Griffith UNIVERSITY
Queensland, Australia

War, selection, and micro-states: Economic and sociological perspectives on the international system

Author

Sharman, JC

Published

2015

Journal Title

European Journal of International Relations

Version

Accepted Manuscript (AM)

DOI

https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066114523658

Copyright Statement

© 2015 The Author(s). This is the author-manuscript version of the paper. Reproduced in accordance with the copyright policy of the publisher. Please refer to the journal's website for access to the definitive, published version.

Downloaded from

http://hdl.handle.net/10072/141001

Griffith Research Online

https://research-repository.griffith.edu.au

War, Selection, and Micro-States:

Economic and Sociological Perspectives on the International System

Abstract

Much International Relations theory explains the dominance of the sovereign state within the international system by a process of competitive selection. By analogy, the selection effects of market competition in promoting better adapted firms are said to illustrate the selection effects of security competition under anarchy in promoting better adapted units, specifically sovereign states. In critiquing this analogy, the paper argues instead that the historical diffusion and current dominance of sovereign states is better explained by a sociological institutionalist logic. Units secure social acceptance, and incidentally survival, through conformity to promote legitimacy. This position is justified on three grounds. First, survival and violent elimination from the international system over the last two centuries are unrelated to military capacity, but highly correlated with legitimacy. Second, selection-by-learning rests on a series of highly demanding and unrealistic assumptions; the sociological alternative requires much less heroic assumptions. Finally, a qualitative study of micro-states, most-likely cases for competitive elimination, demonstrates their attempts to conform to idealized templates of the modern state.

A great deal of theorizing in International Relations over the past few decades has been based on an analogy between firms and states. Whatever their differences, neo-realism, the closely related neo-liberal alternative, and more contemporary non-paradigmatic scholarship that draws heavily from the intellectual tool-kit of the New Institutional Economics (transaction costs, principal-agent problems, asset specificity, credible commitments, etc.) all crucially depend on the assumption that we can learn a great deal about units in the international system by assuming they are like firms. It has almost become taken for granted that, just as firms are assumed to be unitary actors making rational maximizing decisions in a competitive market where their survival is uncertain, so too states are assumed to share the same characteristics and face equivalent environmental pressures.

While generating important insights, this paper argues that the analogy has also misled the field in some very important matters. The most significant of these is the parallel whereby the selection pressures shaping units within the contemporary anarchical international system are equated with those shaping firms within the competitive market place. The success and ultimately survival of firms are attributed to the extent that their forms and strategies are well adapted to the competitive environment. So too the form and strategies of units under anarchy is said to be explained by the need to adapt to military competition. Competition in both domains is said to produce a convergence on efficient forms and strategies through either elimination, or learning, or a combination of both.. Although such selection explanations may ultimately be loosely inspired by Darwin's ideas, this paper argues that it is economists' notions of competitive selection in the market that have been more important in shaping IR scholarship.

The alternative perspective presented here is largely based on sociological institutionalism. If there is one central insight of sociological institutionalism, it is that organizational form and activities are structured in line with the need for legitimacy, produced by congruence with cultural scripts or models. Drori et al. summarize the contrast between the economics-inspired and sociological perspectives on organizational development as follows:

> The first [view] is that... organizations are a functional response: Long-term competitive evolution and increasing socio-technical complexity demanded more and more rationalization and standardization...The second view is that organizations are products of their social and cultural environments, they owe little to efficiency and that the environment legitimizes some forms and stigmatizes others (Drori et al. 2006: 27-28; see also Meyer 2010).

Work in this vein has served as the inspiration for important constructivist work in international relations (e.g. Finnemore 1996a, 1996b). Though such theory has most often been applied to domestic institutions, as a macro theory it has been applied to the development of political units within the international system (Strang 1991; Meyer et al. 1997). Spruyt has indicated the potential for this approach to reconfigure natural selection explanations in IR (Spruyt 2001).

