

**POSTCOMMUNISM AS A HISTORICAL EPISODE  
OF STATE-BUILDING:  
A REVERSED TILLYAN PERSPECTIVE**

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**Working Paper #289 - November 2001**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This analytical essay offers a historical-sociological interpretation of a widely discussed and yet under-analyzed phenomenon that transpired in the former Soviet world after the collapse of communist regimes: the “weakness of the state.” After a critical survey of currently dominant approaches to this problem—approaches that conjure up the ideological commitment of global and local “neo-liberal” elites—I present an alternative explanation of the crisis of state capacity in postcommunism. The analytical matrix proposed in the essay—I call it “reversed Tillyan perspective”—rests on two general presuppositions: first, that the process of reconfiguring state structures in postcommunism is shaped by the distinct structural legacy of state socialism, and, second, that this legacy may be best comprehended if we approach it with the analytical tools provided by the historical sociology of state formation, and in particular Charles Tilly’s work on state building in Western Europe. In the final section of the essay, I explore the broader implication of the analysis of postcommunist “state weakness” for the study of state structures in the modern worlds.

## **RESUMEN**

Este ensayo analítico ofrece una interpretación histórico-sociológica de un fenómeno, ampliamente discutido y sin embargo insuficientemente analizado, que tuvo lugar en el ex mundo soviético luego del colapso de los regímenes comunistas: la “debilidad del estado.” Después de una reseña crítica de las aproximaciones a este problema actualmente dominantes aproximaciones que delatan el compromiso ideológico de las elites neo liberales locales y globales presento una explicación alternativa de la crisis de la capacidad del estado en el postcomunismo. La matriz analítica que se propone en este ensayo a la que denomino “reverso de la perspectiva Tillyana” descansa en dos presuposiciones generales: primero, que el proceso de reconfiguración de las estructuras estatales en el postcomunismo está determinado por el distintivo legado estructural del socialismo de estado; y, segundo, que este legado puede ser mejor comprendido si lo abordamos con las herramientas analíticas provistas por la sociología histórica de la formación del estado, y en particular el trabajo de Charles Tilly sobre la construcción del estado en Europa Occidental. En la sección final de este ensayo, exploro la implicación más amplia del análisis de la “debilidad del estado” postcomunista para el estudio de las estructuras estatales en los mundos modernos.



More than ten years after the spectacular collapse of state socialism, a consensus has coalesced around the following view: all countries that formerly belonged to the Soviet block have been afflicted by an acute crisis of state capacity. Largely absent from the scholarly and political debates that surrounded the momentous events of 1989, concerns about various manifestations of “state weakness”—the radical malfunctioning of key state agencies, the decline of administrative organizations and a swift deterioration of the institutional infrastructure of governance—are ubiquitous today. That the state is “weaker” than before, that it is “weaker” than it should be, are among the very few empirical and normative claims about post-Soviet reality that would hardly engender serious disagreements.<sup>1</sup>

At the same time, however, the dynamic that propelled this unexpected development has remained largely unexplored. Simply put, the question why postcommunist states have become so weak it yet to receive the serious treatment it deserves. As I will demonstrate in a moment, attempts to explain the rapid diminution of state capacity have been marked by polemical zeal rather than analytical depth. What is still lacking, therefore, is a more general understanding of the complex process of state-building in 1989. In this paper, I will offer such a theoretical point of view. My explanation of the crisis of state capacity in the former Soviet world will revolve around an analytical matrix—I will call it “a reversed Tillyan perspective”—which sheds light on the way in which state structures were rapidly reconfigured in postcommunism. This matrix is built upon two general presuppositions: first, that state-building in postcommunism is shaped by the distinct structural legacy of state-socialism, and, second, that the salient aspects of this legacy may be best comprehended if we approach them with the analytical tools provided by the historical sociology of state formation. Thus the “reversed Tillyan perspective” seeks to combine analytical rigor with

heightened sensitivity to the historical specificity of postcommunism. Hopefully, what will emerge from my inquiry is not only a stronger grasp of the problems with which contemporary East-European societies have to grapple, but also a clearer, if admittedly unsettling, vision of the difficulties that may undermine efforts at creating efficient instruments of democratic governance in the modern world.

### **The Dominant Explanation of State Weakness in Postcommunism: Blame the “NeoLiberals”!**

One would expect that, given the engrossing ramifications of the empirical finding that state institutions are radically malfunctioning, the set of issues related to the causes, manifestations and effects of state weakness will stimulate plenty of empirical research, generate competing hypotheses, and stir up at least some debates. A survey of the literature fairly quickly reveals, however, that a rather simple, parsimonious explanation dominates scholarly accounts of state weakness: the state was weakened because this is what local neoliberal zealots and their international capitalist mentors wanted. The simple story that is usually told to justify this explanation runs like this. In the aftermath of the collapse of one-party regimes, large segments of the non-communist political elites in Eastern Europe and the post-Soviet world were overwhelmed by a “neoliberal passion.” Once they seized power, reformist elites unleashed large-scale reforms designed after a “neoliberal blueprint,” and their policies were decisively shaped by the “Washington consensus” about what a healthy economy should look like. It was these elites that proceeded to “dismantle” the state in order to open room for “markets.” They were abetted by various representatives of “international financial institutions” who made the flow of much needed financial assistance contingent upon strict conformity with the devoutly anti-statist “neoliberal orthodoxy.”

Thus the ideology of newly empowered elites is singled out as the causal factor behind the process of devolution of state power. This proposition, in fact, is shared by authors who otherwise have next to nothing in common: “liberal triumphalists,” like Fukuyama,<sup>2</sup> analytical Marxists who are also virtuosos of game-theoretical modeling and macro-empirical research like Adam Przeworski,<sup>3</sup> admirers of the Soviet regime who decry its collapse, like Jerry Hough,<sup>4</sup> and even idiosyncratic prophets of the anti-Enlightenment who are keen to put their *fin-de-siecle* gloom on public display, like John Gray.<sup>5</sup> A Polanyian “great transformation” was re-enacted “from above” as millions of citizens were once again forced to pay an exorbitant price accumulated during the utopian drives of woefully incompetent leaders.<sup>6</sup> The question about the causes of state weakness in postcommunism has received a clear, uncontested answer: this is an artifact created by ideology-driven neoliberal elites.

This elegantly simple explanation suffers from at least three fundamental shortcomings: it rests on demonstrably false assumptions about elite behavior; it favors a-contextual speculations about the inherent “logic” of economic programs over empirical inquiries into social interactions taking place in a concrete historical setting, and—last but certainly not least—it displays a curious disregard for the facts.

