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The geography of state formation

Overview

In this chapter I consider the historical geographies which gave rise to the global system of modern states which we know today. I start by outlining some of the ways in which geographers have sought to understand the state in the past. I then discuss the relationships between space, place and the global jigsaw of modern states. The next sections of the chapter consider some of the main conceptual issues surrounding the state: the process of state formation, the relationship between 'high' and 'low' politics and the notion of sovereignty. I then move to looking in more detail at the processes which gave rise to the typical form of the territorial state. Two processes are emphasized: the preparation for and the waging of wars on the one hand, and the building of the administrative systems of the state apparatus on the other. I then conclude by looking beyond Europe to consider some of the reasons why a political form which developed in one small part of the world has become the dominant system of territorial organization throughout the world.

States in space

A recurring theme

The political geography of states has been one of the longest running themes in the sub-discipline of political geography. One of the people widely cred-

ited with founding the subject, Friedrich Ratzel, wrote extensively on the subject of the state. For Ratzel, the state was an organic, living entity, consisting of a relationship between a people, their culture and their territory:

> Some number of people are joined to the area of the state. These live on its soil, draw their sustenance from it, and are otherwise attached to it by spiritual relationships. Together with this piece of earth they form the state. For political geography each people, located on its essentially fixed area, represents a *living body* which has extended itself over a part of the earth and has differentiated itself either from other bodies which have similarly expanded by boundaries or by empty space.[1]

Ratzel's ideas cannot be understood outside the political and geographical context in which he was working. Writing towards the end of the nineteenth century, Ratzel was especially concerned about the political position of Germany and the German state in a Europe which was in the midst of constructing huge overseas empires (see Chapter 4). His concept of *Lebensraum* (living space) emphasized the connection between what he saw as the cultural superiority and vibrancy of the German 'nation' and the geographical territory to which it was 'constrained' in the middle of Europe. In stressing the organic connection between a nation and its culture and territory, Ratzel was continuing a discourse which began with the writings of the German idealist philosopher G. W. F. Hegel some eighty years earlier. Hegel saw the state as an 'idea' or the expression of the 'mind' of a people. Ratzel was responsible for spelling out what he saw as the territorial or geographical implications of the state.

In the mid-twentieth century, the American geographer Richard Hartshorne allocated the state a special role in his attempt to outline the *Nature of Geography* in 1939. In drawing up a case for the distinctiveness of geography as an academic discipline, Hartshorne sought to provide firm definitions of its constituent parts. The state, he declared, was the defining subject-matter of the sub-discipline of political geography. However, he tried to distance his conception of the state from that of Ratzel and his successors. This was partly because in the 1930s, the Nazi Party under Adolf Hitler had used Ratzel's term *Lebensraum* to provide scientific legitimacy for German territorial claims during the Third Reich. Hartshorne's notion of the state, therefore, was shorn of many of its explicit political associations and made into the expression of territorial administration. In his broad view of geography as 'areal differentiation' Hartshorne's concept of the state referred to the differentiation of territory into political units behind recognized boundaries.

As a territorial form, therefore, the state is the basic building block of the world political map. Traditional political geography has emphasized the geographical form of states in absolute spatial terms – their borders, land areas, and even shapes.[2] It has also been interested in the forces which pro-

mote or disturb territorial integration within states ('centripetal' and 'centrifugal' forces respectively) and territorial differentiation of states from their neighbours. This led to a focus on issues such as the role of transport and communications networks.[3]

With the emergence since the 1970s of approaches to human geography grounded in various forms of critical theory, geographers' understandings of the state have taken new paths. The dominant critical perspective during the late 1970s and early 1980s was informed by Marxism, and in political geography this led to an interest in Marxist writings on the state. Paradoxically, Marx himself had relatively little to say on the subject, but the role of the state (particularly in relation to capitalism) has been the subject of much debate among twentieth-century Marxists and other writers on political economy. These debates provided the material for a reappraisal by geographers of previous geographical writing on the state, and the early 1980s saw two books on the state by geographers, both of which drew heavily on forms of Marxist analysis.[4]

Marxism certainly provided state theorists with some powerful conceptual tools with which to beef up the rather descriptive approach of traditional political geography. It did this especially by showing the extent to which state policies, state élites and state finance were bound into the social relations of capitalism and the processes of capital accumulation. Many Marxist accounts, however, based their explanations of the state on the operation of economic processes. One difficulty with this is that it makes it difficult to interpret the variety of state forms, activities and histories among countries with, broadly speaking, the same economic system – capitalism. In addition, relatively little attention was paid to states which existed on the periphery of the capitalist system, or, as in the case of state socialist societies, largely outside it.

In other words, it became clear that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to produce a general theory of 'the' state, which would apply to all examples. As is often the case, however, academic enquiry has been overtaken by political events, and human geographers and other social scientists are being forced to re-evaluate their previous ideas about the relationships between states and societies. Those political events include: a new phase of state building, with the fragmentation of eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union into a much larger number of political units; a growing debate about state capacity both in the West (with the apparently growing inability of governments to intervene effectively in the economy to deal with unemployment and economic recession) and the economically impoverished countries of the South[5]; and an increased interest in constitutional issues (for example, with the growth of supra-national organizations). After some decades when the territorial state based on liberal democracy (see Chapter 3) was widely seen, at least in the West, as both 'normal' and desirable, questions about the forms, functions and even existence of such states are back on the agenda.

Perhaps 'new times' do not always require new theories to match, but they should at least prompt us to evaluate the theories we have been using to see whether they still pass muster. In this light, geographers working on states and their changing roles have increasingly turned to social, political and cultural theory, and to concrete accounts produced by historical sociologists. A range of questions and issues have been newly highlighted (or sometimes revisited). They include questions of war, militarism and violence; of bureaucracy, organization and surveillance; of culture, discourse and meaning; and of authority, citizenship, rights and resistance. Despite the questions that have been raised over its head, the state remains, for the moment, what the sociologist Anthony Giddens calls the most important 'power container' of modernity.[6] I have extended my discussion of this over two chapters. In this chapter I consider the geography of state formation. In the following one I look at the crisis tendencies in modern welfare states and the geography of their contemporary restructuring.

The global jigsaw

I want to start my substantive discussion of politics and geography with thinking about states at some length because they represent the foremost claimant of authority in the modern world.[7] No other set of agencies asserts its power over us quite so insistently (some would say insidiously) as the states in which we live. I will come back to the issues of power and authority later once I have raised some problematic questions about how we define states. To start with, though, we can get quite a long way with an everyday understanding of states as territorial units. There is, however, rather more to the relationship between states and geography than surface area.

We are all, I imagine, used to the political map of the world in which the land surface is divided up, almost completely, into the territorial areas called states.[8] To be sure there are a few blurred edges, especially where wars have left territorial disputes unresolved. In the vast majority of cases, though, we reside in places which are each clearly within the territory of one particular state, with clear boundaries separating it from its neighbours.[9]

This situation seems so normal to us that it is difficult to imagine how things could be otherwise. The difficulty of thinking outside the framework of states is demonstrated in part by the problems in finding solutions to many territorial political conflicts. In Palestine, for example, two social groups have both laid claim to the same territory, and both insist on their right to establish a state. Since, in our normal way of thinking, no two

states can occupy the same territory it is impossible to reconcile both demands simultaneously. In the modern world, achieving statehood has been made to seem the ultimate goal for any group defining itself as a nation. Yet there is nothing inevitable or natural about states. Like all human institutions they are products not of nature, but of social and political processes.

They are, moreover, extremely recent creations. Human beings emerged some 400,000 years ago, but it was not until 8,000 years ago that anything that might be called a state appeared.[10] Further, for most of the time since then, states of whatever form have only occupied a small part of the earth's surface. It is only in the last 300 years that distinctively modern states have developed and only in the last 50 years that the modern form of the state has become more or less universal.

