional states survived colonial rule. The early sources of colonial power begin many centuries before the formal colonization of Africa. In the early fourteenth century, the first Europeans started to establish various permanent fortresses from which they conducted trade with other precolonial kingdoms. Over the span of the next five centuries, Europeans managed to create an extensive network of fortresses across the West African coastline. All of these initial European settlements became important administrative and military strongholds from which the colonial state could dominate and control native people (e.g. Lawrence, 1963; DeCorse, 2010; Osei-Tutu, 2018). Most colonial power was therefore centered around early colonial fortresses, while hinterland areas in the interior were often outside the reach of the colonial administration (Herbst, 2000).

This uneven distribution of early colonial power shaped the institutional framework of the colonial state. In areas close to colonial fortresses, Europeans possessed the required military infrastructure to dismantle indigenous states. In their stead, the Europeans substituted the traditional structures of power with their own new colonial institutions. However, in hinterland areas, far from colonial forts along the coastline, tearing down indigenous states was difficult and costly because of the lack of military prowess. Instead, colonizers kept traditional polities intact and ruled native people indirectly through indigenous rulers.

3.3 The Economic Legacy of Early Democracy

State institutions have been important for long-run development. However, other institutions also matter for development. Rulers throughout history have exploited the authority of the state apparatus to either promote growth-enhancing policies or engage in self-enriching tactics. Historically, and even in today's world, political regimes create important incentives for ruler behavior. When power is limited, as it is in early and modern democracy, rulers often have strong incentives to not engage in self-enriching tactics and instead promote growth-enhancing policies.

For decades now, political science and economics research has asserted that democracy is associated with enhanced economic activity (see Doucouliagos and Ulubaşoğlu, 2008; Knutsen, 2012; Colagrossi, Rossignoli and Maggioni, 2020; Ghardallou and Sridi, 2020; Knutsen, 2021, for recent reviews of the literature). Previously, much empirical work (before ca. 2000s) found mixed results on the relationship between democracy and growth (e.g. Sirowy and Inkeles, 1990; Przeworski and Limongi, 1993; Barro, 1996; Brunetti, 1997; Przeworski et al., 2000). For example, in a seminal review article, Przeworski and Limongi (1993) emphasized that empirical studies discovered negative, positive and null effects of democracy on economic activity. From this review of the literature, Przeworski and Limongi (1993) concluded that democracy appears to have no systematic effect on economic growth.

However, more recent research typically finds positive effects of democracy on economic activity (e.g. Persson and Tabellini, 2006; Papaioannou and Siourounis, 2008; Bates, Fayad and Hoeffler, 2012; Magee and Dores, 2015; Gründler and Krieger, 2016), although some studies present null effects (e.g. Baum and Lake, 2003; Murin and Wacziarg, 2014). One notable recent study on the positive effects of democracy on growth is Acemoglu et al. (2019). Using novel data on democracy combined with a range of different estimation strategies, such as propensity score reweighting and instrumental variables, Acemoglu et al. (2019) present convincing evidence that transition to democracy increases GDP per capita by about 20 percent in the long run.

Other studies stress that it is not being a democracy that matters for economic activity, but instead a country's historical experience with democracy. Societies with a long history of democracy tend to perform better on a long range of economic indicators (Gerring et al., 2005; Persson and Tabellini, 2009). Such studies point to the importance of the long-run effects of democracy on development. Although this historical

perspective is a welcome opportunity to take the literature in a new direction, these studies only use data from 1800 to the present day—and the history of the world obviously began before the modern era.

An influential strand of literature suggests that early democracy (representative assemblies) was important for the emergence of sustained economic development within Europe (North and Thomas, 1973; North and Weingast, 1989; North, 1990; Acemoglu and Robinson, 2012). This institutional framework placed tight constraints on the monarchs of Europe, thereby ensuring the rule of law and the protection of property rights for the economic elite. Over time, these institutions sparked the unprecedented development Europe has experienced within the last two centuries.

A new emerging empirical literature now supports such theoretical considerations (e.g. DeLong and Shleifer, 1993; Acemoglu, Johnson and Robinson, 2005*b*; Van Zanden, Buringh and Bosker, 2012; Bosker, Buringh and van Zanden, 2013; Stasavage, 2014; Puga and Trefler, 2014; Cox, 2017; Wahl, 2018; Doucette, N.d.), although some scholars suggest that the causal relation runs the other way (Abramson and Boix, 2019; Stasavage, 2020). In an early study, DeLong and Shleifer (1993) document that European medieval societies without an absolute prince grew more economically. DeLong and Shleifer (1993) argue that absolutist princes were concerned with the yields of their tax revenue. In order to maximize their revenue, rulers often taxed their populations too hard, thereby crippling the economy. Van Zanden, Buringh and Bosker (2012) also equivalently document a strong positive relationship between medieval cities with representative assemblies and economic development. Van Zanden, Buringh and Bosker (2012) argue that constraints on the executive, such as a functioning parliament, facilitated the efficiency of the economy by protecting the elite's property rights.

While early democracy was crucial for development within Europe, historical societies outside the European continent also established similar institutions (e.g. Muhlberger and Paine, 1993; Congleton, 2001; Sabbetti, 2004; Stasavage, 2020). However, less is known about the long-run effects of early democracy outside of Europe.¹ For example, Giuliano and Nunn (2013) show in their cross-country regressions that there exists an association between traditional village democracy, current institutions and income per capita at a country level. Similarly, Madсен, Raschky and Skali (2015) document a cross-country relationship be-

¹Bentzen, Hariri and Robinson (2017) also focus on early democracy, but only examine its long-run effects on modern democracy. Bentzen, Hariri and Robinson (2017) find that early democracy is most likely to persist in indigenous groups who were relatively strong compared to the state.

tween changes in indigenous democracy and income in the period 1500 to 2000.

The relationship between early democracy and contemporary development outside of Europe has been empirically unexplored. The literature lacks a good argument for why democratic institutions established hundreds of years ago continue to affect modern development.

In *Article 3_(REG)* I utilize the argument from Section 3.2 on the developing world in order to examine the long-run effects of the survival of early democracy on modern development. *Article 3_(REG)* proposes that early democracy only affects modern development in places far from colonial power in capital cities. Why would early democracy lead to more development in the long run? *Article 3_(REG)* argues that rent-seeking was significantly lower in places governed by early democratic institutions. In particular, the councils and assemblies of early democracy created forums through which society could control and monitor the behavior of rulers. This produced strong incentives for rulers to minimize rent-seeking. Instead, the institutional checks imposed by early democracy created incentives to govern in accordance with the interest of the community. As a result, rulers were more likely to use resources to deliver public goods and other growth-enhancing policies. Over time, the political structures of early democracy laid the economic foundation for long-run development.

3.4 The Long-Run Effects of Premodern States

Institutions are important determinants of long-run economic development. An influential strand of literature within social science now suggests that institutions constitute one of the fundamental causes of development (North and Thomas, 1973; North, 1990; Jones, 1988; North, Wallis and Weingast, 2009; Acemoglu, Johnson and Robinson, 2005a; Acemoglu and Robinson, 2012). One of the most important institutions for development is the state. Within the last two decades, empirical social science work has provided support for the idea that premodern states stimulated development in times before the industrial era (e.g. Englebert, 2000; Bockstette, Chanda and Putterman, 2002; Gennaioli and Rainer, 2007; Acemoglu et al., 2011; Michalopoulos and Papaioannou,

2013; Acemoglu, García-Jimeno and Robinson, 2015; Dincecco and Katz, 2016; Angeles and Elizalde, 2017; Dell, Lane and Querubin, 2018).²

In an early contribution, Bockstette, Chanda and Putterman (2002) constructed a novel measure of state antiquity to examine its effects on development throughout history. Bockstette, Chanda and Putterman (2002) document that modern countries with longer histories of organized states experience higher levels of income today (see also Putterman and Weil, 2010). Since the movement towards the Credibility Revolution in the 1990s (Angrist and Pischke, 2010), empirical social science research has utilized sophisticated econometric techniques to estimate causal effects of state institutions. One noteworthy example is Dell, Lane and Querubin (2018), who exploit exogenous border drawing between strong and weak premodern states in Southeast Asia. Using this boundary as a geographic regression discontinuity design, Dell, Lane and Querubin (2018) find that villages within strong premodern states experience significantly more development (see also Acemoglu et al., 2011; Fenske, 2014; Alsan, 2015; Lowes et al., 2017, for other studies with strong identification strategies).