The main problem for competitive selection accounts is that they either rely on a process of regular elimination by strong selection mechanisms, which is empirically unsupported, or on very implausible assumptions about units' ability to consciously adapt via learning. Taking the first, previous quantitative work has demonstrated that violent elimination from the international system is rare, and is not correlated with military prowess (Strang 1991; Lake and O'Mahony 2004; Fazal 2007). Many IR theorists have observed this problem (e.g.,

Wendt 1999: 323-26), but they have both underestimated its significance, and advanced amendments that themselves are very implausible. Specifically, most IR scholars incorporate some notion of states' capacity to learn in deliberately adapting themselves to the environment. But "saving" the selection analogy by positing that units learn to improve their competitive fitness under anarchy is just as problematic, because it relies on a group of highly unrealistic assumptions. These include the presence of regular, consistent feedback on performance; simple, obvious and invariant causal relationships; a low rate of environmental change; strong incentives to learn and reform; and unproblematic implementation of measures to improve organizational performance. Rather than being separate, additive explanations, however, justifying the unrealistic assumptions of "Lamarckian" selection, based on learning, must in practice rest on the presence of reasonably strong "Darwinian" selection-by-elimination. An illustrative study of micro-states shows that these have survived and multiplied, even in the absence of armed forces and great power protectors, while seeking to mimic the idealized template of the modern, progressive, rational state.

In contrast, the sociological view is supported on each of the three grounds where the state-as-firm competitive selection account falls short. First, while there is no relationship between unit survival and either military strength or powerful allies in the last two centuries, scholars like Strang and Fazal have shown a strong, positive relationship between unit survival and legitimacy, conceived as diplomatic recognition. Second, a sociological institutionalist explanation is more credible than a Lamarckian view of learned adaption because the former rests on the plausible contentions that understanding causal relationships in the social world is very uncertain, and implementing deliberate change in large, complex organizations is difficult.

Third, the section on micro-states explains how they have adopted the typical features of a sovereign state, despite radical diseconomies of scale, largely on symbolic grounds, which may provide incidental functional benefits.

However, the sociological institutionalist account has shortcomings. Methodologically, the sociologists have been criticized for a focus on abstract theory and global large-*N* correlations at the expense of case studies. The evidence presented here is primarily fieldwork-based illustrative case studies of the micro-states St Kitts and Nevis (the smallest country in the Western hemisphere), the Seychelles (the smallest country in the Indian Ocean), and Nauru (the smallest country in the Pacific). Given that these states lack any significant capacity for defense or allies, they should be most-likely candidates for elimination according to the competitive selection model. These cases are highly relevant to sociological institutionalists because one of the seminal statements of their thesis is based on the thought experiment of a new, small island state entering international society (Meyer et al. 1997). Furthermore, these scholars also predict that the effects of conformity with legitimating models should be most evident in the most far-flung, peripheral states (Meyer et al. 1997; Meyer 2009).

Most broadly, the goal of the paper is to caution against a functionalist bias in the field. The belief that the competitive pressures exerted by the anarchical international environment produce efficiency-enhancing learning and ultimately convergence on an equilibrium is one with deep roots in political science (March and Olson 1998: 956; Fioretos 2011: 374). Thus March and Olsen observe: “For those who see history as efficient, the primary postulated mechanism is competition for survival” (March and Olsen 1998: 954). Pierson seconds this view: “Firms, politicians and nation-states may pursue many goals and employ many strategies, but social

scientists often argue that over time those pursuing particular goals and employing particular strategies are more likely to survive" (Pierson2003: 190-191). Not coincidentally, economists hold the same basic belief (Winter 2005: 130). The implications of the argument presented here are for much more sensitivity toward historical inefficiency and uncertainty.

The structure of the paper is to initially present and critique the conventional view of selection pressures in markets and the international system, dealing with first the Darwinian elimination version, and then the Lamarckian learning account. Although presented separately, these two variations on the conventional view are in fact crucially interdependent. The second portion of the paper presents a positive account of how the international system shapes the forms and practices of the units that populate it, drawing on quantitative evidence on patterns of survival and elimination. The final substantive section presents the qualitative evidence on micro-states.