Even today the variety of state forms is quite large, and for most of the modern period the characteristics of different states have been highly diverse. It is therefore not only difficult, but in many ways downright misleading to try to construct a theory of 'the' state. The problem of trying to come up with a definition of 'the' state is that it depends on identifying the essence of stateness, as it were. Because states are political and social institutions, they are in a continuous (albeit slow) process of change and mutation: if we define the essence of the state in one place or era, we are liable to find that in another time or space something which is also understood to be a state has different essential characteristics.

In order to avoid such 'essentialist' interpretations, we need to give due weight to historical and geographical differences in the nature of states. Essentialist accounts also often try to ground an interpretation of the state in a central unifying principle, such as Hegel's state idea, or, as in (some forms of) Marxism, the mode of production. By contrast, I want to suggest that states should be seen as both complex networks of relations among a (shifting) mixture of institutions and social groups, and the product of their own processes of institutional development and historical change as well as important external influences.

If states as we know them today are so recent and (historically) so unusual, why is it that we tend to think they represent the natural order of things? Despite their (relative) newness, they are the most powerful organizations in the world. As such they embody and are constituted from a huge range of political and social interests, and exercise power in often highly unequal ways. A discourse which constructs the modern system of territorial states as *natural* serves to promote many of the interests and power relations involved as similarly natural. 'Naturalizing discourses' are among the most important forms of discourse, because they make what is social (and therefore changeable) seem natural (and therefore eternal). Although the close relationship between a state and its territory is central to this discourse, it is only one way in which geography enters into the constitution of states.

Geography and states

Let us focus for now on modern states, and retain, just for the moment, an everyday definition of the state as an organization with *de facto* responsibility for the government and administration of a territory. That territoriality is clearly a central feature of the geography of states, but geography is important in other ways too.

First, the territories of modern states are ordered by relatively precise boundaries. This is a largely taken-for-granted feature of the modern world. Of course, the positions of the boundaries may often be contested and, despite the best efforts of many traditional political geographers, it is fairly clear that there are rarely any purely technical or rationalist solutions to such conflicts. The existence of such disputes does not, however, undermine the principle that modern states are bordered by clearly demarcated linear boundaries: indeed, it strengthens it. Like the existence of states themselves, however, there is nothing natural about precise boundaries. I have already mentioned the work of the sociologist Anthony Giddens, and, as we shall see, his ideas are particularly helpful in thinking about the character and role of states. In Giddens's view, precise borders only emerge with modern states, and are associated with the capacity of states to spread their power relatively evenly throughout a territory. In earlier times, because of technical, resource and organizational limitations, state power tended to be much stronger in the centre of the territory than towards its edges. States had frontier zones, rather than borders, where the weak influence of one or more states overlapped, or state power petered out into areas not occupied by any state.[11] The neat boundaries of modern states, therefore, are symptoms of the ability of those organizations to project their administrative capacity across the whole of their territories.

Second, most modern states occupy large territories, and seek to administer them through various systems of territorially fragmented institutions. These range from loose confederations at one end of the scale, through federal systems (such as those in Germany or the United States) and systems of regional and local government (city councils, for example), to local offices of the central state at the other end (such as a local tax office).

Third, geography is important in the spatial structures of state institutions. An important (albeit difficult) set of ideas about the state are developed in the writings of Nicos Poulantzas. Poulantzas refers to the 'institutional materiality' of the state: to the material presence of the organizations and institutions of the state 'apparatus'.[12] These institutions obviously have spatial structures which take physical forms – offices, courts, parliaments, military bases and so on must be located somewhere (and where they are located can make a difference to how they work and what effects they have). In addition, though, it may be useful to think of them as having spatial structures which are social and symbolic too. Parliament buildings, for example, embody certain meanings. They form part of various discourses (about state

power, for instance, or 'democracy'). They are also physically exclusive, setting and policing limits about who is entitled to speak politically or to govern (even in systems constructed, discursively, as 'democratic').

Fourth, and related to Poulantzas' argument, the apparatus of the state, spread throughout the territory, provides the means by which the state monitors, governs and attempts to control the population. I shall have more to say about surveillance shortly, but the capacity to keep an eye on what is going on clearly depends both on the territorial reach of the state, and on what we might call the spatial density of the mechanisms and practices through which monitoring occurs. These include the physical surveillance of space by police and other state employees and, increasingly, electronic surveillance using cameras. Less obviously they also include technologies of record-keeping and data-gathering, through which the activities of the population are monitored either at the aggregate level (through the collection of statistics[13]) or the individual level, through personal records relating to birth, marriage, death and a whole range of other aspects of our lives. New technologies are important here too, with the growth of smart-card electronics raising concerns about the state's potential future use of identity documents.

Fifth, according to Giddens, this monitoring activity has a tendency to increase over time in modern states. However, it is never absolute (even in societies labelled 'totalitarian'). This means that there are always gaps in the state apparatus in which resistance of various forms may develop – spaces of resistance, if you like. In the former Soviet Union there were networks of dissidents in which ideas and literature officially banned by the state were able to circulate (albeit in a highly restricted way), and in many countries state authorities either tolerate popular protest over a whole range of issues or do not have the resources to prevent it.

Finally, geography as *place* is significant in the composition of states. For example, at particular times, dominant groups may pursue deliberate state-building strategies (perhaps after independence from a colonizing state). In these circumstances a discourse of the state as 'homeland' is likely to develop as a means of legitimating the state.

I will discuss a number of these points in further detail below. First, however, we must consider the process of state formation in a bit more depth.

States and state formation

Problems of definition

There is no universally accepted definition of 'the state'. In part this is because, as with all objects of social scientific investigation, different writers

adopt different perspectives and understandings, and these inform their definitions. In part though, the problems of definition arise from the difficulties of essentialism, which I mentioned above. If states are historically changing and their forms, functions, and meanings are open to conflict and contestation, what the state is and does can be very different in different times and places.

As we have seen, although it is often the subject of naturalizing discourses, the state is not inevitable, nor are particular forms of the state. Certain political theories adopt *normative* approaches to the state. That is, they try to spell out what the state should be like and what a 'good' state would be. Such theories are sometimes linked to notions of progress, usually towards 'democracy'. This has led some Western governments, for example, to argue that Western-style 'liberal democracy' is the best type of state and should be universally adopted. In practice such theories are not the detached and objective arguments they sometimes claim, but are part of the process by which governments and states claim legitimacy. By naturalizing the liberal democratic state they make what is a highly unusual and geographically specific state form seem 'normal' – the culmination of human progress to date. This is related to what is known as the 'Whig interpretation of history' – the argument that human history has been leading up to the present day and that past forms of social and political organization should be evaluated according to how far they advanced or retarded that process of development.

I want to adopt a rather different approach. In my view it is important to recognize that the so-called liberal democratic state is one quite particular state form. Not only is it not 'natural' or 'normal' in any absolute sense, but it is also the product of specific historical, cultural and intellectual circumstances (see Chapter 3). This means that any definition of the state must give due weight to other types of state, including those which for various reasons faded away, and to the dynamic, complex and shifting character of all states.

By way of a working definition, therefore, I propose the following:

> States are constituted of spatialized social practices which are to a greater or lesser extent institutionalized (in a 'state apparatus') and which involve claims to authority which are general in social scope and which secure at least partial compliance through either consent, or coercion, or both.