Premodern states can promote development through a complex set of causal channels, but arguably the most prominent ones are public goods provision, market regulation and control of violence (e.g. Besley and Persson, 2011; Bardhan, 2016; Johnson and Koyama, 2017; Dincecco, 2017). First, the provision of transportation infrastructure (e.g. roads, bridges and so on) is crucial for any well-functioning economy. Such infrastructure can significantly reduce the cost of products and easily facilitate trade relationships between various market actors. For example, Dalgaard et al. (2022) study the economic effects of the extensive network of Roman roads on long-run development. The authors find that areas with a higher density of Roman roads experienced increased premodern development and even show that this has a persistent effect on income today (see also Jedwab, Kerby and Moradi, 2017; Jedwab and Storeygard, 2019).

Second, market regulation is another important channel. Well-functioning markets provide the necessary conditions for sustained economic growth over time. Strong states can enable the enforcement of well-defined property rights, which constitute the foundation for efficient economies. Institutions for property rights provide clarity and certainty for interaction among market actors today and in the future. Several empirical studies now document the positive effects of secure

²See Bardhan (2016); Johnson and Koyama (2017) for two recent reviews of the literature.

property rights on long-run development (e.g. Acemoglu, Johnson and Robinson, 2001; Cox, 2017).

Third, another prominent channel is political instability. Weak states often lack the necessary institutional capacity to prevent widespread political violence and instability (e.g. Fearon and Laitin, 2003). Under circumstances influenced by uncertainty, it is obviously difficult, from an economic perspective, to imagine any kind of economic activity. If people constantly fear that their production or belongings will be destroyed by violent individuals, they will have minimal incentive to work, let alone invest and innovate. This view has most prominently been articulated by Olson (1993). In his seminal work, Olson (1993) argues that anarchy and weak states distort incentives to invest and produce goods because roving bandits destroy or steal whatever the population produces or invests in (see also Olson, 2000).

However, premodern states can also affect outcomes other than development. For example, several influential scholars have proposed that strong state institutions are a necessary condition for the emergence of political liberty (Schumpeter, 1942; Huntington, 1968; Fukuyama, 2005). However, there are theoretical reasons to believe that strong states instead are oppressive and therefore can provide an environment that is a hindrance for liberty. A prominent explanation for the emergence of political freedom is the balance of power between rulers and society (e.g. Acemoglu and Robinson, 2006; Miller, 2020; Stasavage, 2020). Stasavage (2020), for example, suggests that early democracy thrived when premodern states were weak. When rulers lacked authority due to weaker state institutions, they often had no other alternative than to govern with the assistance of society. Under such conditions many early popular assemblies emerged where rulers and powerful actors governed together (see also Reynolds, 1997; Moore, 2000; Oakley, 2010; Wickham, 2010; Bartlett, 2014; Siedentop, 2014; Scott, 2017). Recent empirical studies also appear to support the conclusion that weak premodern states contributed to the emergence of parliaments and self-governing cities (Blaydes and Chaney, 2013; Kokkonen and Møller, 2020; Doucette and Møller, 2020).

Article 4_(EFF) combines both of these strands of research to argue that historically weak states have stunted long-run development but also promoted political rights among the lower classes of society. First, the article argues that weak premodern states failed to stimulate development because they were unable to secure a peaceful internal order within the polity. Instead, weak states were plagued by widespread theft and violence against the central authority. Second, when structures of power

become significantly weakened, it can produce a fundamental shift in the balance of power between rulers and society. Strong and centralized coercive institutions have historically provided rulers and elites with political authority to control and dominate society. Whenever such institutions are weakened, it significantly diminishes the political power of local lords vis-a-vis society. A fundamental negative shock to state institutions can therefore provide society with a unique opportunity to exploit weaker rulers and fight for better political rights.

Chapter 4

Empirical Designs

The research questions of this dissertation aim at uncovering the emergence, development and consequences of premodern states. It therefore attempts to establish credible causal inference. However, identifying causal effects is, of course, challenging. This is especially the case for social scientists, who examine the tangled web of social reality, where numerous unobservable factors can confound the analysis and where reciprocity between studied variables makes it difficult to know which ones are causes and which are effects.

When empirical researchers attempt to establish causal effects, they encounter the so-called “fundamental problem of causal inference” (Holland, 1986; Angrst and Pischke, 2009). In short, this problem states that we, as researchers, can only observe one outcome for each unit that we study. Say, for example, that we are interested in estimating the effect of indirect colonial rule on the probability that African indigenous states survive the colonial period. Here, we can only observe what happens to indigenous state i if it experiences indirect rule. However, we are never able to know what would have happened if i had been governed through direct rule. This is the fundamental problem. We never observe the counterfactual. Instead, we are forced to compare i , which received the treatment of indirect rule, with indigenous state j , which did not receive the treatment.

In this sense, credible causal inference is all about finding the best counterfactual to compare with. The gold standard for making a reliable comparison is through an experiment where units are randomly assigned to treatment and control groups. Obviously, this strategy is not useful for the present study because I am unable to randomly assign premodern states to different historical developments. Instead, I rely on various empirical strategies, which Chapter 4 explains in detail.

4.1 Fixed Effects and Difference-in-Differences

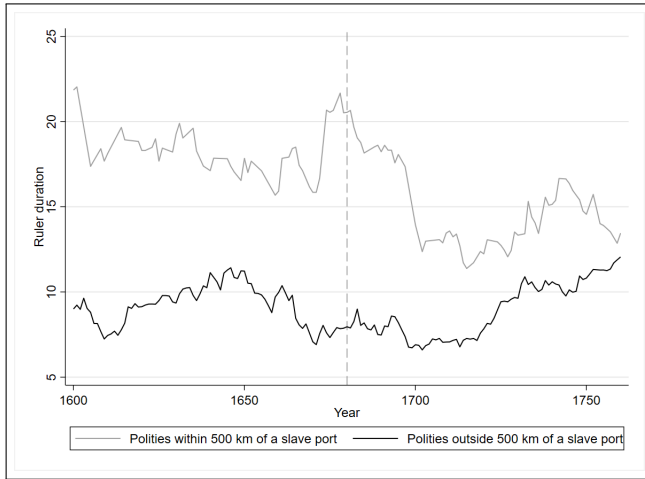
One issue when comparing the historical development of premodern states is that other unobservable factors confound the empirical analysis. The omission of such factors can be distributed across space and time. Related to the issue of space, instead of different colonization processes, other geographic features can also explain the emergence, development and consequences of premodern states. For example, some places may have had favorable agricultural conditions that facilitated the emergence of urban settlement and later the creation of state-like institutions. Not accounting for these geographic factors can, obviously, led to bias estimates.

Article 3_(REG) and *Article 4_(EFF)* exploit fixed effects to partially account for unobservable spatial factors. Fixed effects rely on the logic that units closer to each other in space will be similar on a range of other factors. For example, *Article 3_(REG)* uses variation in early democracy among precolonial ethnic groups to estimate its long-run effects on modern development. Other factors at the country level could possibly confound this analysis. Characteristics such as particular cultural traits, institutions or colonial legacies at the national level are likely to be factors that confound the relationship between early democracy and modern development. To overcome such issues, *Article 3_(REG)* exploits country fixed effects, which simply means that it only compares ethnic groups within the same country. This is a useful approach because omitted factors associated with the country can be accounted for empirically.

Article 4_(EFF) utilizes a similar approach. The article is interested in estimating the long-run effects of weak state institutions on economic and political development in medieval England. Medieval England was divided into 34 counties and 810 hundreds, each composed of numerous manors, which constituted the smallest administrative unit. *Article 4_(EFF)* examines premodern state centralization across manors on economic and political outcomes. To account for other spatially distributed factors, the empirical design in *Article 4_(EFF)* only compares manors within the same county. The design is thus able to remove much variation associated with county-specific factors, such as geography, local institutions and other historical factors, that could possibly confound the results.

Article 1_(STA) and *Article 2_(SUR)* improve on the previous designs by accounting for other unobservable factors that are distributed across space as well as time. In particular, *Article 1_(STA)* and *Article 2_(SUR)*

Figure 4.1: Trends in Ruler Durations



Note: The gray line shows the 25-year moving average for African rulers who reside within 500 kilometers of a European slave port while the dark line indicates tenures for African rulers that are located more than 500 kilometers from slave ports. The dotted line is centered on the year 1680.

both utilize a difference-in-differences approach. *Article 1*_(STA) examines the effect of slave trading on ruler duration in precolonial Africa, while *Article 2*_(SUR) estimates the effect of colonial forts on the probability that African states survive the colonial period.