To begin with, the “blame-the-neo-liberals” paradigm proceeds on the basis of an indefensible analytical premise, namely that political elites in the former Soviet world are motivated exclusively by their ideology, and therefore the outcome under consideration—decay of state power—directly reflects their anti-statist animus. To this claim, one may respond that, far more often than not, elites are not motivated by “ideology,” but by interests. In a relatively early article, David Stark, with admirable perspicacity, warned analysts not to take East European politicians at their word and to explore what “real preferences” may be hidden behind policies presented to the public as “IMF-sponsored programs.”<sup>7</sup> Alas, this advice was passed unheeded—and it is easy to see why. If references

to constellations of interests, historically specific structures and the unintended consequences of elite behavior are allowed to adulterate the purity of the dominant explanation, then its core hypothesis—that a “neoliberal blueprint” is the motor behind all major political developments in postcommunism—will have to be abandoned in favor of more variegated research on the precise role and impact of these diverse interests, structures and modes of agency. Elites will still be at the center of explanations of state weakness but to call them “neoliberal elites” will be meaningless. What they should be called—how they should be characterized analytically—is a question which cannot be answered simply by references to the unfathomable appeal of imported ideologies.

In addition to presenting a misleading interpretation of elite behavior, the hegemonic explanatory framework is strikingly insensitive to peculiarities of historical context. While neoliberal reforms are repeatedly discussed, the emphasis invariably falls on their *generic* consequences, in other words on the impact which these reforms are likely to have irrespectively of time and place. The proponents of the “blame-the-neoliberals” paradigm apparently perceive the study of state incapacity in postcommunism as coterminous with explorations of the immanent logic of the neoliberal *Weltanschauung*. It would be fair to say that, at least so far, academic exchanges regarding the decay of state structures in the former Soviet world have taken the form of re-examination of the first principles of theoretical economics. Little or no attention is being paid to the specificity of social and economic structures bequeathed by the *ancien regime*, empirically observable patterns of elite behavior and formally or informally institutionalized modes of interaction that affect the infrastructure of the state. Borrowing from the faded language of existentialist philosophy, one may assert that scholarly attempts to clarify the *essence* of economic policies is accorded precedence over sustained efforts to explore the factors determining the existence of state structures (I will return to the assumption that state structures should be held to “exist” in postcommunism below). Inevitably, general normative debates about “the proper



role of the state in the economy” have crowded out context-sensitive analytical inquiries into the probable causes of degeneration of state institutions in postcommunism.

But arguably the most disturbing aspect of conventional wisdom on the causes of state weakness in postcommunism is that its parsimony is bought at a very high price: utter disregard for well known facts about postcommunist politics. Even if elites in Eastern Europe were motivated exclusively by their ideology, to characterize this ideology as “neoliberal” will be preposterous. Poland is the only country where a handful of intellectuals had actually read Friedrich von Hayek and embraced his ideas about the state and the market.<sup>8</sup> To what extent these intellectuals possessed the wherewithal to establish a putative “hegemony” in the postcommunist intellectual milieu—where vehement Catholics, socialists and trade unionists were also remarkably active—is debatable. One thing is clear, however—nowhere else have “neoliberals” come even close to occupying leading positions. To label the policies of Vaclav Klaus in the Czech republic “neoliberal” would be seriously misleading;<sup>9</sup> to assert that a “shock therapy” was administered in Hungary would be obviously false;<sup>10</sup> to insist that policy-making in countries like Bulgaria and Romania, Albania and Slovakia, Latvia and Lithuania, was conditioned by local elites’ unwavering allegiance to a “neoliberal gospel” will be a sheer distortion. And yet, the process of devolution of state power is observed—with varying magnitude—all across the region.<sup>11</sup> This fact alone suggests that the dominant explanation of the causes of state weakness in postcommunism cannot survive an even moderately careful scrutiny. What we need instead is an account that offers a better perspective on modes of elite behavior, is more sensitive to context and thus explains the universal character of the phenomenon, in other words the fact that postcommunist state structures atrophied irrespectively of the reform strategies of concrete governments.

## **The Historical Sociology of State Formation and the Study of Postcommunism**

My attempt to provide such an account will revolve around several themes derived from the historical sociology of state formation. That this body of knowledge may have a bearing upon the study of the transformation of state structures in the late twentieth century was first suggested by Thomas Ertman:

How is it possible, under conditions of rapid social and economic change, to construct stable and legitimate governments and honest and effective systems of public administration and finance...? The European statebuilding experience, the only case of sustained political development comparable in scale and scope to the one unleashed by the recent wave of state formation, can cast a new light on that question.<sup>12</sup>

At least so far, however, this remarkable insight has been passed unheeded. With few exceptions—among which Arista Maria Cirtautas' analysis of center-periphery relations in Poland,<sup>13</sup> Vadim Volkov's study of violent entrepreneurship in Saint Petersburg<sup>14</sup> and a collection of essays on Russia edited by Gordon B. Smith<sup>15</sup> are especially valuable—the problematic of state formation has been largely absent from academic studies of postcommunism. Only one important aspect of the state-building process has been discussed, to the virtual marginalization of all others: the formation of nation-states. An overwhelming majority of analysts today subscribe to the view that the set of issues related to state-building in postcommunism is coterminous with the problematic of defining boundaries and creating nations. Therefore there is enormous literature on secessionist movements, strategies for constructing national identities and ethnic tension and/or reconciliation—and a dearth of analyses of other aspects of state building and state maintenance. Perhaps the best illustration of this rather one-sided interpretation of the problem of state-building in a postcommunist context is the following contention of Linz, Stepan and Gunther: “questions regarding stateness are irrelevant to political transitions

that occur within established nation-states or state-nations...”<sup>16</sup> The major implication of this argument is that outside the context of disintegrating federative and multiethnic states the issue of state-building should not even be broached.

As the voluminous literature on the historical evolution of state structures in a European context clearly suggests, however, the analysis of “state-building” is a rich and variegated research agenda that cannot—and should not—be reduced to the study of modern nationalisms. As Julia Adams (among others) has pointed out, “the state-building paradigm” displays a theoretical vitality and analytical depth precisely because it encompasses a wide array of “big questions” and “perennial” scholarly concerns.<sup>17</sup> Raising these questions and concerns in the context of postcommunist studies will enrich considerably current understanding of the transformative processes that swept through the former Soviet world.<sup>18</sup>

One insight from the literature on state-formation in particular will serve as a starting point of my analysis: state structures are historically contingent creations, and therefore the proposition that they are “there,” so to speak, ready to be “used” by political and social actors, should be treated not as an a priori assumption, but as an empirical claim that needs to be substantiated. Put differently, assumptions about existing state structures under state socialism should not be mechanically carried over in the analysis of postcommunism. Simply because the communist state constructed a set of heavy administrative structures entrusted with the task of economic planning does not mean that these structures may be easily re-tooled and used to monitor postcommunist privatizations. Simply because the communist state maintained a vast and well-equipped police force does not mean that this police force may be instantly re-directed to enforce property rights and the rules of market competition. Simply because the communist state effectively controlled the entire national wealth does not mean that its resources may be swiftly re-deployed for the purposes of postcommunist economic and social

development. In order to understand the problem of state-building after 1989, then, it is necessary to analyze the peculiarities of postcommunism as a historically specific environment in which a fundamental re-ordering of major political relations is taking place at a rapid pace.