This may seem disappointingly vague, but there can be no detailed definition of the state which is both transhistorical (valid throughout time) and applicable to the wide variety of social forms which have been understood to be states in different historical and geographical settings. The suggestion that the claim to authority should be general distinguishes states from, for example, the management of a firm. The argument that the claim should actually be complied with (at least to some extent) ensures that the term 'state' is only applied to institutions which are recognized as such (at least

by some) and which are therefore effective, and not to fringe organizations which might claim authority, but which have no means of making the claim stick. The definition proposed above could include groups which are not conventionally regarded as states (such as some religious organizations). In my view, however, in so far as some of their practices fit the definition, then they could in fact be viewed as more or less state-like. This open definition thus ensures that account can be taken of the emergence of new types of states, or state-ish practices. Thus the United Nations, the European Union, monastic orders and the Mafia, among others, are all like states in some respects. Although none of them claim statehood, they all claim more or less general social authority in particular places and in some contexts effectively replace states as, for example, rule-makers and keepers, welfare providers and conflict-resolvers. We might refer to them as 'quasi-states'.

State formation as a social process

States, then, are not natural or inevitable, but are the products of specific social processes and political struggles which generate a process of state formation. However, it seems highly unlikely that a ruler or other dominant group could have coolly decided to deliberately create the modern form of the state before it had emerged. Even if such rational calculations had been undertaken it is even less likely that a far-sighted potentate would have had the technical and organizational capacity and all the resources required.

Certainly states are the products of the actions of people, both of the powerful and of the relatively powerless, whose labour and loyalty (or resistance and dissent) are part of the process too. However, in late medieval and early modern Europe, where modern states began to emerge for the first time, none of the people involved could have foreseen (let alone desired) the vast bureaucratic powerhouses which we recognize as states today. This means that the process of state formation was a by-product of other activities, which may in themselves have been intentional, but which were not intended to generate the multifunctional modern state. In the language of Anthony Giddens, modern state formation was the 'unintended consequence' of intentional activities.[14] However, Giddens also argues that human activities are 'reflexively monitored'.[15] What he means by this is that both individually and institutionally we continually examine our actions and their consequences. This means that once state institutions start to emerge, once they gain their 'institutional materiality', they become objects of human understanding and reasoning. This means that individuals and groups, both within and outside the state apparatus, start to pursue strategies in relation to the state. In some cases this may include attempting to emulate the formation of states elsewhere. This occurred, for example, in a number of former British

colonies, where the British state was used, following independence, as a model for institutions of government and administration. Such strategies never arise on a blank surface, however; there is always a historical legacy – a set of institutions and conventions inherited from the immediate past. These provide the resources with which actors pursue strategies for the future, but they also limit the range of options. On a day-to-day basis, change is often piecemeal rather than dramatic, although piecemeal changes can add up to complete transformations over a long period. Occasionally, in the cases of revolutions, previous structures may be almost wholly dispensed with, although even here it is likely that the revolutionary strategy itself will have been heavily conditioned by the previous forms which were the context for its development. For example, historians studying Russia have often remarked on the extent to which the Tsarist state influenced that established by the Bolsheviks, following the Russian revolution in 1917.

Political strategies are important to state formation, therefore, but they rarely turn out as expected. They are also multifarious. The development paths of modern states have not been unilinear, even where similar forms have emerged in the end, and often the products have been markedly different. State formation should certainly not be seen as a process which tended automatically towards the modern form of the state. Along the road many other forms emerged, grew and declined: city states, absolutist monarchies, empires, satellites, religious governments and others rose and then, for the most part, fell. Their falls should not be seen as indicating that the surviving modern form of the state is superior, either morally or functionally. Decline can, after all, occur for a variety of reasons, and may have happened in some cases in spite of the otherwise functionally and morally 'good' features.

State formation, therefore, is not a process in which a 'more effective', 'more democratic' or 'more enlightened' system of political administration arose from 'inefficient', 'despotic' or 'ignorant' predecessors. While medieval states were no doubt all of these things from time to time, it would be a mistake to assume that modern states have done away with all forms of domination, inefficiency and irrationality, as we shall see below.

High and low politics

State security and social security

Before outlining some actual examples of state formation it will be helpful to add to the concepts of formal and informal politics, which we considered in Chapter 1. The terms 'high politics' and 'low politics' might seem similar

at first to the ideas of formal and informal politics, but they actually focus attention on a rather different division in the political process.

High politics refers to the politics of war, peace, diplomacy, the state's claim to sovereignty and constitutional change. It touches on the very existence of the state, and the ways in which it deals with threats to that existence. Its strategies commonly (though not exclusively) involve the people who occupy élite positions in the state apparatus. Since it is involved with the big questions of the state's existence and broad organization, we might think of it as dealing with state security.

By contrast, *low politics* refers to more mundane issues such as economic policy, public health, education, routine administration, welfare benefits and environmental protection: the kinds of issues over which states rarely, if ever, go to war, but which today occupy a large part of their attention and resources. The strategies and practices concerned do involve state élites, especially in producing legislation, but are carried out overwhelmingly by the ordinary personnel of the state – the junior civil servants, employees of municipal councils, teachers and social workers.

As in the case of formal and informal politics there is a degree of overlap between the two – they are not mutually exclusive. Thus the provision of social welfare may be used to assert the legitimacy of a state's claim to authority, while the protection of state security commonly involves the routine monitoring of many more ordinary people than is often realized. However, the high/low distinction is different from the formal/informal one. High politics involves informal politics (such as personal relations between heads of state) as well as formal politics (in the shape of diplomatic missions, constitutional commissions and the like). Similarly, low politics involves the formal arenas of parliament and civil service, as well as informal politics within a council department or an educational institution.

A shifting balance

The balance between high and low politics has moved back and forth over time. During war, for example, high politics comes to the fore. Over a relatively long period, however, there has been a tendency for high politics to decline in importance relative to low politics, at least in the West. In premodern states, government was dominated by high politics. Rulers were concerned first and foremost with issues such as territorial conquest and expansion, securing the constitutional succession for monarchic dynasties and gaining wealth and prestige relative to other states. The daily lives of their subjects were of very little concern to them, at least by contrast with the situation today. Provided the masses did not pose a threat to the state they were, for the most part, ignored. With the emergence of the modern

form of the state, in which the state becomes distinct from the person of the monarch, the balance began to shift. More and more states became concerned with the everyday affairs of their resident populations. To begin with, this was a by-product of the state's increased demand for resources with which to finance its own activities. Raising more taxes required more knowledge and information on the population and its activities, and this led to a growing tendency to keep tabs on what was going on 'at home'. At the same time, doing more to and for ordinary people required its own kinds of resources. These were not just a question of money, but also required new forms of technology – such as the means to collect and record data.

The roots of the shift from high to low politics correspond to the development of new discursive formations. You will recall that the concept of discursive formation originated with the work of Michel Foucault (see Chapter 1). Foucault's early work was not much concerned with the processes of formal politics; indeed, it was instrumental in focusing much-needed attention on informal politics. In his later writings, however, he did consider the issues of state and government in more detail.[16] According to Foucault, the idea of government was not originally associated with what we now consider to be 'politics'. Initially 'government' referred to government of oneself – the exercise of self-control. The term then came to refer to government of the family or the household (by, for example, the father). Until the sixteenth century, Foucault suggests, the ruler of a state was concerned with preservation of the state, rather than with governing: 'to be able to retain one's principality is not at all the same as possessing the art of government.'[17]

The notion of government in its modern, political sense only arises when the management of the state comes to be understood in the same way as a father's management of a family. That is, that the governor (father) comes to be concerned with the ordering of the people, activities and things of the state (household) and with their interrelations. This is a different concern from simply ensuring the survival of the state or protecting the monarchy from overthrow. With the shift to what Foucault calls governmentality, the ruler of a state begins to take an interest in, and to pursue strategies towards, the people who live in the territory of the state, and their affairs, including economic activities, social norms and so on. Previously what the people did was of little concern to the prince unless they threatened the state. Central to this change was the identification of the people of the state as a *population* which was understood as the proper focus of the art of government. For Foucault, the discourses and practices of governmentality emerge during the sixteenth century together with the objects of government: the population of a particular territory.