There are two general benefits to this approach. First, because the difference-in-differences design examines changes over time, it excludes all possible covariates that are constant within the given time period. Put simply, this approach relies on within-polity variation and therefore only compares African states with themselves over time. The logic here is that African states are much more similar to themselves than to other states across space. In this respect, it greatly improves on the previous fixed effects approach. Second, the difference-in-differences approach can also control for any time shocks that affect all units similarly by including year fixed effects. For example, impactful events that affect the African continent, such as global economic or political crises, can be accounted for empirically.

The central assumption of the difference-in-differences design is that African states who received treatments (i.e. those states affected by slave

trading in *Article 1*_(STA) and colonial rule in *Article 2*_(SUR)) would have followed similar trends over time in the absence of any treatment. This is also known as the parallel trend assumption (Angrst and Pischke, 2009, chap. 5).

Although it is impossible to examine this assumption directly, we can visually show that both treated and untreated units appear to follow similar trends before the assignment is given. For example, Figure 4.1 shows the trend in ruler duration for African states affected and unaffected by Europeans' massive increased demand for enslaved people after 1680. The grey line shows the 25-year moving average for ruler duration in African polities that lie within 500 kilometers of a European slave port while the dark line indicates the moving average for African rulers more than 500 kilometers from slave ports. The dotted grey line is centered on the year 1680. Before the increased demand for African slaves in 1680, we see that polities more or less follow a similar trend. However, after 1680, a sharp decline in ruler duration occurs for polities affected by the slave trades, and by 1760 there appears to be no meaningful difference in ruler duration between polities. This suggests that the parallel trends assumption underlining the difference-in-differences design in *Article 1*_(STA) may be plausible.

4.2 Instrumental Variables

While the previous strategies can alleviate potential issues with omitted invariant factors, other potential time-varying covariates as well as reverse causality may still confound the empirical analysis. *Article 1*_(SUR) and *Article 2*_(SUR) supplement the previous empirical designs by exploiting an instrumental variable (IV) approach.

The reasoning behind the IV approach is fairly simple: find a variable—a so-called instrument—that is exogenous in the empirical system but is correlated with the independent variable of interest. Then only use the variation in the independent variable that comes from the instrument to estimate the causal effect on the dependent variable. Since the instrument is exogenous (uncorrelated with the error term), it is possible to remove all variation in the independent variable that comes from variables other than the instrument itself. This is a useful approach since it allows for credible causal inference (Angrst and Pischke, 2009, chap. 4).

*Article 1*_(SUR) utilizes this approach to isolate exogenous variation in exposure to slave ports. The article exploits the distance from slave destinations in the Americas as an exogenous source of variation in prox-

imity to slave ports in Africa. The basic logic here is that African polities are more likely to lie in the vicinity of slave ports if they are closer to slave destinations in the Americas. Locations to slave markets in America can be considered exogenous to factors within Africa because it was the Americas' external demand for slaves that determined the supply and location of African slave ports and not vice versa.

*Article 2*_(SUR) exploits unique geographic features of Africa to capture exogenous variation in the distribution of early colonial forts. It uses proximity to natural harbors as an instrument for indigenous institutions' exposure to colonial forts. In times before Europeans arrived in West Africa, indigenous polities did not utilize the sea for maritime exploration or trade as Europeans had done for centuries. Instead, African polities were interested in the trade outposts of the lucrative trans-Saharan trade rather than the uncultivated lands near the coastline. This meant that no man-made docks existed in precolonial Africa. Given the absence of artificially manufactured docks, early European explorers and traders landed where coastal geography made it possible to dock European ships. Such places were characterized by natural harbors, which ended up determining the location of the first colonial forts along the coastline.

The IV approach rests on two important assumptions. The first assumption simply states that the instrument must have an effect on the independent variable. This assumption can easily be validated with different statistical tests. For example, in *Article 1*_(SUR), the first assumption entails that slave markets in the Americas must determine the location of slave ports in Africa, whereas for *Article 2*_(SUR) it means that the natural harbors should make it more likely that a colonial fort is located nearby. Both articles provide historical and statistical evidence that indicate that the first assumption is satisfied.

The second assumption requires that the instrument only affects the dependent variable through the independent variable. This is a relatively strong assumption because it requires the instrument to be uncorrelated with any factors other than the independent variable itself. For instance, in *Article 1*_(SUR) this necessitates that distance to slave markets in the Americas must only affect African ruler duration through exposure to slave ports in Africa. Similarly, in *Article 2*_(SUR) this assumption requires that the presence of natural harbors should only have an impact on indigenous polities' survival probability that runs through the effects of colonial forts.

Although it can be difficult to verify this assumption directly, *Article 1*_(SUR) and *Article 2*_(SUR) utilize different kinds of placebo

tests to probe this assumption. For example, *Article 1_(SUR)* examines whether distance to the Americas' slave markets is associated with other slave trades unrelated to the one that Europeans initiated. Besides the transatlantic slave trade, the African continent also experienced three other slave trades—the trans-Saharan, Red Sea and Indian Ocean slave trades—that were much older and predated the slave trade started by Europeans. If the instrument only works through the location of European slave ports, then it should not be associated with other types of non-European slave trades. In *Article 1_(SUR)*, I show that distance to slave markets in the Americas cannot explain any other types of non-European slave trades, lending additional credibility to the IV estimates.

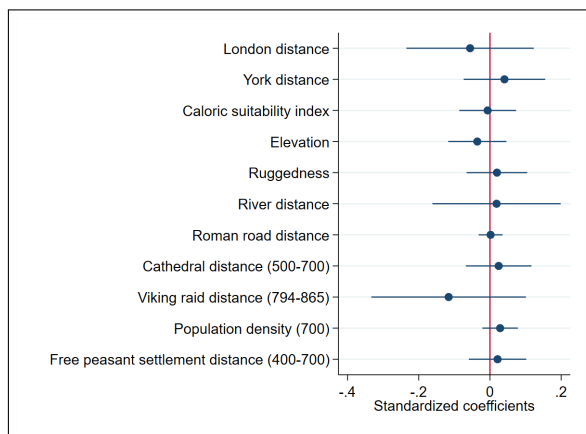
Article 2_(SUR) also exploits a placebo test to probe the second IV assumption. If proximity to natural harbors only affects survival probability through colonial forts, then we should not expect that proximity to natural harbors has an impact on survival probability before Europeans came to Africa. *Article 2_(SUR)* utilizes detailed information on indigenous African polities before European contact and shows that the presence of natural harbors has no meaningful effect on survival probability prior to European arrival on the African continent.

4.3 Natural Experiment

The most commonly proposed method to achieve a credible causal effect is the randomized control experiment. It is characterized by three hallmarks. First, the classical experiment assigns the population (e.g. individuals or societies) into treatment and control groups. Second, the assignment to treatment and control groups is done at random, for example through a randomizing device such as a coin flip. Third, the manipulation of the treatment—also known as the intervention—is under the complete control of the researcher. When studying the development of societies, researchers are rarely able to randomly assign treatment and controls to different polities. However, sometimes the natural world divides units into as-if random treatment and control groups. Such natural experiments are very similar to the traditional experiment, but separate themselves by the fact that the researcher is no longer in control of the randomization process. Instead, under a natural experiment some random process in the real world assigns units into treatment and control (Dunning, 2012, chap. 1).

Article 4_(EFF) exploits a natural experiment to estimate the causal effects of weak state institutions on economic and political outcomes.

Figure 4.2: Balance on the Observables near the Danelaw Border



Note: The figure depicts standardized coefficients from several regressions in which the indicator of belonging to the Danelaw is used to predict pre-treated characteristics. The blue lines attached to the dots illustrate the 0.05 significance level.

The article proposes that the Viking colonization of medieval England can be utilized as a natural experiment that leverages as-if random variation within local state institutions. In 878, a Viking army managed to conquer most of eastern England. Immediately after the victory, a treaty between the English and the Vikings was signed. The treaty formalized the boundaries of the English kingdom and the Viking territory, the so-called Danelaw. Historians suggest that the Viking colonization of eastern England resulted in the collapse of previously centralized kingdoms, which were then replaced by a weak and fragmented power structure (Loyn, 1994; Hadley, 2000; Richards, 2000; Day, 2010; Townend, 2014).