In addition to necessitating a recalibration of analytical assumptions, a “state-building” approach also suggests that empirical developments in postcommunism be refracted through the prism of a set of questions that bring into relief the historical peculiarity of this episode of state-formation. More concretely, we need to re-visit the fundamental analytical questions that frame the study of modern state structures:

(1). What are the distinct features of the socio-economic context and how do they impinge upon the process of state-building? The analytical clarification of socio-economic context demands a scholarly exercise which Gabriel Almond has called “taking the historical cure.”<sup>19</sup> In other words, the analysis of the metamorphosis of state structures in the ex-Soviet block should rest on theoretically informed comparisons between postcommunism and other historically distinct episodes of state-building. More specifically, what “the taking of the historical cure” mandates is a re-interpretation of the structural legacy of state socialism from a state-building perspective. At least so far, narratives that touch upon the problem of the postcommunist state are structured around arguments that either emphasize the uniqueness of the historical situation (e.g. the conflicting imperatives of “multiple transitions,”<sup>20</sup>) or, alternatively, conjure up the *déjà vu* aspects of postcommunist transformations (i.e. the impact of neoliberal reforms implemented under the putative *diktat* of international financial institutions).<sup>21</sup> What I intend to offer, instead, is a context-sensitive account that revolves around clearly delineated analytical themes that illuminate the distinctiveness of postcommunism while placing this historical period in a broader comparative perspective.

(2). What are the strategic alternatives available to governing elites? Whether or not coalitions of powerful actors will favor the maintenance of a robust state organization is an empirical question that may be tackled only if the opportunity structure that these actors face is carefully surveyed.<sup>22</sup> This opportunity structure shapes strategic behavior, which in turn determines whether efforts to reproduce patterns of domination will result in the creation of “strong states”—and national markets—or precipitate the fracturing of pre-existing institutions. Therefore narratives about state-building in postcommunism should accord a high priority to the analysis of the historically constituted opportunity structures.

(3). What are the institutional consequences of dominant modes of predatory elite behavior? One aspect of elite behavior is particularly important for the study of state-building, namely the mode of agency known as “extraction,” which is broadly defined by Charles Tilly as “acquiring the means for carrying out [the rulers’] activities.”<sup>23</sup> “Extraction” is not simply a series of predatory acts unleashed upon subordinate populations; it also gives rise to a set of interactions—involving large constituencies—that eventually may crystallize in reproducible institutional framework of governance. What is extracted and how, then, are two analytical questions that have a bearing upon the social dynamic underpinning state-building. An adequate interpretation of the interactive aspects of predatory behavior in postcommunism will illuminate the nature of the social factors that affect the consolidation of state structures.

Conceived as an episode of state-building, then, postcommunism is characterized by historically specific socio-economic structures, patterns of elite agency that are both shaped by and in turn re-mold these structures, and modes of social engagement—involving predatory elites and the citizenry at large—that affect the level of institutionalization of governance. How to integrate these analytical themes into a

coherent perspective on state-building in postcommunism—this is the task to which I now turn.

### **The Reversed Tillyan Perspective**

Why and how robust state structures emerge in history is not among the questions to which the literature offers clear and unambiguous answers. There is, however, one particular account of this historical process that, in my opinion, is more powerful and insightful than anything else written on the subject: Charles Tilly's analysis of state formation in Western Europe. My argument about the causes of devolution of state capacity in postcommunism<sup>24</sup> is structured around an analytical scaffolding largely borrowed from Tilly's work. I will demonstrate that Tilly's explanation of the rise of modern states revolves around a coherent set of analytical themes. Subsequently, I will weave together these themes into an analytical matrix—which I call “the reversed Tillyan perspective”—and apply it to postcommunism in order to highlight the factors at work in the weakening of the postcommunist state. More specifically, I argue that the peculiar legacy of communism laid the ground for the emergence of a new elite predatory project (I call it “extraction from the state”) and that this project is inimical to the creation and maintenance of effective and strong state structures. For reasons that I will explain, this elite predatory project is not likely to encounter effective social opposition, and may inflict enormous damage to state structures unless countered by democratically elected elites who have a vested interest in strengthening public institutions.

In his mature writings on state formation<sup>25</sup> Tilly emphasizes that state structures should be considered neither as the natural off-shoot of preordained evolutionary historical processes, nor as epiphenomenal to the interplay of broadly defined “social forces.”<sup>26</sup> Rather, the study of modern states should be conceived as an inquiry into the emergence of what Tilly's distinguished collaborator Gabriel Ardant loosely calls “the

practical, concrete and technical conditions in which states function,” i.e., a coherent institutional framework of governance.<sup>27</sup>

Under what conditions can state structures take firm roots? What specific factors contribute to the potency and growth of the institutional edifice of the state? I think that Tilly provides a three-pronged argument designed to fit the peculiarities of West-European development. The argument runs as follows. State structures are shaped as what might be called the dominant elite project (in Tilly’s interpretation, this project is war-making) which unfolds within specific socio-economic structures (Tilly focuses primarily on the various structures to be found in medieval Europe) begins to crystallize in reproducible organizational forms (in Tilly’s account, quasi-administrative agencies providing the resources necessary for war-making). As the following analysis will show this argument is applicable to other historical settings, and to postcommunism in particular. In order to “transpose” this analytical scheme, I will argue, it is imperative to understand the nature of the respective dominant elite project, to explore how it is embedded in socio-economic structures and to examine its organizational-infrastructure impact.

It is well known that Tilly integrates these distinct analytical concerns into a powerful account of the historical significance of war-making—this is the dominant elite project he is examining.<sup>28</sup> It is also noteworthy that this astute observer who rarely leaves the analytical stones along his path unturned, does not spend too much time explaining *why* war-making became the dominant elite project in early modern Europe. To the question “Why did wars occur at all?” he provides the following succinct—and in my view convincing—answer: “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.”<sup>29</sup> Scholars bent upon comprehending the dominant elite project in a

certain age need not resort to obtuse theorizing; a careful examination of the historical record and sound intuitions about the nature of politics during that age will suffice. In order to understand how this project affects state structures, however, serious theoretical, conceptual and comparative work is necessary.

