

Tilly, Charles. "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime." In *Bringing the State Back In*, 169–91. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

Summary

In this text, Tilly draws on the analogy that war-making and state making behave like protection rackets and organized crime. In summary, Tilly views that war-makers and state-makers operate as coercive and self seeking entrepreneurs that are less like the traditional view of the social contract where the people consent to govern or whose shared norms and expectations arrive at a specific type of government and instead are more like racketeering enterprises that seek to use the mechanism of government to pursue one's own interests and authority. Tilly argues from the perspective of European development and claims that coercive exploitation played a large role in the development of the state in this region, but in instances where popular resistance or dissent is at its most effective, those that hold power are compelled to accept restraints to their power in order to avoid losing it. This made me think of Germany under Nazi occupation and events such as the Rosenstrasse protest, which led to the Nazi regime conceding to the demands of the protestors. Meaning, those in power were unable to effectively wield control and ultimately realized that despite the original plans to ship Jewish spouses of German citizens to concentration camps, that if carried out, they risked a growth in resistance to their regime.

In another part of the text, Tilly discusses how the concept of protection is a double-edged sword. Meaning, on one side of the term, protection brings forth comfort in that the protection that the state offers creates stability and shelter against danger. However, the other side of the term, Tilly states that it also calls forth more of an ominous context. Tilly believes that much like organized crime, citizens may be compelled to go along with the demands of the state such as the levying of taxes, the abiding by certain rules, because the state itself may be the perpetrator of violence towards them. Meaning, the protection that the state offers is from the violence it creates should the people not accept the authority of those in power and meet their demands. In this context, Tilly raises the fair point that citizens may not necessarily consent to rule as seen in notions of a social contract with the state, but are coerced by those who would potentially do them harm should they not accept their rule.

Violence itself when it is conducted by the state is carried out at a larger and more efficient scale. Further, in Tilly's mind, violence can be a tool used by the state to assert their authority. This text argues that war makes states and that in a very realist sense, those who controlled European states did not intend to create a nation state, but rather the goal was to keep would be challengers to their authority in check or to expand their power. However, war-making is a costly endeavor that requires both people and resources to carry them out. Therefore, war facilitates development in that the need for extraction from both natural resources and populations (such as taxes) drives the development of mechanisms for governance and coercion. Therefore, the formation of the state comes from the need to have the capability to carry out war.

Conclusion

- Main Theme- “The use of organized means of violence results in growth and change of Nation States.”
- Power holder’s behavior is akin to organized crime and racketeering enterprises in that protection is both a means of comfort (as in protection from invaders) and ominous intentions in that the state may use violence as a means of coercion into enacting their authority and will.
- War Making, the use of violence to secure or expand their claim of authority drives the need to the creation of systems of governance. Therefore, war making creates the state.
- But power can be constrained when there is the potential for mass uprising or discontent with the state of things. Therefore, in order to preserve some power, power holders may be willing to accept some limitations to their power.