The main logic of the natural experiment is to examine manors (smaller administrative units) that are sufficiently close to the Danelaw border, making the assignment of weak state institutions as-if random. The benefit of this strategy is that it accounts for unobservable factors that vary smoothly across space. In other words, as long as the determinants of unobservable traits such as geography, history or other idiosyncratic shocks vary smoothly, the unobservable factors will be accounted for by the design.

However, before this design can produce credible causal inference it must satisfy three important assumptions (see for example Keele and

Titunik, 2015).¹ The most important assumption of the design is that the boundary between the Scandinavian and English kingdoms was drawn as-if random. If some political or military considerations determined the location of the border, then this would invalidate the design. In times before advanced cartographic methods, drawing precise borders was often very difficult. Instead, many premodern boundaries were so-called natural borders, which followed notable and easily detectable features in the landscape, such as rivers, lakes or mountain ranges. This made it easy for people to separate the domain of two separate kingdoms. Crossing a particular river was a simple approach for knowing the start or end of a political entity. Historical sources indicate that the Danelaw boundary was a natural border drawn on random features. For example, the treaty between the Scandinavians and the English clearly shows that the border was based on random features in the landscape such as rivers. According to the treaty, the border ran “up the Thames, and then up the Lea, and along the Lea to its source, then in a straight line to Bedford, then up the Ouse to Watling Street” (Attenborough, 1922, 99). *Article 4_(EFF)* also empirically assesses this assumption by examining whether there are notable differences in pre-Viking characteristics when comparing areas just outside the Danelaw’s border to areas just inside its borders. Figure 4.2 presents this balance check. It shows that there are no prior geographic, social or ecclesiastical differences between the two historical polities, lending additional support to the assumption.

Another important assumption is that the Danelaw border must not align with other major boundaries. If other important borders align with the boundary of the Danelaw, then it is obviously difficult to estimate which border determined the potential differences in outcomes. *Article 4_(EFF)* examines this assumption by collecting novel data on the geolocation of Anglo-Saxon kingdoms that existed before the Vikings colonized eastern England. It shows that the Danelaw border was not drawn based on these preexisting borders. The last assumption states that individuals must not be able to select into the treatment. In this case, if individuals can migrate along the Danelaw boundary, then spatial sorting effects can bias the estimates. From historical sources, this seems to be an insignificant problem. The treaty states that no one “should be allowed to pass over to the Danish host without permission, any more than that any of them should come over to us” (Attenborough, 1922, 101). Any migration along the border was therefore unlikely or at least very insignificant.

¹These empirical designs are also commonly referred to as geographic regression discontinuity designs (Angrst and Pischke, 2009; Dunning, 2012; Keele and Titunik, 2015).

Using different descriptive and statistical methods, *Article 4*_(EFF) also provides evidence that migration along the border was very unlikely.

Chapter 5

Data Sources

Chapter 5 presents the main data sources on premodern states and colonization. Other minor data sources are presented and discussed in the individual articles.

5.1 Political Stability in Precolonial Africa

In recent years, political scientists have begun to collect data on the rise of political stability in premodern history. Morby's (2002) *Dynasties of the World* lists the chronology of rulers across monarchies in several countries from antiquity to modern times. It provides information on the year rulers ascended and descended the throne, whether rulers were deposed or abdicated and the ruler's relation to the predecessor (whether, for instance, the predecessor was the incumbent ruler's father or brother). This source has been analyzed by other political scientists. Blaydes and Chaney (2013) utilize Morby's (2002) *Dynasties of the World* to examine the development of ruler duration between Europe and the Islamic world. Kokkonen and Sundell (2014) extend Morby's (2002) database by collecting improved data on how European monarchs exited office. In particular, they include new data on whether internal or external actors deposed premodern rulers.

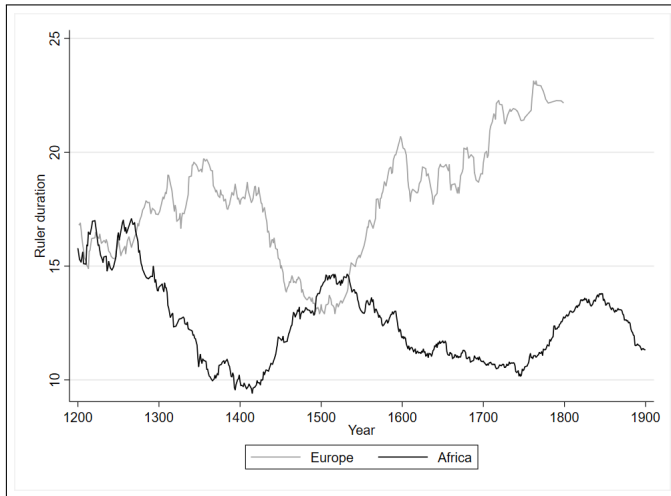
Other scholars have also devoted attention to the rise of political stability in imperial China. Historical sources, such as *Chronologies of Chinese Emperors and Their Families* (Du, 1995) and *The Complete Biographies of Chinese Emperors* (Qiao et al., 1996) provide reliable and systematic information on Chinese emperors over the last millennium. Wang (2018) utilizes these historical sources to collect an extensive dataset of 1,035 monarchs from 1000 to 1800 CE, which he uses to explain the rise of longer ruler tenure among Chinese emperors. Huang and Yang (2022) utilize similar sources to collect data on ruler duration among Chinese monarchs, but primarily enlist data on bureaucrats from the civil service examination system in Imperial China.

While much new historical data have been collected on ruler duration among European and Chinese monarchs, no studies have examined the development of ruler duration in precolonial Africa. *Article 1_(SUR)* fills this gap by exploiting data on ruler duration among precolonial African rulers. The information on African rulers comes from John Stewart's (2006) encyclopedia of *African States and Rulers*, which was recently digitized by Müller-Crepon (2020). The encyclopedia holds information on a long range of precolonial, colonial and post-colonial African polities. Stewart (2006) provides detailed information on a list of important events, such as dates polities were conquered and colonized and became independent. However, most importantly, Stewart (2006) lists the year precolonial African rulers entered and left political office. This enables me to calculate the number of years African rulers reigned, which I utilize as a measure of political stability. *Article 1_(SUR)* then combines data on African ruler duration with information on the location of European slave ports from Eltis et al.'s (1999) *Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database*. Based on the location of African polities, I construct a measure of proximity to European slave ports. The main logic behind the measure is that the effect of the slave trade was strongest near European slave ports, while the negative effects decrease with distance.

Although Stewart's (2006) database provides the most comprehensive sample of precolonial African polities, it is not without its shortcomings. First, the political entities covered by Stewart (2006) overwhelmingly belong to centralized precolonial polities. This is, of course, not surprising given that Stewart's (2006) main aim is to collect data on rulers, which are difficult to identify in acephalous societies. However, this does mean that the data is not a representative sample of all precolonial indigenous societies. Since the focus in *Article 1_(SUR)* is on political stability in premodern states, this is not an issue that creates potential biases. Second, hardly any precolonial African societies had written records. Instead, most information we have on precolonial polities comes from oral traditions. For example, premodern states in Africa did not collect written materials but instead tasked certain individuals to keep oral information on the history of the kingdom and prior monarchs. This, obviously, can create some potential issues that make estimates on ruler duration a bit uncertain. However, Vansina (1985) has an influential study shown that oral traditions can be trustworthy and reliable sources for historical knowledge.

How did ruler duration in Africa and Europe develop compared to each other? Figure 5.1 briefly explores this. The grey line shows the 100-year moving average for ruler durations in Europe, whereas the dark

Figure 5.1: Development in Ruler Durations between Africa and Europe



Note: The figure compares ruler durations of African and European rulers. The gray line shows the 100-year moving average for European rulers, while the dark line indicates tenures for African rulers.

line indicates the moving average for African rulers. For African rulers, my main data source is Stewart's (2006) encyclopedia. For European monarchs, my data source is Kokkonen and Sundell (2014).¹

In 1500, at the beginning of the transatlantic slave trade, African rulers experienced a small advantage in terms of political stability compared to European monarchs. On average, African rulers reigned for 14 years in 1500, whereas European monarchs sat on the throne for approximately 13 years. Over the following centuries, as the slave trade intensified, this small difference in political stability changed greatly. While European monarchs could expect to reign for approximately 21 years in 1750, African rulers governed for only 10 years.