A relative shift towards low politics involved increasing what I have called the density of relations between state and society. In order to provide public health measures, mass education, environmental improvements and welfare benefits, the state has to 'penetrate'[18] society much more intensively, which requires additional resources of all kinds: staff, institutions, build-

ings, knowledge, systems of organization and frameworks of understanding. While states are in general more highly militarized than ever, there has been a relative shift away from high politics with the decline of war-making[19] as a routine activity, at least in the West. Wars continue to be fought from time to time, but the routine role of states, on which the majority of state revenues are spent, has become dominated by low politics.

This shift is less marked in the impoverished South, where a much higher proportion of state resources and activities are commonly devoted to high politics. This is in part a consequence of the smaller overall resources available to Southern states. Since state security (both material and symbolic) is widely regarded (by state élites) as the first priority, it is common for the first call on resources to be allocated to military and diplomatic activities. Where resources are limited, this may leave little for anything else. The absence of successful economic policies and the lack of social welfare provision, may, of course, exacerbate the threat to the survival of the government, or even of the state, from 'below'.

A further implication of the relative lack of importance accorded to low politics prior to the full development of modern states was that government often did relatively little by way of governing. The notion of governance, as a routine, continuous and fairly intensive monitoring, regulation and administration of a wide range of activities in society does not arise where high politics is the order of the day, since this commonly involves the state in strategies which are either directed externally (to allies and enemies) or confined to the state élite (such as the court in absolutist monarchies).

A growing concern with low politics is partly the product of strategies from 'above'. Tax gathering, for example, both serves the immediate purposes of the state and involves low politics. More often, however, it is the result of pressures, or responses to perceived threats, from 'below'. The long-term trend towards low politics developed especially strongly in the context of the dramatic industrialization and urbanization of the nineteenth century. These changes (see Table 2.1) produced large, impoverished urban populations, removed from many of the traditional ties of rural life and less able to rely on local sources of support. Living and working conditions were often dangerous and unhealthy. Such dramatic transformations gave rise to popular social movements (see Chapter 6) which pressed for reforms and the provision of social welfare, health services and education. At the same time, regardless of the actual conditions in large cities, the urban poor were regarded by the wealthy and by the state as a source of disease, moral laxity and social unrest. The strategies of the poor and the fears of the rich constituted a pressure on the state for social reform which had not previously arisen. In addition, industrialization gave rise to a new set of social interests, of industrialists, capitalists and entrepreneurs, who were concerned that the state should turn its attention to economic matters and to trade policy. In the twin processes of industrialization and urbanization, therefore, lay the seeds of the two

Table 2.1   Urbanization in Europe west of Russia

Year	People living in cities of 10,000 or more (millions)	Percentage of population living in cities of 10,000 or more
1590	5.9	7.6
1790	12.2	10.0
1890	66.9	29.0
1980	c.250	c.55

After Tilly, 1990[10]

major concerns of twentieth-century low politics in industrial economies: economic progress and social welfare.

Although the two are linked, in this chapter I am more concerned with high politics – with state formation and the development of state institutions. In the next chapter I will give more attention to low politics in discussing the rise and apparent decline of welfare states.

Claiming sovereignty

No higher authority?

In the modern world, states are the foremost claimers of authority, an authority which is simultaneously claimed to be legitimate. In other words, states claim to have the right to require residents of their territories to behave in certain ways and to refrain from certain activities, that is, to receive compliance. The fact that these rights of the state are (within limits) more or less universally accepted in most states should not mislead us into thinking that they are absolute or can be legitimated in any permanent way. They remain claims and assertions, albeit ones which are conventionally accepted, both by residents and by other states. The discourse of sovereignty raises the stakes still further. As Joseph Camilleri and Jim Falk argue:

> Sovereignty is a notion which, perhaps more than any other, has come to dominate our understanding of national and international life. Its history parallels the evolution of the modern state. More particularly, it reflects the evolving relationship between state and civil society, between political authority and community. ... despite loose talk about the way it is acquired, lost or eroded, sovereignty is not a fact. Rather it is a concept or a claim about the way political power is or should be exercised.[20]

A claim to sovereignty is a claim to being the highest authority within an area, or over a particular group. Modern states' claims to sovereignty are conventionally recognized by other states, although some states are not regarded as sovereign or legitimate by all others. For example, the state of Northern Cyprus, is not recognized as legitimate by any European countries apart from Turkey, although it operates in most other regards as any other state. An institution would be entirely sovereign if there were no organization or institution which could require its compliance in any field of activity and if it were free to pursue its own policies unhindered, at least within its own territory. It is doubtful whether states have ever been sovereign in this sense. Initially, as they developed, other claimants to authority, such as kinship groups and religions, have often been able to hold sway, at least in some areas of life. In the contemporary world, the gaps in states' sovereignty are numerous. In some cases there are *de jure* competitors, such as the European Union, which has the capacity to legislate on a wide range of trade, employment and economic matters. There are also many *de facto* challengers, such as transnational corporations, and international monetary and aid organizations. For example, transnational corporations can effectively bypass certain taxation regulations by manipulating the prices charged by one arm of the corporation to another. Since the resources available to the largest transnational corporations rival those of many states, and because they are able to move those resources across international boundaries with increasing ease, there are many areas of economic policy-making in supposedly sovereign states which are certainly heavily influenced, if not actually determined, by the strategies of transnational corporations.

Origins of modern claims to sovereignty

Despite contemporary challenges to their claims to sovereignty, states remain the most powerful organizations on the planet, and have the resources to pursue a variety of strategies in support of their claims. The doctrine and discourse of sovereignty, however, developed in Europe in tandem with the modern state itself. In feudal Europe, power was in many ways highly decentralized. The broad normative and legal framework was regarded as fixed, and divinely ordained, rather than the product or possession of the government. The monarch may have ruled by divine right, and been regarded as the ultimate temporal authority, but was almost wholly detached from the daily lives of ordinary people. Power was exercised through a highly hierarchical, but simultaneously decentralized system. The local lord was a far more important (and powerful) figure in the everyday lives of villagers than their king or queen.

As the feudal system began to disintegrate, the power of monarchs was

strengthened. The system of absolutist monarchies, which came to dominate Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, saw the concentration of power (in principle, absolute power) in the hands of the monarch. According to Anthony Giddens, however, unlike medieval monarchs whose power was embodied in their very person, the sovereignty of absolute monarchs was in principle at least, separable from the individual known as the sovereign. This allowed a shift, with the growth of a centralized state apparatus which extended beyond the court, from the sovereign-as-monarch to the more impersonal 'sovereign state'.[21]

Of crucial importance to this process was the emergence of a number of absolutist states together and the resulting development of the interstate system. Since sovereignty cannot be grounded in any absolute foundations, it is constructed in practice through a system of mutual recognition. A state's claim to sovereignty is 'made to stick', as it were, by showing that other states regard it as a legitimate claim. In one sense this is a circular exercise, since those acknowledging the claim have an interest in getting their own claims recognized. None the less it has provided the preconditions for the hugely powerful system of territorial administration of modern states, by providing a bounded space in which the massive apparatus and complex practices of the modern state could develop relatively free, under 'normal' circumstances, from external intervention.

One of the key moments in this mutual recognition process came at the end of the Thirty Years War in 1648. The Treaty of Westphalia secured the foundations of the modern state system by agreeing that individual territorial states, rather than the empires of which they were a part, should have the right to conduct their own diplomatic relations with other states, and that in principle, states should be regarded by other states as sovereign within their own borders. Thus it can be seen that far from being a natural and universal norm, the modern territorial sovereign state is the product of quite particular historical circumstances. Moreover, notwithstanding the undoubtedly large resources of the modern state, its claim to sovereignty remains open to challenge and continues to be contested, albeit often implicitly, as with the growth of transnational corporations.