An important preliminary point to grasp is that in his analysis of the linkages between war-making and state-making, Tilly discards any simplistic notions of intentionality. To be sure, his argument belongs to a category which Rogers M. Smith has recently called “agency-sympathetic” accounts—Tilly seems convinced that what powerful actors do matters, and his historical canvasses are interlaced with evidence confirming that “our commonsensical feelings of genuine agency are right.”<sup>30</sup> But he emphatically rejects the notion that rulers deliberately designed state institutions which would “optimize” their war efforts. “Rarely did Europe’s princes,” Tilly asserts, “have in mind a precise model of the sort of state they were producing, and even more rarely did they act efficiently to produce such a model state... No one designed the principal components of national states.”<sup>31</sup> Moreover, he points out that, if produced, evidence indicating the rulers were actually capable of constructing states in accordance with a pre-existing blueprint will effectively falsify his theory.<sup>32</sup> How, then, does the dominant elite project leave its imprint on state structures?

It is in this context that the problem of *extraction* becomes relevant. As I have already indicated above, Tilly’s understanding of “extraction” seeks to elucidate not the timeless plot of how the strong exploit the weak, but concrete social dynamics that engender tangible institutional consequences. Put differently, Tilly’s analysis is intended to demonstrate how elite strategies for “appropriation of the goods of others”<sup>33</sup> eventually lead to the emergence of rudimentary administrative agencies which formed the institutional backbone of modern states. The key question in this analytical context is: where are the resources which dominant elites strive to acquire “located” and what does it



take to “extract” them? And the term “location,” of course, is not used in a geographical sense, but to denote specific nodes in the webs of institutions, practices and conventions allocating control over resources in societies.

Accounts of context-specific modes of extraction (or “spoliation”) play a dual function in Tilly’s argument. On the one hand, he highlights the variety of social relations which elites need to enter into in order to procure the resources they need. On the other, he argues that these varying modes of engagement propel the rise of different types of quasi-administrative agencies which may then be used for the purposes of governance.

In his writings Tilly demonstrates convincingly that different types of state structures may be traced back to the prevalence of various forms of “extraction” in specific areas. The “coercive-intensive path” to state-formation occurred where the bulk of resources were held by countless peasants and artisans, which impelled rulers to squeeze the means for war from their own populations. This is the most clear-cut case of coercive spoliation which targeted primarily agricultural surplus. In a revealing passage, Tilly conveys the urgency and drama of this mode of extraction:

Warmaking and statemaking placed demands on land, labor, capital and commodities that were already committed: grain earmarked for the local poor or next year’s seeds, manpower required for a farm’s operation, savings promised for a dowry. The commitments were not merely fond hopes or pious intentions but matters of right and obligation; not to meet those commitments, or to impede their fulfillment, was to violate established rights of real people.<sup>34</sup>

A relatively milder strategy for extracting resources was “the capital-intensive mode,” where rulers relied on “compacts with capitalists—whose interests they served with care—to rent out or purchase military forces.” This mode spread in commercially more developed parts of Europe. Finally, there was the hybrid “capitalized coercion mode” which involved elements of both “the coercion-intensive” and “the capital-

intensive” modes (Tilly maintains that historically “this form proved to be more effective in war and therefore provided a compelling model” which all European states soon followed).<sup>35</sup>

The other Tillyan insight which is relevant in this context is that organizational infrastructure created by rulers will be larger if the cost of extraction is higher—in other words, he explains the rise and strengthening of bureaucracy and various state institutions in terms of pressing need to extract. The imperative of massive coercion gradually led to the emergence of capacious state structures (as in Brandenburg-Prussia). Negotiations over capital flows produced federations of largely autonomous city-states, federations without permanent political institutions (as in medieval Italy). The scope and coherence of the set of administrative agencies established as the dominant elite project gained momentum is thus correlated with the “ease” with which extraction is carried out.

This broader view of state-building as a socio-economic process is supplemented in Tilly’s analytical scheme by what might be called an “institutionalist” perspective revolving around the following question: Under what conditions may the dominant elite project be constrained by various rules and regulations? Tilly demonstrates that predatory elite behavior inevitably encounters vehement resistance. And the “taming” of elite projects is what eventually leads to the metamorphosis of organizations originally created to assist rapacious elites into instruments of governance routinely used to satisfy popular demands. Developing an argument which incurred the wrath of orthodox “structuralists” like Theda Skocpol,<sup>36</sup> Tilly asserts that the values, perceptions and participation of “the masses” matter: The active involvement of the population in the dominant elite project precipitates “the internal forging of mutual constraints between rulers and ruled” within the polity and puts a pressure on power-holders “to concede protection [to the weak] and constraints on their own action.”<sup>37</sup> Only when elites are forced to re-negotiate the terms of extraction will the “organizational residue” engendered as a by-product of the dominant

elite project be harnessed for the purposes of good governance. Moreover—and this bears emphasizing—it is through popular mobilization and participation that domains subservient to “checks and balances” are demarcated.<sup>38</sup> That historically taxation became such a domain is due to the fact that it inevitably galvanized all social groups and provoked massive involvement in the political process.<sup>39</sup>

In the absence of such “internal forging of constraints,” state structures are bound to remain enmeshed in unrestrained predatory projects. Tilly’s brief but sharp remarks about neo-colonial states are important in this context. These states represent a case where rulers are not forced to negotiate their projects with the population because they get the resources they need to maintain their coercive apparatuses from abroad. As a result, their predatory behavior is not subject to rules and regulations.<sup>40</sup>

Tilly’s argument, then, may be summarized as follows. Robust state structures emerged at a particular juncture in Western Europe because the elite project which dominated the historical scene—war making—required a constant supply of resources which elites did not directly control. Since these resources were held by other social groups, they had to be extracted, which in turn made it imperative for ruling elites to invest time, effort and money in the creation and maintenance of a viable set of organizations involved in extraction. The extraction itself was an interactive process which was gradually institutionalized, thus leading to the emergence of rules and regulations which ensured to the weak at least some measure of protection against rapacious forays. The convergence of interests and attitudes made possible the rise of a structured, rule-governed, institutionalized domain of effective governance.