From the late fifteenth century, Europe was slowly moving out of the Middle Ages and into its early modern period. It was a time of great change for many European countries. With the advent of the military revolution in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, radical new changes in military technologies, strategies and tactics were in-

¹This is not a complete sample of heads of state in Europe, but only includes leaders from major monarchies. The sample is not representative for all European leaders, especially not for the heads of state of the numerous principalities in the Holy Roman Empire.

troduced. European warfare now required massive funds to maintain standing armies and substantial capital had to be invested in new powerful siege artilleries. To obtain resources needed to meet such requirements, monarchs gradually began to establish sophisticated systems of taxation, and to manage this extraction the development of complex administrative structures became necessary. The result was the emergence of modern states, and extraordinary political stability among European monarchs (Tilly, 1990; Finer, 1997; Ertman, 1997).

While Europe experienced its rise to great political stability, Africa was beginning a significantly different institutional path. From the late fifteenth century onward, Africa increasingly experienced the rise of powerful kingdoms and empires (e.g. Reid, 2012). With the development of centralized institutions, the length of African rulers' reigns also started to improve. However, with the introduction of the transatlantic slave trade in the seventeenth century, many African polities saw a rising trend of political instability. From around 1680, rulers in close proximity to slave ports entered a different path of increasing political instability (see Figure 4.1.).

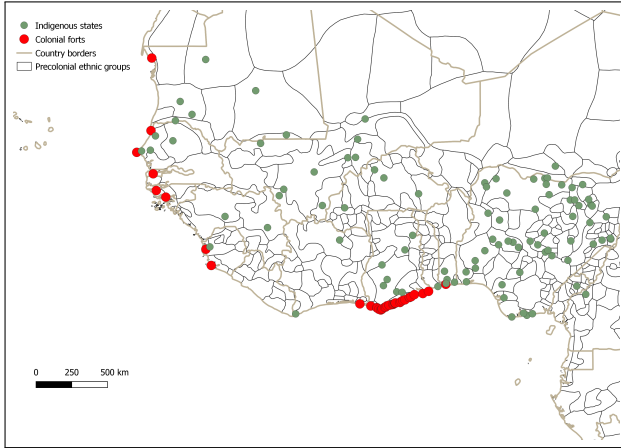
5.2 The Colonial State in West Africa

Social science scholars have collected data on various aspects of the colonial state in Africa. Some have measured the fiscal capacity of the colonial state by assembling data on taxation (Gardner, 2012; Havik, 2013; Frankema and van Waijenburg, 2014; Huillery, 2014; Bolt and Gardner, 2020; Müller-Crepon, 2020; Cogneau, Dupraz and Mesplé-Somps, 2021), while others measure indirect colonial rule through the presence of European administrators (Kirk-Greene, 1980; Müller-Crepon, 2020) or colonially recognized customary court cases (Lange, 2004). However, no studies to date have collected data on the coercive capacity of the colonial state.²

In *Article 2*_(SUR), I collect novel data on military forts to measure the coercive power structure of the early colonial state in West Africa. When Europeans first came to West Africa in the early sixteenth century, they erected forts where they defended their interests and conducted trades with local Africans (e.g. Lawrence, 1963; DeCorse, 2010; Osei-Tutu, 2018). Later on, these same structures became an integral part of the colonial state, which Europeans utilized as military and admin-

²For a focus on single colonies, see Pierskalla, Schultz and Wibbels (2017) on German East Africa and Juan, Krautwald and Pierskalla (2017) on Namibia.

Figure 5.2: Colonial Forts and Indigenous States in West Africa



Note: The figure shows the geographic location of colonial forts and indigenous states in West Africa. The green dots represent indigenous states, while the red dots represent colonial forts. The black lines indicate ethnic boundaries in the precolonial era. The dense brown lines are the borders of modern African countries.

istrative strongholds from which the colony could be dominated (Hove, 2018). Coercive power was therefore strong in places near such physical structures, while the potential for coercion decreased in concentric circles into the interior. Using data from Lawrence's (1963) *Trade Castle and Forts of West Africa*, *Article 2*_(SUR) enlists new data on the location of European forts that were in existence in the beginning of the colonial era. Lawrence (1963) provides detailed information on the existence of colonial forts, spanning from the first European forts in the fifteenth century to the latest, beginning with the colonial conquest of Africa. I then sample all colonial forts that continued to be in existence during the first years of colonial conquest. In order to estimate the effects of colonial forts on the survival probability of indigenous states, *Article 2*_(SUR) then combines this new data source with information on the survival of over 100 West African indigenous states from Stewart (2006).

Figure 5.2 illustrates the geographic location of colonial forts and indigenous states in West Africa. The red dots represent colonial forts. All forts were located along the African coastline, with the majority of fortresses situated on the banks of the Gold Coast. The green dots illustrate the location of indigenous states. The sample of indigenous states

is spread more evenly across West Africa than colonial forts. Approximately 40 percent of indigenous states are situated in modern-day Nigeria.

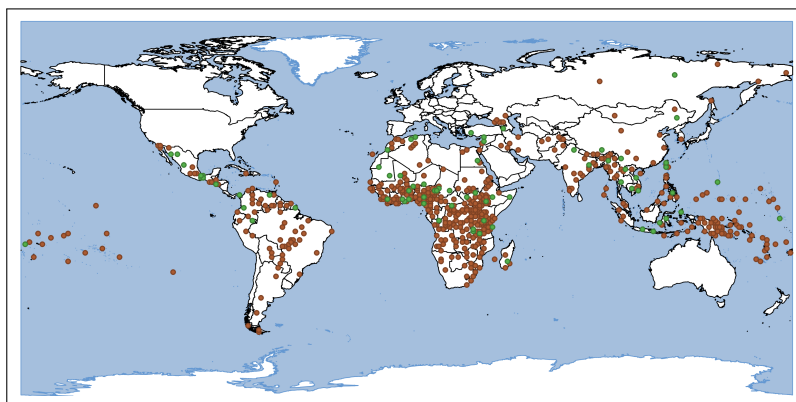
5.3 Early Democracy

Scholars have collected novel data on the development of early European parliaments in recent decades (DeLong and Shleifer, 1993; Acemoglu, Johnson and Robinson, 2005b; Stasavage, 2010; Van Zanden, Buringh and Bosker, 2012; Bosker, Buringh and van Zanden, 2013; Møller, 2017; Kokkonen and Møller, 2020). While such early democratic institutions were not unique to Europe, much less data collection has been done to acquire empirical information on the development of non-European assemblies.

The most extensive dataset on the institutional framework of preindustrial societies is the Ethnographic Atlas. The Ethnographic Atlas is an ethnicity-level database with preindustrial characteristics on 1,265 ethnic groups around the world. It was constructed by Murdock (1967) who, based on readings of accessible ethnographic scholarship, codes a long range of group characteristics, such as cultural practices, subsistence activities and political organization. The information in the Ethnographic Atlas is meant to represent the earliest possible date for which reliable information is available. This also means that ethnic groups are measured at different points in time. Only 44 societies were measured prior to the nineteenth century, corresponding to roughly 4 percent of the entire sample. Most societies, 89 percent, were measured between 1851 to 1950. For places without early written records, mostly groups in Africa and the New World, the information is intended to reflect the group's characteristics prior to any contact with Europeans.

Most importantly, the database provides detailed information on aspects of early democracy. For example, Murdock (1967) codes how ethnic groups selected their rulers in premodern times. One example is the inheritance of political office through the line of the father (patrilineal) or mother (matrilineal). Such inheritance structures were one of the hallmarks of early autocracies. Another example is the selection of leaders through elections or other formal consensus, which characterized the political structure of early democracies. *Article 3_(REG)* measures early democracy by this metric, by examining the long-run effects of ethnic groups who selected their rulers through elections or other formal consensus procedures. To estimate the effects of early democracy on

Figure 5.3: Geographic Location of Early Democracy



Note: The dots represent indigenous societies in the developing world based on the geographic coordinates from Murdock's (1967) *Ethnographic Atlas*. The green dots are early democracies, while the brown dots are undemocratic groups.

modern development, the article exploits fine-grained data on nighttime light emission, which other studies show to be a reliable proxy for local development (e.g. Henderson, Storeygard and Weil, 2012).

Historical research emphasizes that early democracy was not uniquely European (Muhlberger and Paine, 1993; Congleton, 2001; Stasavage, 2020). Where, then, was early democracy located? Figure 5.3 shows the geographic location of ethnic groups with information on early democracy across the developing world. Indigenous groups are represented by dots. The green dots are coded as early democracies, while the brown dots are undemocratic societies. The figure reveals that early democracy indeed was a widespread phenomenon in the developing world, as suggested by many other scholars.