Rulers, resources and wars

High politics and state security

While episodes such as the Treaty of Westphalia are important, it is crucial to remember that state formation is an ongoing process. The process is not

necessarily smooth, and indeed, Anthony Giddens argues for a 'discontinuist' view of history, which does not start from the assumption that present circumstances represent the neat unfolding of an even process of progressive development.[22] Things are certainly much messier than that. None the less, state institutions do endure over long periods, even if their functions may change (sometimes quite sharply).

Most states set a very high priority on securing their own survival. State security is usually presented by governments as their first duty. Notwithstanding the rise of low politics, modern states continue to this day to advance a variety of discourses concerned with protection from external and internal threats. In all cases, therefore, relations between states are, to a greater or lesser extent, discursively constructed. The implications of this insight for contemporary international relations are considered in more detail in Chapter 5. At the same time, one effect of these geopolitical discourses is to promote preparations for war. Such preparations still continue with the development, trade and stockpiling of weapons of all sorts all over the world. Modern states are typically highly militarized organizations, although the extent to which militarism is present in everyday life varies considerably.

State formation as the product of war

Charles Tilly argues that preparations for war and the waging of wars were crucial to the process through which the modern European state system developed, and that this has often been underestimated. He further argues that the ability of states to prepare for and wage war was heavily dependent on the kinds of resources available to rulers (he calls such resources 'capital'), and that rulers' strategies in relation to war generated state institutions and practices largely unintentionally. Moreover, the strategies which were pursued, and thus the processes of state formation, were strongly affected by the strategies and institutions of other rulers and states.[23] His analysis therefore fits very closely the approach to politics which I outlined in Chapter 1.

Preparing for, and waging, war are influential in state formation for a number of reasons. Making war is expensive and complicated. It requires large resources of people and equipment and significant levels of organization. It therefore requires taxation, recruitment into the armed forces and the development of new institutions. According to Tilly, these form the core of the process of state formation. In addition 'successful' wars may increase the territorial possessions of rulers, and start to demarcate the more precise boundaries associated with modern states. Of course this process relies heavily on coercion rather than consent:

Why did wars occur at all? The central, tragic fact is simple: coercion *works*; those who apply substantial force to their fellows get compliance, and from that compliance draw the multiple advantages of money, goods, deference, access to pleasures denied to less powerful people. Europeans followed a standard war-provoking logic: everyone who controlled substantial coercive means tried to maintain a secure area within which he [sic] could enjoy the returns from coercion, plus a fortified buffer zone, possibly run at a loss, to protect the secure area. Police or their equivalent deployed force in the secure area, while armies patrolled the buffer zone and ventured outside it; the most aggressive princes, such as Louis XIV, shrank the buffer zone to a thin but heavily-armed frontier, while their weaker or more pacific neighbors relied on larger buffers and waterways. When that operation succeeded for a while, the buffer zone turned into a secure area, which encouraged the wielder of coercion to acquire a new buffer zone surrounding the old. So long as adjacent powers were pursuing the same logic, war resulted.[24]

The extent of war during the period of the emergence of modern states was dramatic (see Table 2.2).

Wars are expensive, requiring the maintenance of large armies who are not engaged in production, and the acquisition of equipment, much of which has to be continuously replenished. Paying for all this involves taxation (in a broad sense), or borrowing against future taxation. Certain forms of taxation such as direct and arbitrary collection of money or goods (which Tilly calls 'tribute'[25]) can be garnered by *ad hoc* and coercive means. More systematic and dependable taxation regimes require organization and monitoring of the population, and a monetary economy.

In addition, the armed forces had to be organized and managed, and as warfare itself became increasingly large scale and complex, so too did military organizations. According to Christopher Dandekar, the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries saw a revolution in military organization:

Table 2.2   Temporal extent of war between great powers

Period	Number of wars	Proportion of period during which war was under way (%)
16th century	34	95
17th century	29	94
18th century	17	78
19th century	20	40
1901–75	15	53

After Tilly, 1990[19]

The state transformed military organization from a system comprising autonomous, largely self-equipped mercenary formations, employed by contracting captains, to one based on professional servants of the state, disciplined in a bureaucratic hierarchy and owing allegiance to the state alone.[26]

Despite the importance of coercion, the dependence of the warmongering states of early modern Europe on the wider economy and society for the resources for war, forced their ruling elites into relations of strategic alliance and compromise with other social groups. These other groups were often pursuing very different interests and strategies, but they were sometimes able to secure their aims in a process of negotiation with the dominant élite:

> In fact, rulers attempted to avoid the establishment of institutions representing groups outside their own class, and sometimes succeeded for considerable periods. In the long term, however, those institutions were the price and outcome of bargaining with different members of the subject population for the wherewithal of state activity, especially the means of war. Kings of England did not *want* a Parliament to form and assume ever-greater power; they conceded to barons, and then to clergy, gentry, and bourgeois, in the course of persuading them to raise the money for warfare.[27]

These processes and strategies resulted in the emergence of state institutions from which developed modern states. Among the key institutions involved were treasuries, state banks, taxation departments, diplomatic corps, military administration, military academies, armies and navies, and, as a product of bargaining with other social groups, (partially) representative institutions, such as parliaments. These organizations formed the cores of the apparatuses of modern states. On the whole none of them were established deliberately in order to construct modern states – the idea would have made little sense to those involved at the time. Rather they were the by-products, the unintended consequences of strategies pursued for other reasons, most notably the preparation for, and waging of, wars.

The character of states: variations, then convergence

During the Middle Ages the political map of Europe was both fragmented and complex. Hundreds of rulers governed a multifarious patchwork of statelets, cities, dukedoms, principalities, caliphates and larger empires. Within the largest units (such as the dynastic empires) dozens of local potentates pursued their own interests and strategies largely independently from those of their ultimate overlords.[28] As state formation proceeded through

the pursuit of war, different states developed in very different ways. By the middle of the twentieth century, however, states had become much more alike. While significant differences remain, modern states have much more in common with each other in terms of their activities and forms of organization than did their early modern ancestors. This process of differentiation and then convergence is central to Charles Tilly's account of state formation.

The resourcing of armies and wars through various forms of taxation over a sustained period depended upon the ability of the economy to generate sufficient production to maintain not only the general population, but also the military activities of the state. According to Tilly, the capacity of states and their rulers to pursue militarist strategies was heavily influenced by the reciprocal relationship between coercion and capital. We have already seen the importance of coercion, but it was the various different ways in which coercion combined with the availability of capital that led to variation in the character of states.

The spatial structure of the relations between capital and coercion were of crucial importance. According to Tilly, the means of coercion were characteristically mobilized by states and their rulers. Capital, by contrast, was concentrated in cities: the home of banks, merchants, traders, markets and craft workers. Anthony Giddens argues that while states have become the pre-eminent power containers in the modern world, it was cities which held that position in earlier societies.[29] Cities were in many respects rivals to the emerging states. Cities had their own institutions and resources and were concerned above all with production and trade, rather than war and the acquisition of territory. In some cases, they formed states in their own right – city states. In others they existed more or less uncomfortably *within* the territories or spheres of influence of emerging states.

States and their rulers relied to a greater or lesser extent on the resources which cities could provide. The precise balance varied, and Tilly identifies three contrasting trends in state development: capital-intensive, coercion-intensive and an intermediate 'capitalized coercion' path. These alternatives were not deliberate strategies, but represented the response of states to the different environments in which they found themselves.