I think that the same analytical themes which Tilly developed to examine the consolidation of state structures in Western Europe can be employed to account for the devolution of state power in postcommunism. It would not be an exaggeration to assert that, in this particular historical context, the themes that I delineated above converge on

the following question: What are the analytical ramifications of the fact that the state-building process in postcommunism takes place simultaneously with the disintegration of a state-owned economy? I would argue that, conceived as the most important aspect of the structural legacy of state socialism, the state-owned economy is important to the study of state building in three distinct ways. First, this structural legacy makes possible the rise of a qualitatively new dominant elite project most aptly described as “extraction from the state.” Powerful elites involved in this project prey upon the wealth accumulated in the state domain. Second, since these elites are fully capable of manipulating flows of resources *within* the existing institutional edifice of the state, they have no incentive to develop strong state structures; quite on the contrary, undermining key institutions from “inside” is necessary for the success of their project. Finally, this form of predatory behavior does not pit elites against large groups of title-holders, which in turn means that (at least in the short to the medium run) the dominant elite project is not likely to encounter popular resistance and therefore to reckon with formal and informal constraints. These three empirically grounded analytical propositions comprise the matrix that I call “the reversed Tillyan perspective.” While Tilly tells the story of how predatory elites created robust state structures in the face of popular resistance, the postcommunist drama is about how predatory elites weaken state structures despite the persistence of popular demands for more and better governance.

The extraction from the state is a series of interactions whereby resources accumulated in the public domain are effectively removed from there. After 40 years of communist rule marked by relentless coercive appropriations, the party-state was in control of the entire wealth of the nation. Precisely these resources—amassed by the state—are targeted by political elites in postcommunism. These elites have absolutely no interest in the meager possessions held by the agents of “civil society” (a circumstance that accounts for the surprisingly low levels of repression in the fledgling postcommunist

democracies). In contrast, they stand to reap enormous benefits if they succeed in gaining access to and appropriating strategic “locales” where state assets are stored.

To the question why extraction from the state becomes the dominant elite project in postcommunism, I will provide a Tillyan answer: it *works*. Those who triumph in this endeavor can delight in the previously forbidden joys of wealth. They instantly acquire a celebrity status much higher than that of “simple” businessmen and are accorded social recognition denied to increasingly impoverished ordinary citizens. In the aftermath of the implosion of state socialism, extraction works even better and there are clear incentives to pursue it with heightened intensity, for at least two interrelated reasons. On the one hand, “democratization” and the campaign to introduce “the rule of law” are interpreted by predators as developments that render the imposition of swift and heavy sanctions increasingly unlikely. On the other hand the vicissitudes of the democratic electoral process exacerbate the fears of entrenched elites that their strategic positions may be lost.

Tilly points out that “forms of extraction” which make state-building possible range from “outright plunder to regular tribute to bureaucratized taxation,” but all forms depend on “the state’s tendency to monopolize the concentrated means of coercion.”<sup>41</sup> In a similar vein, I would argue that the concrete manifestations of “the extraction from the state” may run the gamut from embezzlement pure and simple to ad hoc transactions with state bodies to more regularized “partnerships” between state officials and non-state agents. In a very fundamental way, the boundary between the state and non-state domains is demarcated not by means of legal rules, but through changes in the “economic order,” a concept which Max Weber defines as “the distribution of *de facto* control over goods and services [as well as] the manner in which goods and services are indeed used by virtue of these powers of disposition which are based on *de facto* recognition.”<sup>42</sup> In other words, the success of the extraction from the state should not be necessarily construed in terms of the wrestling of first property rights in times of chaotic privatizations, but as a

question of *de facto* control which may not be adequately reflected in legally defined property forms. It is therefore misleading to think of extraction as transfer of resources between clearly articulated domains of “the state” and “markets.” It is fairly easy, however, to specify the common effect of the various forms which the dominant elite project will have: extracted resources—which also involve “intangibles” like the loyalty of officials, administrative knowledge and information—will not be available to future democratically elected governments.

Another, equally noteworthy implication of the fact that state-held resources are the primary target of extraction may also be spelled out. Predatory elites in postcommunism lack what Thomas Ertman has called “the incentive for infrastructural expansion,” i.e. the incentive to invest in the establishment and maintenance of viable state institutions.<sup>43</sup> In other words, those who extract from the state are only marginally concerned about flows of resources *into* the state domain. Simply put, the chunks of wealth already available to predators are so huge and are distributed among so few key players that foregoing short-term opportunities for the sake of sustaining extraction “over the long run” would be patently irrational.<sup>44</sup> Theoretically, of course, predatory elites will benefit from the regular replenishing of the state “locales” they have occupied. And, of course, whatever assets trickle into the state—the money of the occasional conscientious tax payer or international financial assistance—will be promptly redistributed. But in practice predators are driven primarily by short-term considerations. If and when these elites are forced to abandon their strategic positions, there is little or no “organizational residue” which future rulers may build upon. The dominant elite project under postcommunism is therefore conducive to the atrophy and decay of the state’s extractive agencies.

The social and economic structures amidst which the dominant elite project unfolds are strikingly different from those described by Tilly. As I already pointed out, in

communism—as well as immediately after 1989—all means of production, natural resources and financial assets are held by state agents, which means that in reality “economic structures” were entwined with administrative agencies. The social domain, on the other hand, was largely flattened: organized groups, intermediary organizations and articulated interests were non-existent. While an argument may be made that “subjects” under communism enjoyed some room to negotiate relations in the workplace and indulged in their small-scale strategies for resistance, there were no clearly articulated “interests” around which organized groups could begin to coalesce.<sup>45</sup> The capacity of civil society to monitor any elite action beyond the extremely narrow confines of labor relations was nonexistent.

As a *social process*, then, extraction from the state is quite different from war making, and the major difference is easy to grasp. In postcommunism, rulers are not compelled to “go out” and acquire resources held by identifiable and potentially mobilizable social groups. One particular corollary of this observation is that a re-scaling of elite predatory action occurs in postcommunism, from large-scale campaigns towards small-scale strategic transactions. Initial investments in massive, organized operations are not necessary—with the complicity of very few “insiders” operating exclusively from “within” state agencies the success of the dominant elite project is ensured. Larger constituencies were not involved, neither as victims nor as collaborators.