Although the *Ethnographic Atlas* is, to the best of my knowledge, the only database on early democracy around the world, the use of it definitely comes with challenges. First, measuring each society at different times in history will inevitably introduce potential bias. It seems reasonable to contend that institutions measured early on in history will most likely be significantly different from those measured closer to the present day. Since many argue that democracy as we know it today is a recent phenomenon, early democracy measured closer to the present day might be more democratic. Second, institutions closer to the present may have had contact with European explorers or colonizers. This would

have influenced the ethnic groups socially, economically and politically. In other words, groups measured late may reflect some aspects of European colonization.

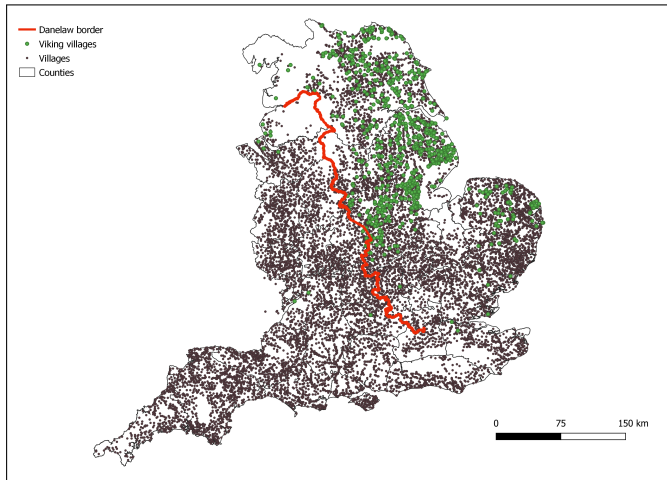
However, there are good reasons why the Ethnographic Atlas can still be utilized as a reliable data source. There have been several recent efforts to validate the information in the Ethnographic Atlas. For example, Bahrami-Rad, Becker and Henrich (2021) validate the various different variables in the Ethnographic Atlas against information in the contemporary data from the Demographic and Heath Survey. The Demographic and Heath Survey provides nationally representative data on over 790,000 individuals from over 300 different ethnic groups across the developing world. Bahrami-Rad, Becker and Henrich (2021) combines data that can be matched across both databases, such as cultural and socioeconomic traits of ethnic groups. The authors find a positive and highly significant relationship between these different characteristics, lending further validity to the relevance of information in the Ethnographic Atlas (see also Rijpma and Carmichael, 2016; Moscona, Nunn and Robinson, 2020, for further evidence).

Moreover, the Ethnographic Atlas is now a well-used data source in social science research. For instance, several variables from Murdock's (1967) database such as precolonial state institutions (e.g. Gennaioli and Rainer, 2007; Michalopoulos and Papaioannou, 2013), early democracy (e.g. Bentzen, Hariri and Robinson, 2017; Giuliano and Nunn, 2013) and several other cultural traits (e.g. Alesina, Giuliano and Nunn, 2013; Michalopoulos, Putterman and Weil, 2018) have been used to explore the origins of modern outcomes.

5.4 State Centralization in Medieval England

Generations of remarkable scholarship have been dedicated to exploring the historical origins of European states (e.g. Mann, 1984; Levi, 1989; Tilly, 1990; Downing, 1992; Ertman, 1997; Finer, 1997; Boix, 2003; Fukuyama, 2011; Hoffman, 2015; Acemoglu and Robinson, 2019; Stasavage, 2020). In recent decades, social science researchers have attempted to empirically examine various claims from this prominent literature. While measures of modern statehood are widely available to researchers (Hendrix, 2010; Hanson and Sigman, 2021), data collection on premodern states has been more sparse. This is, of course, not surprising given the difficulty involved in gathering historical data. However, with the

Figure 5.4: Geographic Location of Viking Settlements



Note: The figure illustrates the location of villages from the Domesday Book. The green dots are Viking villages, while the brown dots represent other villages.

expansion of advanced tools for digitization of historical archives, social science scholars have begun to collect novel historical data, including widespread and detailed information on premodern states (e.g. Cirone and Spirling, 2021; Giuliano and Matranga, 2021; Matranga and Pascali, 2021).

The literature on European medieval state formation has exclusively focused on macro-level dynamics (e.g. Stasavage, 2011; Karaman and Pamuk, 2013; Blaydes and Paik, 2016; Dincecco and Katz, 2016; Abramson, 2017; D'Arcy and Nistotskaya, 2017). However, we have little systematic evidence on how local-level state institutions affected economic and political development. The micro-level focus on state formation has primarily been overlooked because of difficulties with measuring state capacity at the local level. Instead, *Article 4_(EFF)* examines detailed variation in local state capacity that emerged with the Viking settlement of eastern England. When the Vikings conquered and settled in eastern England, they begin to disintegrate the existing centralized institutions and replaced them with weaker and fragmented power structures.

Measuring the size and extent of the Viking settlement is no easy task. We only know that the Vikings settled in large numbers in the eastern parts of England (Kershaw and Røyrvik, 2016). Exactly where this set-

tlement occurred is more difficult to know. However, the Vikings left distinct marks on places they settled, which can help us identify where the Vikings initially established settlements. When the Vikings began to take over established settlements, they often decided to rename these settlements using their own Scandinavian language. Settlements that were renamed have often been proposed to indicate colonization by the Vikings (Stenton, 1971, 525). *Article 4_(EFF)* takes advantage of this and utilizes manors with Viking-sounding names as a measure of Viking settlements. One approach is to find those ending in *-by*, which is translated to mean farm or village. For instance, villages named Derby, Rugby and Kirkby are all of Viking origin, and a surprising number of these Viking names are still used today.

Figure 5.4 shows the geographic distribution of Viking settlements. The green dots are villages with Viking-sounding names, while the brown dots are villages not settled by Vikings. The dense red line in the figure shows the boundaries between the Danes and the English in 878. *Article 4_(EFF)* exploits the location of the Viking settlements to examine their effects on the level of income and political liberty among medieval manors. Moreover, it takes advantage of the known location of the Danelaw border to provide an alternative measure of the weak Viking kingdom. Manors located within the Danelaw can then be used as another way to capture exposure to the weaker institutions established by the Scandinavians. The article then combines these data sources with historically unique data from a medieval census, the so-called Domesday Book. The Domesday Book provides detailed data on the economic activity as well as the political rights of peasants for over 16,000 manors from eleventh-century England. *Article 4_(EFF)* measures economic and political development with the levels of manorial income and share of peasants who were considered free.

Chapter 6

Results

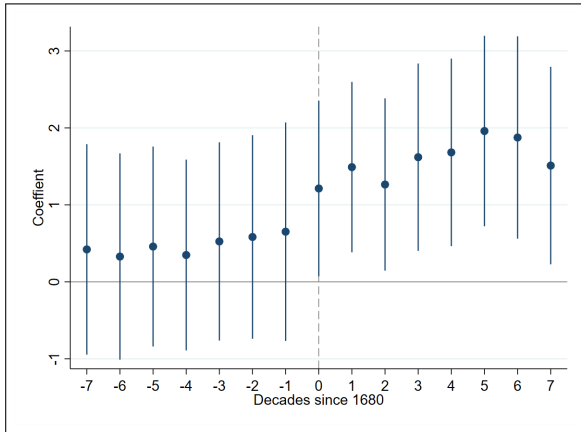
Chapter 6 presents a selection of the main findings from the four self-contained articles. All further results and details are presented and discussed in the individual articles.

6.1 Political Stability

Article 1_(STA) examines the effects of slave trading on political instability among precolonial African rulers in the period 1200 to 1900. The article finds that African rulers after 1680 had shorter lengths of ruler tenure if they were situated in the vicinity of slave ports. Figure 6.1 illustrates the effect of the transatlantic slave trade on ruler tenure over time. To measure the impact of slave trading, *Article 1_(STA)* exploits distance to slave ports. Rulers located closer to these ports were, obviously, more likely to be involved in and influenced by the slave trading initiated by Europeans. However, African rulers in the interior were often so far away from slave markets around the coastline that they never became involved in or affected by slaving. Figure 6.1 shows the coefficients on proximity to slave ports before and after the increased slave demand in 1680. In times before the massive increased demand for African slaves in the late seventeenth century, the effect is very small and statistically insignificant. However, after 1680, the coefficient jumps substantially and turns significant.