In the capital-intensive mode, 'rulers relied on compacts with capitalists – whose interests they served with care – to rent or purchase military force, and thereby warred without building vast permanent state structures.'[30] By contrast, where coercion dominated, 'rulers squeezed the means of war from their own populations and others they conquered, building massive structures of extraction in the process.'[31] The intermediate path involved aspects of each, and included 'incorporating capitalists and sources of capital directly into the structures' of the state.[32] According to Tilly, examples of the first approach include Genoa and the Dutch Republic, of the second Brandenburg and Russia, and of the third, France and England.

In due course, however, the loose federations of city states at one end of the scale and the massive tribute-taking empires at the other both lost out to the 'intermediate form', the modern state:

> Which sort of state prevailed in a given era and part of Europe varied greatly. Only late in the millennium did national states exercise clear superiority over city-states, empires, and other common European forms of state. Nevertheless, the increasing scale of war and the knitting together of the European state system through commercial, military, and diplomatic interaction eventually gave the war-making advantage to those states that could field standing armies; states having access to a combination of large rural populations, capitalists, and relatively commercialized economies won out. They set the terms of war, and their form of state became the predominant one in Europe. Eventually European states converged on that form: the national state.[33]

Tilly's arguments are important, and the differing relationships between capital and coercion in different states were certainly highly influential in shaping different state forms. However, there is another aspect to the process of state formation which was also important in the constitution of states and the differences between them. In their book *The Great Arch*, Philip Corrigan and Derek Sayer[34] argue that state formation should be seen as a *cultural* process. So far we have looked at the ways in which military strategy and the relation between coercion and capital shaped European states. It should be remembered, however, that these aspects, together with the institutions which they produced are cultural, as well as military, political and economic phenomena.

What does it mean to say that state formation is cultural? First, it implies that it is a process which is symbolic as well as organizational or material. State institutions and practices embody a wide range of meanings, in their buildings, spatial arrangements, discourses, flags, costumes, ceremonies and routine activities. A berobed and bewigged judge symbolizes something different from one wearing a business suit. The elaborate ceremonials of the British monarchy carry a different set of coded meanings from the more austere rituals of a federal republic such as the United States. A conscript army means something different from one made up of volunteers. A parliament which meets in an ancient and grand palace is governing (symbolically) in a different way from one which meets in a purpose-built modern office building. Second, it implies that the production of meaning is central to the progress of state development. The state is not only a set of institutions, but also a set of understandings – stories and narratives which the state tells about itself and which make it make sense (in particular ways) both to its personnel and to the general population. These might include myths and legends, the official history of the state, or fictions and dramas which represent the state, its people and government in particular (usually heroic!)

ways. Third, there is a sense in which state activities are *performed* by the actors involved.[35] State bureaucrats behave in bureaucratic ways because they have an understanding of what it is bureaucrats do, with which they try to fit in. Armies, police forces, tax inspectors, administrators, teachers and politicians all work with a set of cultural codes about what it is to be a soldier, police officer, tax inspector and so on.

Crucially, cultural aspects can vary markedly between different states as their formation progresses. Even modern state institutions like parliaments, or bureaucratic departments, which may seem organizationally similar may have very different effects and roles as a result, in part, of the different discourses, symbols and performances embedded within them. According to Corrigan and Sayer[34], it is these cultural differences, which account for much of the distinctiveness of the English state as it developed from the Middle Ages onwards. Among other things, they emphasize the discourses of the state and its role in moral regulation as key aspects of its cultural formation. The discourses of the state are multiple (and sometimes contradictory). They include legislation, court judgments, inquiries, regulations, official reports, histories, educational material, public pronouncements and political arguments. The work of Corrigan and Sayer suggests that over time, these discourses, through their rhetorics, characteristic language and symbolic content, serve to mould the state as a series of cultural forms.

For Corrigan and Sayer, the concept of 'moral regulation' carries a broad meaning – much more than legislating against 'vice', for example. By moral regulation, they mean the processes by which the state tries to represent itself as the neutral guardian and protector of a unified whole people, which is actually a heterogeneous mixture of different and often conflicting social groups and interests. The state tries to pull together and integrate society, in part by representing itself as the embodiment of society. How often, for example, do we hear journalists speak of the British or the Americans or the Chinese when what they actually mean is the British government or the US administration or the Chinese authorities? The widespread confusion of states with their populations is evidence of the success of state strategies in trying to represent themselves as normal and natural expressions of a homogeneous and united people.

This process is always contested, however, with more or less success. Distinctive social groups, such as nationalist minorities, political opponents of the state, social classes, and social movements of all sorts have been at pains to undermine this claim of the state to what we might call cultural authority. (This and other aspects of social movements are discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.) Such opposition to state authority rarely goes unanswered, and while an emphasis on war with other states has been an important part of my argument so far, I want to turn now to the question of the state's control of its internal dissenters and resident populations.

Administrative power and state apparatus

Power and information

Recent work by sociologists and historians has stressed the vital impor-
tance of surveillance, monitoring and internal control for the development
of states. For Anthony Giddens, 'administrative power' is one of the defin-
ing features of modern states. Its origins date back to the development of
writing, and the importance of recorded information and information
storage to the emergence and power of traditional states. In pre-modern
societies technological and resource limitations prevented the kinds of
detailed information storage that we now associate with all kinds of large
organizations, but especially states. None the less the fact that some kind
of recording, however limited, was undertaken was a key breakthrough
and gave rise to the very possibility of the state as an administrative orga-
nization.

Writing and information storage and retrieval allowed a gradual shift
away from power as the immediate expression of the will of the monarch
towards power as the capacity of institutions to co-ordinate large-scale
resources for strategic objectives. The sociologist Michael Mann has drawn
a useful distinction between despotic power and infrastructural power.[36]
Despotic power refers to the power of state élites to do things without ref-
erence to the rest of society. As Mann graphically puts it: 'Great despotic
power can be "measured" most vividly in the ability of all those Red Queens
to shout "off with his head" and have their whim gratified without further
ado – provided the person is at hand'.[37]

By contrast, infrastructural power refers to the ability of the state to 'pen-
etrate' civil society and reach out across geographical space to influence
events throughout its territory. States which were despotically strong, but
infrastructurally weak, had great powers over life and death in theory, but
did not possess the logistical wherewithal to carry them out. Where states
have great infrastructural power, but limited despotic power, they typically
have huge bureaucracies reaching into every part of the land, but are unable
to use them to produce rapid or effective results. Mann identifies a range of
types of states depending on the combination of infrastructural and despotic
power (see Table 2.3).

Integral to infrastructural power is the collection of information. As we
have seen, absolutist states financed their military activities through taxa-
tion, and this was one of the first contexts in which systematic record-keep-
ing was undertaken. For Giddens, however,

> As good a single index as any of the movement from the absolutist
> state to the nation-state is the initiation of the systematic collection of

Table 2.3 Despotic and infrastructural power

	Infrastructurally weak	Infrastructurally strong
Despotically weak	Feudal	Bureaucratic
Despotically strong	Imperial	Authoritarian

After Mann, 1988[36]

'official statistics'. In the period of absolutism, such data-gathering was particularly concentrated in two areas, at least as regards the internal affairs of states. One was that of finance and taxation, the other the keeping of population statistics – which tended, however, until the eighteenth century to be localized, rather than centralized. . . . The official statistics that all states began to keep from about the middle of the eighteenth century onwards maintain and extend these concerns. But they also range over many sectors of social life and, for the first time, are detailed, systematic and nearly complete. They include the centralized collation of materials registering births, marriages and deaths; statistics pertaining to residence, ethnic background and occupation; and ... 'moral statistics', relating to suicide, delinquency, divorce and so on.[38]

Surveillance and pacification

According to Giddens, there are four axes which define the modern age. These are industrial production, capitalism as a way of organizing that production, heightened surveillance, and the centralized control of the means of violence. The state is involved to varying degrees in all of these, but is most fully involved with the last two: surveillance and pacification. Those of us who live in modern states with a high degree of infrastructural power would find it very difficult, probably impossible, to pursue our everyday lives entirely independently from the state. The state monitors our births, marriages and deaths, our work and income, our child rearing, our health, our housing, transport and travel, our entitlement to public assistance, our political activities, our law-breaking and much else besides. Some of this information is held anonymously, but much of it is in named records. With the technological changes associated with the development of microprocessors, electronic information storage has greatly expanded the ability of states to keep tabs on its population. On the whole information-gathering is *not* undertaken by specialized security services, although some of it undoubtedly is. Rather it is the by-product of a huge range of routine daily

interactions between people and state institutions.