From that perspective, it becomes clear that the extraction from the state in postcommunism states gains momentum not by means of large-scale coercion, but through a set of painless operations likely to encounter no sustained social resistance. Tilly defines coercion in the following way: “all concerted application, theoretical and actual, of action that commonly causes loss or damage to the persons or possessions of individuals and groups who are aware of both the action and the potential damage.” He laments the “cumbursomeness” of this definition, but justifies it arguing that it makes it

possible to draw a distinction between coercive elite projects and what he describes as “involuntary, inadvertent or secret damage.”<sup>46</sup> It is the term *secret damage* I find especially pertinent to the study of postcommunism. The extraction from the state takes place in arcane bureaucratic “spaces” from which the citizenry is by definition excluded. That is why—and this is a major difference in comparison with early modern Europe—the domain where extraction proceeds is not marked by the galvanization of mass participation and is not the immediate focal point of popular involvement. Insofar as it involved, so to speak, the extraction of the extracted, the dominant elite project in postcommunism does not have to be re-negotiated by means of bargaining and compromise. Legal rules and regulations are not lacking; however, there is no mobilized social constituency capable of monitoring the management of state property and enforcing rules against predatory elites.

I hope that by now it is clear why I call my analytical matrix “a reversed Tillyan perspective.” In Tilly’s account, elites create a web of institutions in order to channel resources in the treasury and are forced to negotiate the terms of their predatory projects with mobilized social groups. The outcome is robust state structures. In postcommunism, elites emasculate existing state agencies in order to extract resources *from* the state; they do not have to reckon with societal counterparts and to fear the enforcement of rules and conventions imposing nominal constraints on their projects. The result is decline of state structures.

### **Conclusion: The Implications of the State-Building Paradigm**

That postcommunist societies are undergoing “multiple transitions” is by now commonplace in the literature.<sup>47</sup> When the concrete dimensions of this “problem of simultaneity” are specified, however, the accent is habitually placed on the synergy of economic reforms and democratic consolidation.<sup>48</sup> The “reversed Tillyan perspective”



should sensitize us to the fact that a third, equally important process is unfolding in a postcommunist setting: the re-configuration of state structures. Research agendas designed to explore the puzzles of postcommunist politics will be considerably enriched if the problem of state-building is considered alongside the set of well-known analytical issues related to marketization and democratization.

More concretely, the foregoing analysis of state-building may offer a fresh and more subtle perspective on the prospects of democratization in an East European context, a perspective that illuminates the nature of what has been called “other games in town,” in other words modes of wielding power that may eventually undermine democracy.<sup>49</sup> Rather simply put, the other game in town is not authoritarianism, communism or even plebiscitarianism—it is the extraction from the state. The “reversed Tillyan perspective” furnishes a vantage point that allows us to analyze elite behavior not in the light of a-historical assumptions about human nature (e.g. that rulers will inevitably steal whatever they can put their hands on) or a-contextual postulates about the nature of ruling (e.g. maximization of power—or revenue<sup>50</sup>), but in a historically specific context. It suggests that postcommunist predation is distinctly different from the anti-democratic strategies for domination traditionally analyzed in the literature on democratization. Predatory elites in the former Soviet world are simply not interested in using the infrastructure of the state in order to exploit “society.” That is why the postcommunist state is not predatory in the sense intimated by Douglass C. North, who focuses on the activities of “a group or class [seeking] to extract income from the rest of the constituents in the interest of that group or class.”<sup>51</sup> Neither is it predatory in the sense described by Peter Evans, namely “held hostage” by rapacious incumbents who are autonomous from those above them and prey upon those below them.<sup>52</sup> It is also not entirely similar to state-led predation described by John Waterbury: “through deficit financing and external borrowing the appetite of the state was sated at the expense of future generations.”<sup>53</sup> Future generations in the

postcommunist countries will surely have to suffer; but that is not because the state's appetite was whetted and sated, but because the state was sedated and ripped apart by the rulers themselves.

In short, in postcommunism—or at least the stages we have witnessed so far—social predators do not target the institutions of liberal democracy. Nevertheless, it is clear that their predatory projects may undermine democracy by default. For example, low intensity citizenship<sup>54</sup> is a fact of life in postcommunism, not because of the reproduction of repressive social relations and entrenched class inequalities, but because the on-going extraction from the state eats away the organizational basis of the state and thus renders impossible potentially salutary state action that may alleviate social suffering. More generally, the stability of postcommunist democracies seems to be threatened not by the recrudescence of illiberal passions or the seductive appeal of authoritarian movements, but by the seemingly unfathomable forces that re-shape the institutional and organizational landscape of the fledgling polities. The state-building perspective sketched in this paper offers an interpretation of the nature and impact of these forces.

In addition to improving our understanding of complex processes that unfold in a particular region, the analysis of state-building in postcommunism has broader implications for the study of state structures in the modern world. I would venture the somewhat radical opinion that the kind of elite conduct observed under the peculiar conditions of postcommunism may be a harbinger of things to come as the world moves into the twenty-first century. One of the lessons that we may draw from the postcommunist experience is that local predatory elites may turn themselves into a globally mobile caste whose ultimate objective is to consume extracted resources in some of the nicer neighborhoods of the global village.<sup>55</sup> In other words, my analysis of the atrophy of state structures in postcommunism brings back on the agenda an all-but-

forgotten question: *why govern?*—and by governing I mean creating the administrative wherewithal to respond to at least some demands of at least some domestic social constituencies at least some of the time. The dominant mode of elite predatory action that transpired in postcommunism—I called it “extraction from the state”—suggests that the issue regarding what might be called “the incentive to govern”—the incentive to invest time, effort and resources into the creation and maintenance of viable institutional infrastructures—may re-emerge with heightened urgency in debates about politics in the twenty-first century. In that sense, current research on state building in postcommunism may contribute towards the study of state structures in the modern world.

Summarizing his findings, Tilly argues that the political victories of ruling elites in early modern Europe “entailed administration.”<sup>56</sup> My own analysis warrants the conclusion that in a postcommunist setting the success of predatory projects entails the opposite: the destruction of administration.<sup>57</sup> In order to put this conclusion in perspective, it may be well worth remembering a genuinely prophetic statement made by John Stuart Mill 150 years ago: “Freedom cannot produce its best effects, and often breaks down altogether, unless means may be found of combining it with trained and skilled administration.”<sup>58</sup> The message which this paper has tried to convey is that the task of establishing the mechanisms and institutions of effective governance is the most daunting challenge facing the fledgling democracies in Eastern Europe—democracies where freedom is yet to produce its best effects. It would be a grave mistake to believe that while democratization and the establishment of functioning markets can only be brought about by means of popular mobilization, continued negotiations, commitment and sustained organized action, the maintenance of state structures is merely a matter of legislation and institutional design. In fact, the problem of state building in postcommunism is that, given the structural peculiarities of historical legacies, the