What, then, appears to drive these empirical findings? *Article 1_(STA)* also examines the main theoretical claim that African elites received a massive influx of firearms in exchange for exported slaves. Utilizing detailed port-level data on exported slaves and imported firearms, the article provides empirical evidence that slave ports that exported more slaves after 1680 also experienced a massive influx of European firearms.

Figure 6.1: The Transatlantic Slave Trade and Political Instability



Note: The figure shows the coefficients on distance to slave ports before and after the increase slave demand in 1680. The gray vertical line illustrates a coefficient of 0. The grey dotted line shows the coefficients on distance to slave ports in 1680. The blue lines attached to the dots illustrate the 0.05 significance level.

6.2 The Survival of Indigenous States

Article 2_(SUR) examines the survival of West African indigenous states during the colonial period. The article enlists newly collected data on early colonial forts and combine it with extensive information on the survival of indigenous institutions in West Africa. I find strong empirical evidence that indigenous African states are more likely to be destroyed by Europeans after being colonized if they are situated in the vicinity of colonial forts. The main empirical findings are presented in Table 6.1. This overall relationship remains robust to a range of different empirical specifications and the two most prominent alternative theories: strength of precolonial institutions and the identity of the colonizer. The magnitude of the effect is also substantial. For example, *Article 2_(SUR)* finds that a one standard-deviation shift in proximity to colonial forts is associated with a 0.75 increase in survival probability. This strong effect underlines the importance of early colonial power in understanding which traditional authority structures remained intact during the colonial period.

Table 6.1: Colonial Forts and the Survival of Indigenous States

	Polity death		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Colonized \times proximity to forts	0.321*** (0.0248)	0.322*** (0.0248)	0.322*** (0.0248)
Polity and year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Geo location \times time trend	No	Yes	Yes
Baseline controls \times time trend	No	No	Yes
Observations	13106	13106	13106

Note: Standard errors clustered by polity in parentheses.

***, ** and * indicate significance at the 1%, 5% and 10% levels.

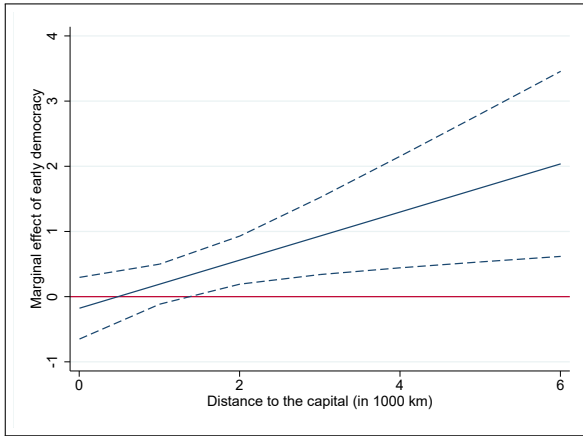
6.3 The Long-Run Effects of Political Regimes

Article 3_(REG) focuses on how early democracy in the precolonial era affected long-run development in the contemporary developing world. The article utilizes the theoretical argument from *Article 2_(SUR)* to propose that early democracy in the precolonial era only affected modern development in places far from colonial power in the capital cities. Figure 6.2 presents the main empirical findings from *Article 3_(REG)*. It shows the marginal effect of early democracy on modern development at different distances to the capital. If the article's argument is correct, then we should expect to see a stronger effect of early democracy the farther away we get from the capital. Consistent with the overall hypothesis, Figure 6.2 illustrates that early democracy has a very small and insignificant effect on development in areas close to the capital, while the effect of early democracy increases with the distance to the capital. While *Article 3_(REG)* does not have a credible causal design to obtain exogenous variation in early democracy, it shows that a long range of precolonial, colonial and contemporary factors are unable to explain away the main empirical results.

What, then, appears to drive this relationship? *Article 3_(REG)* presents evidence that areas exposed to early democracy have better public health and transportation infrastructure today. Both aspects are important for any well-functioning economy.

Article 3_(REG) also documents that early democracy influenced long-run development throughout the precolonial and colonial eras. The article exploits historical data on population density, the best available proxy

Figure 6.2: Early Democracy and Modern Development



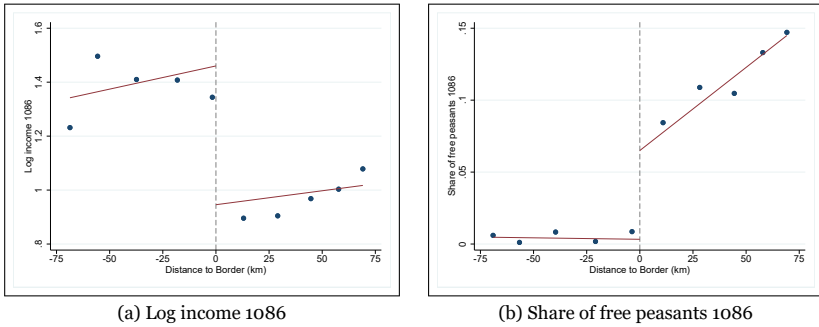
Note: The figure shows the marginal effect of early democracy at various distances to the capital. The solid line is the marginal effect of early democracy, while the dotted line indicates the 95 percent confidence intervals.

for premodern economic activity, to estimate early democracy's effect on premodern development. *Article 3_(REG)* finds that ethnic groups who had early democratic institutions also on average had higher population densities and more complex settlement patterns in the precolonial era. The article also provides evidence that the relationship between early democracy, distance to the capital and development existed throughout the colonial period. This illustrates how important early democracy has been for the development of the economy over the course of hundreds of years.

6.4 The Long-Run Effects of Premodern States

Article 4_(EFF) examines the long-run effects of weak premodern states on economic and political development. Using detailed data from the Domesday Book, *Article 4_(EFF)* finds strong support for the hypothesis that weak premodern states produced lower levels of development but also secured political freedom for society. In particular, it provides evidence that manors within the former Danelaw, areas exposed to weak

Figure 6.3: The Effects of the Weak Viking Kingdom on Economic and Political Development



Note: The figures illustrate binned scatterplots (with 10 bins) of the unconditional relationship between both income and the share of free peasants and the distance to the Danelaw border. The border is at kilometer 0, and positive values indicate kilometers in the territory of the Danelaw.

state institutions, experienced lower incomes and more political liberty. Figure 6.3 illustrates these results. The figure shows binned scatterplots (with 10 bins) of the unconditional relationship between the distance to the Danelaw border and income (Figure 6.3a) and the share of free peasants (Figure 6.3b). The x-axis in both figures is the distance to the Danelaw border, and positive values indicate kilometers in the territory of the Danelaw. From Figure 6.3, we can see a sharp discontinuity in economic and political development. When crossing the border with the Danelaw, manorial income increases suddenly. The same development also occurs for political freedom, where we observe a substantially larger share of free peasants in the areas of the Danelaw.

Article 4_(EFF) also estimates the effect of Danelaw manors on economic and political development. The article finds that income was around 14 percent lower in areas colonized by Scandinavians, while political liberty was almost five percent higher in the Danelaw region. This is a quite substantial effect and a testimony to the importance of how weak premodern states can leave behind diverse legacies on economic and political outcomes.

Article 4_(EFF) also examines the two proposed mechanisms that produce these diverse effects on economic and political outcomes. To explore empirically the implications of the theoretical argument, I collect novel data on political violence and castles, important physical structures of coercive potential used to dominate the peasantry. I then use

these data sources to document that areas settled by Scandinavians experienced significantly more political violence and were less likely to be controlled by castles.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

Today's world is dominated by the state. It organizes the most important parts of our lives. Without the state, it is fair to say that human life probably would be nasty, brutish and short, as Thomas Hobbes famously stated in the seventeenth century. In many countries with strong states, people can drive their cars on state-sponsored roads, go to the hospital if they get sick and freely walk the streets without being assaulted by bandits. However, many people today often take the organization of the state for granted.

This was not always so. Thousands of years ago, the world was stateless. During the 200,000 years modern humans have walked the earth, under one percent of our time has been characterized by the existence of states. Since the first signs of proto-states over six thousand years ago, the state as an institutional structure has undergone fundamental transformations in its size, function, form and strength. However, it is only in the last millennium that we began to see proper states emerge, which have laid the foundation for modern-day countries. Why did some premodern states experience political stability while others were plagued by continuing instability? Why did premodern states take different paths of development? And what economic and political legacies did premodern states leave behind?