Geography is crucial to the state's capacity to undertake such routine surveillance. It requires a high level of infrastructural power, and thus depends on a spatially dense and comprehensive set of institutional practices through which whole populations, from Miami to Seattle or from Land's End to the Orkneys, can be drawn into the knowledge circuits of the state. The 'institutional materiality' of the state which I mentioned above has a geography which stretches its practices throughout the state's territory, usually, although not necessarily, through a spatially dispersed network of offices, courts, registries and agents. This allows the expansion of state power away from the centre and right up to the boundary, enabling the establishment of the kinds of sharply-drawn borders characteristic of modern states.

In addition to surveillance, administrative power is expressed through the process of what Giddens calls 'internal pacification'. In traditional states, the centre had very little capacity to suppress internal dissent or unusual behaviour. Giddens mentions two developments which led to an increased emphasis on the state suppression of what gradually came to be defined as 'deviance'.[39] First, the growth of a large class of landless and dispossessed people led to rural unrest, poverty and rapid urban growth. Second, the state became increasingly concerned with the separation and treatment of specific social groups constructed as 'deviant' or 'abnormal'. These included those suffering from mental distress (the 'insane'), those with certain diseases, those committing criminal offences and those regarded as immoral or morally degraded, such as prostitutes and unmarried mothers. These twin shifts produced further parts of the state apparatus: the police, the internal security forces and 'carceral' institutions, such as prisons, workhouses and mental institutions.[40]

Resisting the state

The surveillant state is not without challenges, however. In part it carries on its detailed surveillance precisely because challenges to it exist. But the citizens of modern states are not dupes. They deploy a whole range of forms of resistance to state power. In all countries of the South and the former Eastern bloc and in a growing number of Western countries a burgeoning informal economy has grown up, outside the monitoring activities of the state. In some cases the goods and services it provides have been obtained through arbitrary and violent means, such as burglary and interpersonal violence, which seem to echo in a small way the excesses of the absolutist monarchies. In other cases, however, community groups working co-operatively have developed alternative trading and banking systems (so-called LETS: Local Exchange and Trading Systems) which bypass the formal struc-

tures of state power, and which bring much-needed economic growth and employment to impoverished communities. Much of the increasing capacity of the state to undertake monitoring and information-gathering is a product of the development of electronics and the rise of new information and communication technologies (NICTs). On the other hand, the same technologies can be used to transfer information between groups and individuals opposing state authoritarianism. Such information can now be transferred quickly, quite cheaply and largely unseen across international frontiers and stored in very small spaces. Through international computer networks (the Internet) it can also be published and transmitted to an increasing number of people. It is too early to tell what impact popular use of NICTs will have on the ability of states to control their populations, but at the very least it is clear that technological development is not always inherently and uniformly in the interests of the very powerful.

Finally, no system of control is perfect or complete. As a number of writers have shown, there is always the possibility of some resistance. Sometimes this is symbolic; sometimes it takes the form of hidden acts of sabotage or non-co-operation. The strategies of state institutions are met with the tactics of everyday life. Refusing to fill in a census return, declining to undergo electroconvulsive therapy, or greeting the rhetorics of politicians with scepticism may hardly be revolutionary activities, but they can represent resistance to the state none the less, and they give the lie to any assumption that the process of state formation is ever entirely uncontested.

The spread of modern states: statehood as aspiration

The apparatus of the modern state, complete with its complex geographies, differentiated institutions, and high levels of infrastructural power, was therefore emphatically not the product of a neat process of political development to ever-more progressive or 'democratic' forms. On the contrary, it represents the results of centuries of sporadic, *ad hoc* and unintentional developments. For much of the time war and the resourcing of war has been a key influence. More recently, the growth of administrative power, both through surveillance and population monitoring on the one hand and through the emergence of strategies for internal pacification and social control on the other, has been important. These processes have all involved particular uses of space and production of spaces, and all of them have to be understood as cultural transformations as well as political, economic and military ones. Modern, surveillant states are vast and powerful organizations which embody and act for particular social interests (including those

of the dominant groups within the state apparatus). In the next chapter I consider in more detail what the modern state does and in precisely whose interests it operates. Beforehand, however, I want to close the present discussion with reference to the global impact of the *idea* of the modern state.

Imperialism is the subject of Chapter 4, but I will refer to it briefly here because of its impact on the process of state formation. There are two important ways in which imperialism influenced the development of states. First, during the rise of Europe's overseas empires, the imperatives and cultures of imperialism were of great importance in conditioning the formation of states *in Europe*. Second, during the period of decolonization, the territories and (European style) administrative apparatuses bequeathed to the newly independent areas by the departing imperialists were central to the formation of states *in the South*.

Colonialism was a crucial influence on the development of states throughout Asia, Africa and Latin America. Firstly, imperial administrations operated in territories which had been mapped out through the processes of colonization. The boundaries were partly the product of conflict between imperialist powers over territory, partly the results of conflicts between colonizers and the colonized and partly a consequence of the imperialists' desire to organize space so as to facilitate the exploitation of resources.

With the eventual decolonization (at least in a formal, political sense) of these territories, the newly independent states stepped into the administrative map of the colonizers, although it rarely bore any relationship to the social or political geography of the pre-colonial societies. This crucially weakened the capacities of post-colonial states in key areas of their activities. They also inherited a state apparatus which was culturally alien and which had been designed for the twin purposes of subduing the local population and facilitating the transfer of resources to the metropolitan core.[41] While this legacy hardly provided a propitious start for many newly independent states, there was in practice little that they could do other than adopt the model of the modern state, at least in broad terms.[42] One of the difficulties with this, is that (as we have seen) the modern state depends upon the provision of large resources in order to carry out its activities. The position of many post-colonial countries in the world economic system has ensured that at best such resources are limited. The elaborate edifice of the modern state is expensive, and supporting it has in some cases added to, rather than solved, the economic difficulties of poor countries. According to Ron Johnston the failure of states in the South to secure 'development' has generated a cycle of political instability in many areas,[43] which has typically led to more liberal regimes being succeeded by more authoritarian ones and vice versa.

However, it would be a mistake to overstate the extent to which European notions of the state have been imported into other contexts. The political scientist Jean-François Bayart counsels against seeing states in sub-

Saharan Africa as unstable, weak, ineffective and corrupt.⁴⁴ Such images, he suggests, are not only offensive, but also inaccurate. They are not failed versions of European states, fatally undermined by a combination of indigenous inadequacy and the global economic order. Rather, African politics and state formation must be understood in their own terms and be seen as ordinary and human, not as pathological deviations from some Western norm or ideal.

Having said that, it is unlikely that any society could avoid the general model of the modern state – bureaucratic, territorial, complex and militarized – since the pressures which generated it in Europe have to some extent become global in their scope.⁴⁵ The importance of Bayart's work is to point out that within this general model, states in different societies can take very different forms, and that those forms have to be understood as the products of their own histories and trajectories.