destruction of the institutional infrastructure is an almost *natural* development, and a major social effort is necessary to reverse it.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Here is a small list of scholarly works that deal explicitly with the problem of what may be loosely called “state weakness” in postcommunism: Stephen Holmes, “Cultural Legacies or State Collapse? Probing the Postcommunist Dilemma,” in: Michael Mandelbaum, ed., *Postcommunism: Four Perspectives* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1996); Adam Przeworski, *Sustainable Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Richard Whitley, “Transformation and Change in Europe: Critical Themes,” in: Eckhardt Dittrich, Gert Schmidt and Richard Whitley, eds., *Industrial Transformation in Europe: Process and Contexts* (London: Sage Publications, 1995); Alice Amsden, Jacek Kohanowicz and Lance Taylor, *The Market Meets Its Match: Restructuring the Economies of Eastern Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994); Michael Burawoy, “The State and Economic Involution: Russia Through A China Lens,” in: Peter Evans, ed., *State-Society Synergy: Government and Social Capital in Development* (Berkeley: The University of California Research Series, No. 94, 1997); Jacek Kohanowicz, “Reforming Weak States and Deficient Bureaucracies,” in: Joan Nelson, ed., *Intricate Links: Democratization and Market Reforms in Latin America and Eastern Europe* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1994); Guillermo O’Donnell, “The State, Democratization and Some Conceptual Problems: A Latin American View with Glances At Some Postcommunist Countries,” *World Development* 21 (8) (1993), pp. 135–36; David Stark, “Not By Design: The Myth of Designer Capitalism in Eastern Europe,” in: Jerzy Hausner, Bob Jessop and Klaus Nielsen, eds., *Strategic Choice and Path-Dependency in Post-Socialism: Institutional Dynamics in the Transformation Process* (Aldershot: Edward Elgar, 1995); Michael McFaul, “State Power, Institutional Change and the Politics of Privatization in Russia,” 47 *World Politics* (January 1995), pp. 210–43.

<sup>2</sup> Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History* (New York: Free Press, 1992).

<sup>3</sup> Adam Przeworski, “The Neo-Liberal Fallacy,” 3 *Journal of Democracy* (1993).

<sup>4</sup> Jerry Hough, “Russia—On the Road to Thermidor,” *Problems of Post-Communism* (1994), p. 26.

<sup>5</sup> John Gray, *Enlightenment’s Wake* (London: Routledge, 1995).

<sup>6</sup> The controversial work of Karl Polanyi has been widely advertised as the key to understanding the conundrums of postcommunism; for a representative collection of articles developing Polanyian themes, see Christopher Bryant and Edmund Mokrzycki, eds., *The New Great Transformation?* (London: Routledge, 1994).

<sup>7</sup> Avid Stark, “Path Dependence and Privatization Strategies in East Central Europe,” *East European Politics and Societies*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (winter 1992), p. 52.

<sup>8</sup> On neoliberalism in Poland, see Jerzy Szacki, *Liberalism After Communism* (Budapest: Central University Press, 1994).

<sup>9</sup> For more on Klaus, see the fascinating analysis of David Stark and Laszlo Bruszt, *Postsocialist Pathways* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

<sup>10</sup> For a definitive account of Hungary’s reforms, see Janos Kornai, “Paying the Bill for Goulash Communism: Hungarian Development and Macro-Stabilization in a Political Economy Perspective,” *Social Research*, Vol. 63, No. 4 (winter 1996).

<sup>11</sup> I would like to emphasize that the extent to which postcommunist states were afflicted by “weakness” varied considerably across cases. On the causes and nature of this variation, see Venelin I. Ganey, “The

Separation of Party and State as a Logistical Problem,” *East European Politics and Societies* Vol. 15, No. 2 (spring 2001) and Venelin I. Ganey, “Praying on the State: Political Capitalism After Communism,” Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of Political Science, The University of Chicago, August 2000, Chapter 6. In this paper, however, I explore the general structural underpinnings of “the malfunctioning postcommunist state,” a phenomenon observable throughout the former Soviet world.

<sup>12</sup> Thomas Ertman, *Birth of the Leviathan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.1.

<sup>13</sup> Arista Maria Cirtautas, “The Post-Leninist State: A Conceptual and Empirical Examination,” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (1995), pp. 379–92.

<sup>14</sup> Vadim Volkov, “Violent Entrepreneurship in Post-Communist Russia,” *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 51, No. 5 (1999), pp. 741–54.

<sup>15</sup> Gordon B. Smith, ed., *State-Building in Russia: The Yeltsin Legacy and the Challenge of the Future* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1999).

<sup>16</sup> See Juan J. Linz, Alfred Stepan and Richard Gunther, “Democratic Transition and Consolidation in Southern Europe, with Reflections on Latin America and Eastern Europe,” in: Richard Gunther, Hans-Jurgen Puhle and P. Nikiforos Diamandouros, eds., *The Politics of Democratic Consolidation: Southern Europe in Comparative Perspective* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), p.85. See also Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America and Postcommunist Europe* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), ch.2.

<sup>17</sup> Julia Adams, “Culture in Rational-Choice Theories of State-Formation,” in: George Steinmetz, ed., *State/Culture: State Formation After the Cultural Turn*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), p.98.

<sup>18</sup> In addition to Ertman’s book and the volume edited by Steinmetz (see footnotes 13 and 18, above), I have found the following inquiries into state-formation particularly helpful: Charles Tilly, ed., *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975); Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital and European States, AD 990–1992* (London: Blackwell, 1992); Douglas C. North, *Structure and Change in Economic History* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1982); Brian Downing, *The Military Revolution and Political Change: Origins of Democracy and Autocracy in Early Modern Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992); Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power*, 2 vols., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986 and 1992); Gianfranco Poggi, *The State: Its Nature, Development and Prospects* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990); Theda Skocpol, ed., *Bringing the State Back In* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Karen Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats: The Ottoman Route to State Centralization* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994); Kiren Aziz Chaudhry, *The Price of Wealth: Economies and Institutions in the Middle East* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997).

<sup>19</sup> Gabriel Almond, “Approaches to Developmental Causation,” in: Gabriel Almond, Scott Flanagan and Robert Mundt, eds., *Crisis, Choice and Change: Historical Studies of Political Development* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1973), p. 22–28.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Claus Offe, *Varieties of Transitions* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997).

<sup>21</sup> This is the dominant position espoused by all authors quoted above (footnote 1) with the exception of Holmes and McFaul.

<sup>22</sup> For an excellent discussion of the significance of “opportunity structures” in the creation of centralized states and unified markets, see Chaudhry, *The Price of Wealth*, pp. 43–46.

<sup>23</sup> Tilly, “War Making as an Organized Crime,” p. 181.