Based on four self-contained articles, this dissertation has provided answers to these time-honored questions. The dissertation focused its attention on the development and consequences of premodern states in Africa and Europe. Concerning the first question, the dissertation demonstrated that the rise of the transatlantic slave trade promoted political instability in precolonial African polities by delivering the coercive means that enabled African elites to remove rulers. The dissertation also provided answers for the different development patterns of premodern states. In particular, it focused on why some indigenous African institutions were destroyed by European colonizers and others became part of the colonial administration. The dissertation argued that traditional structures far from early colonial power centers were integrated into the

colonial state while those in proximity to the colonial sources of authority were destroyed in the process. Premodern states also had long-run effects on economic and political development. The dissertation documented that premodern societies governed with early democratic institutions have affected long-run development in the contemporary developing world. However, it was only in places far from colonial capitals that early democracy survived and therefore left a legacy on economic development. Lastly, the dissertation examined the long-run effects of weak premodern states on economic and political outcomes. Utilizing the Viking colonization of eastern England as a natural experiment, it showed that weak state institutions stunt long-run development but also create conditions that facilitate the emergence of political liberty.

In total, this dissertation sheds new light on some of the biggest questions in political science: the origins, development and consequences of states. The dissertation makes four key contributions. First, it challenges the common theory that war-making became state-making (Levi, 1989; Tilly, 1990; Downing, 1992; Ertman, 1997; Finer, 1997; Hoffman, 2015). The underlying logic of this theory has mainly been associated with Charles Tilly (1975, 42), who famously stated that “war made the state, and the state made war.” According to the common interpretation of this bellicist theory, the massive geopolitical pressure in medieval and early modern Europe created incentives for monarchs to develop strong and centralized institutions necessary to mobilize and organize large armies required to fight intense battles across the European continent. Over time, these early state institutions developed into modern European states as we know them today (see e.g. for empirical evidence Dincecco, Federico and Vindigni, 2011; Dincecco and Prado, 2012; Karaman and Pamuk, 2013; Gennaioli and Voth, 2015; Blaydes and Paik, 2016; Dincecco and Onorato, 2017).

However, in Africa, warfare associated with the transatlantic slave trade stunted state building because it created hostile relations between rulers and elites. The implications of the warfare that Europeans incentivized have been monumental for African state development. In the period before the transatlantic slave trade, African kingdoms and empires were stable entities that promoted state development via taxation on trade and people across the continent. European involvement in the African slave trade effectively ended this positive trend. The state weakness that still characterizes the African continent today can, in large part, be traced all the way back to the dark and brutal period of the transatlantic slave trade.

Second, the dissertation brings new light to the massive complexity of institutions that characterize African countries today. While European countries primarily consist of national and local institutions, African states have far greater complexity due to varying traditional institutions that still play a vital role in social, economic and political issues. The empirical results from the dissertation help us understand why some regions have various indigenous states and others have none or very few. The survival of indigenous states depended on where the Europeans established colonial power. Indigenous states near colonial power centers were dismantled, while states far from the power source were able to survive because Europeans lacked the institutional infrastructure to tear them down.

Third, the dissertation documents how the survival of early democratic institutions has produced important economic legacies throughout history. The results argue against the common perspective that precolonial institutions were an impediment to long-run economic and political development (e.g. Acemoglu, Johnson and Robinson, 2001; Hariri, 2012). The picture is much more nuanced than that. The destructive legacy of precolonial institutions depended on the kind of institutions that survived the colonial period. When growth-enhancing institutions such as early democracy persisted, they often laid a crucial foundation for economic development today. Similarly, the dissertation complements an extensive literature that documents how early states become important for economic development today (Englebert, 2000; Bockstette, Chanda and Putterman, 2002; Gennaioli and Rainer, 2007; Gerring et al., 2011; Michalopoulos and Papaioannou, 2013; Dippel, 2014; Angeles and Elizalde, 2017). The dissertation shows that in addition to the development and complexity of state institutions, the way leaders were selected and constrained matters greatly for current development.

Fourth, the dissertation helps us understand how states have shaped economic and political outcomes. The development of strong states can be both a blessing and a curse. The dissertation points to some overlooked positive aspects of weak states. Negative shocks to state institutions not only impair development; they also produce a window of opportunity for societal actors to exploit weaker rulers and fight for better political conditions. In this regard, state institutions can be viewed as a double-edged sword that can both promote and oppress political rights, depending on the government in control of the state apparatus.

Short Summary

The state is the most powerful social organization in today's world. It coordinates important aspects of human intercourse that make life easier for millions of people. Everything from infrastructure to protection against theft and violence is all organized by the state. However, the state as we know it today is a recent institutional phenomenon. Thousands of years ago, the modern state had not yet emerged. Instead, the world was characterized by weak and underdeveloped premodern states.

What explains the origins and development of such premodern states and what were their consequences? On the basis of four articles, this dissertation focuses on premodern states on the African and European continents to shed new light on all three parts of this question. First, the dissertation contends that the rise of the transatlantic slave trade created political instability in precolonial African polities by delivering the coercive means that enabled African elites to remove incumbent rulers. Second, many of these indigenous institutions were integrated into colonial administrations after the European colonization in the late nineteenth century. The dissertation argues that the spatial distribution of colonial power determined which indigenous institutions became part of the colonial state and which were destroyed in the process. Third, premodern states had very different political regimes that came to be important for long-run development. The dissertation argues that forms of precolonial democracy shaped modern development in places where such institutions survived colonial rule. Fourth, premodern states were also important for long-run development in another respect. The dissertation argues that weak premodern states stunted long-run development but also created a political environment that promoted political liberty.

The articles in the dissertation utilize various empirical strategies to ensure that the findings can be given a causal interpretation. Using difference-in-differences designs, instrumental variables and a natural experiment, the dissertation provides new evidence of the four theoretical claims. Moreover, the articles examine the empirical implications of the theoretical arguments by accessing the mechanisms that produced the overall relationships.

Dansk resumé

Staten er på mange måder fundamentet for det moderne samfund. Uden staten ville vi ikke have et vejnet til vores biler, hospitaler for syge borgere og politi til at beskytte os mod vold og tyveri. Selvom staten i dag er blevet en integreret del af vores samfund, så er den moderne stat historisk set et nyt institutionelt fænomen. For tusinder af år siden var den moderne stat endnu ikke dannet. I stedet var verden præget af svage og underudviklede præmoderne stater.

Hvad forklarer præmoderne staters opståen og udvikling, og hvilke konsekvenser havde de? På baggrund af fire selvbærende artikler forsøger denne ph.d.-afhandling at belyse alle tre dele af dette spørgsmål. Nærmere bestemt fokuserer ph.d.-afhandlingen på præmoderne stater på det afrikanske og europæiske kontinent. For det første hævder afhandlingen, at fremkomsten af den transatlantiske slavehandel fremmede politisk ustabilitet i prækoloniale afrikanske stater ved at levere europæiske skydevåben, der gjorde det muligt for afrikanske eliter at fjerne de siddende herskere. For det andet blev mange af disse oprindelige afrikanske institutioner integreret i den europæiske koloni administration i slutningen af det nittende århundrede. Afhandlingen argumenterer, at oprindelige afrikanske institutioner overlevede koloniseringen i områder langt fra tidlige koloniale fæstninger, mens andre institutioner tæt på disse magtbaser blev ødelagt af kolonistyre. For det tredje havde præmoderne stater forskellige politiske regimer, der var vigtige for langsigtede økonomisk udvikling. Afhandlingen hævder, at prækolonialt demokrati formede moderne udvikling i områder, hvor sådanne institutioner overlevede den europæiske kolonisering. For det fjerde var præmoderne stater også vigtige for langsigtet politisk udvikling. Afhandlingen argumenterer, at svage præmoderne stater hæmmede langsigtede økonomisk udvikling, men også skabte et politisk miljø, der fremmede politisk frihed for personer i samfundslaget under eliten.

Artiklerne i ph.d.-afhandlingen anvender forskellige empiriske strategier for at sikre, at de empiriske resultater kan gives en kausal fortolkning. Ved at bruge difference-in-differences designs, instrumental variables og et naturligt eksperiment præsenterer ph.d.-afhandlingen empirisk evidens for de fire teoretiske påstande. Desuden undersøger ar-

tiklerne de empiriske implikationer af de fire teoretiske argumenter ved at undersøge de bestemte mekanismer, der producerede de overordnede empirisk sammenhænge.

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