A further influential role for the *idea* of the modern state stems from a second great movement of the twentieth century: nationalism. The anti-imperialist struggles which led to the creation of independent states in the ways I have described were one form of nationalism and led in some cases to what has been called 'flag nationalism' or 'state nationalism': the attempt to develop a sense of nationhood and national belonging on the basis of nothing more than residence in the same state's territory.⁴⁶ Other nationalisms, grounded in various constructions of ethnic identity pursue the ideal of the modern state understood as a nation state: an organic synthesis of state and people reminiscent of Ratzel. In such campaigns a discourse of statehood is developed in which the 'destiny' of the 'nation' is presented as dependent upon achieving statehood – a territorial space, in which the 'community' of the nation can govern itself. Such arrangements are mythical of course – as we have seen, actual processes of state formation are not quite like that. But they are also extremely powerful as the nationalist war in the former Yugoslavia, which began in 1991, attests. These issues are pursued in more detail in Chapter 6.

I have concentrated in this chapter on the rise of the modern state in Europe. This has been at the neglect of issues of state formation elsewhere. I make only a partial apology for this. It is certainly the case, as Bayart's work makes clear, that state formation must be understood in its particular historical and geographical contexts. This is true, not just for Africa, but everywhere, including the crucially important states of China, Japan, southeast Asia, and Russia. All of these states have had distinctive processes of formation and must be understood as such. However, all states in the contemporary world are examples of the modern state form. They are certainly all distinctive, but the patchwork of territorial states which covers the whole land surface of the globe is a state system in which, through the mutual recognition of claims to sovereignty and a perpetual interchange of ideas and information about what states are for and what they do, the modern state has been universalized (at least discursively) as natural. Locating the

origins of that form in the particular circumstances of a limited period and place helps to undermine its claims to naturalism, and thus in some small way questions its claims to authority too.

According to Charles Tilly, the modern form of the state has reached this state of ubiquity at precisely the moment that it has started to run into serious challenges to its claims to authority. In the next chapter we will examine in more detail what it is that modern states do in the contemporary world and whether the decline of the state has really set in.

Notes to Chapter 2

1 Friedrich Ratzel, 'The Laws of the Spatial Growth of States', in Roger Kasperson and Julian Minghi, eds, *The Structure of Political Geography* (London, London University Press, 1969), pp. 17–28, emphasis added. (Originally published in German as 'Die Gesetze des räumlichen Wachstums der Staaten', *Petermanns Mitteilungen* 42 (1896), pp. 97–107.)

2 Martin Glassner, *Political Geography* (New York, John Wiley and Sons, 1993).

3 Edward Soja, 'Communications and Territorial Integration in East Africa', *East Lakes Geographer* 4 (1968), pp. 39–57.

4 Ron Johnston, *Geography and the State: An Essay in Political Geography* (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1982). Gordon Clark and Michael Dear, *State Apparatus: Structures and Language of Legitimacy* (Boston, MA, Allen and Unwin, 1984).

5 I use the term 'South' as a shorthand term to refer to (most of) the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. The countries and people of the South probably have more differences between them than they have things in common. However, they are similar in having been made objects of international policy and concern, which identifies them as 'poor', 'underdeveloped' or 'Third World'. Many of the terms used to discuss them (such as 'developing countries') derive from discourses constructed largely in the 'North' and by 'Northern' agencies, governments and academics. Rather than reproduce those discourses and their attendant power relations here, it seems preferable to choose a less tendentious term. Whenever the term 'South' is used in this way, however, it should not be taken to imply that its constituent countries are a homogeneous group.

6 Anthony Giddens, *The Nation-state and Violence* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1985), p. 13.

7 For a discussion of the significance of 'claiming authority', see Chapter 1.

8 The main exception is Antarctica. While the governance of Antarctica raises interesting questions about states and territory, I will not be considering it here.

9 The same does not apply to most of the oceans, the sea bed, or the space above the earth's atmosphere.

10 Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital and European States: AD 990–1990* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1990), p. 2.

11 Giddens, *Nation-state*, pp. 49–51.

12 Nicos Poulantzas, *State, Power, Socialism* (London, New Left Books, 1978).

13 It is no coincidence that the words 'state' and 'statistics' share the same root.

14 Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1984), pp. 8–12.
15 *Op. cit.*, pp. 6–7.
16 Michel Foucault, 'Governmentality', *Ideology and Consciousness* 6 (1979), pp. 5–21.
17 *Op. cit.*, p. 8.
18 The masculinist overtones of the metaphor of 'penetration' are clear. The gendering of the state is considered in the next chapter.
19 Note though, that preparing to fight wars continues as a routine activity.
20 Joseph Camilleri and Jim Falk, *The End of Sovereignty?* (Aldershot, Edward Elgar, 1992), p. 11.
21 Giddens, *Nation-state*, pp. 94–5.
22 Giddens, *Nation-state*, pp. 31–4.
23 Tilly, *Coercion*, pp. 14–16
24 *Op. cit.*, pp. 70–1.
25 *Op. cit.*, p. 87.
26 Christopher Dandekar, *Surveillance, Power and Modernity* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1990), p. 57.
27 Tilly, *Coercion*, p. 64.
28 *Op. cit.*, pp. 39–40.
29 Giddens, *Nation-state*, p. 13.
30 Tilly, *Coercion*, p. 30.
31 *Op. cit.*, p. 30.
32 *Op. cit.*, p. 30.
33 *Op. cit.*, p. 15. Note that Tilly distinguishes between the national states (what I have called 'modern states') and nation states. The notion of the 'nation state' represents an aspiration for nationalist movements – a situation in which the boundaries of the state coincide with those of a culturally-defined nation. Few, if any, actual states fit this description. However, Anthony Giddens uses the term 'nation-state' to refer to modern states, since modern states usually *purport* to be nation states (for political reasons) and are widely regarded as such.   '
34 Philip Corrigan and Derek Sayer, *The Great Arch: English State Formation as Cultural Revolution* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1985).
35 Thanks to Miles Ogborn for this point.
36 Michael Mann, 'The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Origins, Mechanisms and Results', in *States, War and Capitalism* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1988), p. 5. The essay was first published under the same title in the *Archives Européennes de Sociologie* XXV (1984), pp. 185–213.
37 *Op. cit.*, p. 5.
38 Giddens, *Nation-state*, pp. 179–80. Giddens goes on to make the important point that social statistics are closely connected to the practices of social research, and the emergence of both from the eighteenth and, especially, nineteenth centuries led to the development of 'social sciences' which were not only 'about' society, but also implicated in the development of society: another example of the ways in which discourses produce their objects (see Chapter 1).
39 Giddens, *Nation-state*, p. 182.
40 On the significance of geography to these developments, see: Felix Driver, *Power and Pauperism: The Workhouse System 1834–1884* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993); Chris Philo, '"Fit Localities for an Asylum": The Historical Geography of the Nineteenth-century "Mad-business" in England as Viewed through the Pages of the *Asylum Journal*', *Journal of Historical Geography* 13 (1987), pp. 398–415.
41 Stuart Corbridge, 'Colonialism, Post-colonialism and the Political Geography of the Third World', in Peter Taylor, ed., *Political Geography of the Twentieth*

Century (London, Belhaven Press, 1993), p. 176.

42 Tilly, *Coercion*, p. 192.

43 Ron Johnston, 'The Rise and Decline of the Corporate Welfare State: A Comparative Analysis in Global Context', in Peter Taylor, ed., *Political Geography of the Twentieth Century* (London, Belhaven Press, 1993), p. 162.

44 Jean-François Bayart, *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly* (London, Longman, 1993). First published in French in 1989.

45 Tilly, *Coercion*, pp. 192–225.

46 Flag nationalism is not limited to the post-colonial world. UK nationalism is a flag nationalism. See, for example, Tom Nairn, *The Enchanted Glass: Britain and its Monarchy* (London, Radius, 1988).