<sup>24</sup> “State capacity” is a general term used to designate the ability of state agents to design and implement policies. It may be disaggregated into several types of state capacities analytically linked to types of state institutions (e.g. extractive capacity, coercive capacity etc.) As will become clear from my analysis, I will

deal primarily with the extractive, regulatory and integrative capacity of the postcommunist state. For an illuminating discussion of varieties of state capacities, see Charles Tilly, “Reflections on the History of European State-Making,” in: *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*; Kiren Aziz Chaudhry, *The Price of Wealth*, p.6, and Gordon B. Smith, “State-Building in the New Russia: Assessing the Yeltsin Record,” in: *State-Building in Russia*, pp. 4–6.

<sup>25</sup> To be found in Tilly, “War Making and State-Making As Organized Crime,” (in: Theda Skocpol, Peter Evans and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, eds., *Bringing the State Back*. In [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985], pp. 169–91], which I will quote hereafter as “War Making,” and especially *Coercion, Capital and European States, AD 990–1992* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1992), quoted hereafter as *Coercion...*

<sup>26</sup> This general analytical position informs Tilly’s critical comments on the valuable work of Barrington Moore, Jr. (who, according to Tilly, “said little about the actual mechanisms that transferred a certain form of class power into a specific mode of government,” *Coercion...*, p. 12); Stein Rokkan (whose project “left a muddled idea of the actual social processes connecting changes of the relations among rulers, neighboring powers, dominant classes and religious institutions with alternative state trajectories,” *Coercion...*, p.13) and Lewis Mumford (who rather mechanically treated “forms of rule as outgrowths of prevailing technology,” *Coercion...*, p. 14). Cf. Barrington Moore, Jr., *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966), Stein Rokkan, “Dimensions of State Formation and Nation-Building: A Possible Paradigm for Research on Variations Within Europe, in: Charles Tilly, ed., *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), pp. 562–600; and Lewis Mumford, *The Myth of the Machine: The Pentagon of Power* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Jovanovich, 1970).

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Gabriel Ardant, “Financial Policy and Economic Infrastructure of Modern States and Nations,” in: *The Formation of National States*, p. 164.

<sup>28</sup> For a useful survey of the literature on “war-making and state-building,” see Brian Downing, *The Military Revolution and Political Change*, Chapter 1. A classical study of war in early modern Europe is William McNeill, *The Pursuit of Power: Technology, Armed Force, and Society Since A.D. 1000*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982.

<sup>29</sup> Tilly, *Coercion...*, p. 70; italics in the original.

<sup>30</sup> Rogers M. Smith, “Science, Non-Science and Politics,” in: Terrence McDonald, ed., *The Historic Turn in the Human Sciences* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1996), p. 124.

<sup>31</sup> Tilly, *Coercion...*, pp. 25–26.

<sup>32</sup> Tilly, *Coercion...*, p. 34.

<sup>33</sup> This is Vilfredo Pareto’s definition of “spoliation,” a concept that anticipates Tilly’s “extraction.” Pareto singles out “spoliation” as the foremost functional imperative that shapes the behavior of political elites, see Vilfredo Pareto, *Sociological Writings*, selected and introduced by S. E. Finer (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1966), p. 114.

<sup>34</sup> Charles Tilly, *As Sociology Meets History* (New York: Academic Press, 1981), p. 121.

<sup>35</sup> Tilly, *Coercion...*, p. 30.

<sup>36</sup> For Skocpol’s criticisms of Tilly, see her *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 16.

<sup>37</sup> Tilly, “War Making...,” p. 170, 186.

<sup>38</sup> Given that Tilly’s writings invariably offer sustained and illuminating discussions of the mechanisms whereby various coalitions of social actors impose limits on predatory behavior and thus partake in the process of state-building, the charge that Tilly somehow denigrates the role of “social alliances” seems to

me misplaced. Cf. Hendrik Spruyt, *The Sovereign State and Its Competitors* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 29–33.

<sup>39</sup> For more on the relation between state-building and taxation in the modern era, see Joseph Schumpeter's masterful study "The Crisis of the Tax State," in: *The Economics and Sociology of Capitalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), pp. 89–123.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Tilly, "War Making...," p. 186.

<sup>41</sup> Tilly, p. 181.

<sup>42</sup> Max Weber, *Economy and Society* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1978), Volume I, p. 312

<sup>43</sup> Thomas Ertman, *Birth of the Leviathan*, p. 315.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Steven L. Solnick, "Russia Over the Edge," *East European Constitutional Review*, Vol.7, No.4 (Fall 1998), pp. 70–72.

<sup>45</sup> For more on this, see Jadwiga Staniszkis, *The Ontology of Socialism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).

<sup>46</sup> Tilly, *Capital...*, p. 19.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Jon Elster, Claus Offe and Ulrich K. Preuss, *Institutional Design in Post-Communist Societies: Re-Building the Ship at Sea* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

<sup>48</sup> Along these lines, see Adam Przeworski, *Democracy and the Market* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

<sup>49</sup> The reference is to the well known definition of "consolidated democracy" as a polity where "democracy is the only game in town," a definition adopted by, among others, Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan in their *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America and Postcommunist Europe* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), Chapter 1.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Margaret Levy, "The Predatory Theory of Rule," *Politics and Society*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (January 1981), pp. 431–66.

<sup>51</sup> Douglass C. North, *Structure and Change in Economic History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1981), p. 22.

<sup>52</sup> Peter B. Evans, "Predatory, Developmental and Other Apparatuses: A Comparative Political Economy Perspective on the Third World State," *Sociological Forum* Vol. 4, No. 4 (1989), pp. 569–71.

<sup>53</sup> John Waterbury, *Exposed to Innumerable Delusions: Public Enterprise and State Power in Egypt, India, Mexico and Turkey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 20.

<sup>54</sup> On the notion of "low intensity citizenship," see Guillermo O'Donnell, *Counterpoints* (Notre Dame: The University of Notre Dame Press, 1999).

<sup>55</sup> Half-jokingly, one may state that from this perspective the most important agency in the future world will be the US Immigration and Naturalization Service: the more corrupt the agency and the easier it is to obtain a "green card" on global illegal markets, the lower the level of governance in the so called "third world," whose leaders will simply plunder available resources and then leave.

<sup>56</sup> Tilly, *Coercion...*, p. 20.

<sup>57</sup> For a fuller elaboration of the notion of "success" in postcommunism and on the role of "winners" as "state-breakers," see Venelin I. Ganey, "The Dorian Gray Effect: winners as State Breakers in Postcommunism," *34 Communist and Postcommunist Studies*, (spring 2001), pp. 1–25.

<sup>58</sup> John Stuart Mill, "Considerations on Representative Government," in: *Utilitarianism and Other Essays* (London: Everyman, 1993), p. 267.