DARWINIAN SELECTION

In post-war economics the classic statement of Darwinian selection mechanisms comes from Alchian's discussion of firms (this logic had been earlier pioneered by Weber and especially Schumpeter) (Alchian 1950). Assuming that the system (the market) disproportionately rewards those firms that happen to be closer to optimum structure and strategy, these firms will realize greater profits and come to dominate, as others more distant from the optimum fall away: "In an economic system the realization of profits is the criterion according to which successful and surviving firms are selected" (Alchian 1950: 213). In the

initial statement of his model, there is no role for agency, foresight or learning (though this assumption is later relaxed). Alchian notes that persistent survival may well be a matter of luck, and that in a world of high uncertainty the lucky are more likely to survive than the "logical, careful, fact-gathering individuals" (1950: 213).

Following on from Alchian's work, Nelson and Winter build their evolutionary economics on a similar notion: "the economic analogue of natural selection operates as the market determines which firms are profitable and which are unprofitable, and tends to winnow out the latter" (1982: 8). These authors and others note the centrality of the natural selection analogy for economics more generally. North reiterates that economists' explanations of rational behavior "rest fundamentally on the assumption that competitive forces will see that those who behave in a rational manner... will survive, and those who do not will fail" (North 1990a: 19).

Drawing on this vein of thought, many IR scholars have emphasized that convergence on the efficient equilibrium of militarily effective Westphalian states has been driven by conquest within a self-help, anarchical system. The field has sometimes been oddly reluctant to acknowledge its dependence on this logic, and thus it is necessary to carefully illustrate how deeply the selection account is embedded within the conventional wisdom. Waltz is the best known advocate of this Darwinian competitive selection analogy. Echoing Alchian, Waltz holds that it is immaterial whether firms, and by analogy states, succeed "through intelligence, skill, hard work, or dumb luck" (1979: 77), and so Waltz claims not to rely on any assumptions about units' rationality. Systemic pressures are determinative, those units who are maladapted "fall by the wayside" (1979: 77). This position is by no means limited to Waltz, however. Thus in his study of military emulation Resende-Santos asserts: "Whether firms in the market or states in the

system, units in competitive realms are continually pressed to ensure they are internally well organized and equipped to thrive and survive" (2007: 6). In speaking of the mass conscript army Posen holds that "As in any competitive system, successful practices will be imitated. Those who fail to imitate are unlikely to survive" (1993: 20). Similarly, Walt notes that "states that failed to compete effectively were more likely to be eliminated from the system" (2002: 203). John Mearsheimer's argument about offensive realism depends on the notion that successful conquests, and thus the elimination of units from the system, are reasonably common (2001: 39-40, 147-148). Fazal notes more generally that this view of elimination of maladapted units via military competition is a vital, but often only implicit, plank of the realist position (2007: 4, 60-61).

The analogy of impersonal systemic forces selecting out maladapted units in the international system is by no means limited just to realists, or even just to IR scholars, however. For all the changes from Tilly's 1975 volume until *Capital, Coercion and European States*, there is a fundamental continuity in the prominence given to war and military competition in selecting out alternatives to the modern state (Tilly 1992). Echoing this military logic, North holds: "The cross-bow, the long-bow, the pike, and gunpowder had implications for the organization and capital costs of warfare. The costs of warfare rose. So, accordingly, rose the costs of survival in political units." Units had to evolve, as traditional revenues "were nowhere near enough to be able to pay the armies and mercenaries necessary for survival" (1990b: 24). Similarly, for Ruggie also the effects of military competition were also crucial (though not sufficient) in explaining the rise of the state: "The feudal cavalry was coming to be undermined by the longbow, pike, and crossbow and the feudal castle, subsequently, by gunpowder," which in turn required regular

taxation rather than traditional feudal structures (1998: 181). Although like Ruggie she advances a constructivist argument, Bukovansky concedes “The realist view of a system wide natural selection process working through international power struggles is difficult to discard in its broadest contours” (2002: 6). From the English school, Bull attributes war with a systemic function: “to determine whether particular states survive or are eliminated” (1977: 187). Although granting a role to legitimacy and peer recognition, Spruyt takes a classically Darwinian line: “The dynamic of competitive advantage selected out those units that were less effective and efficacious than others” (1994: 6). In arguing for the utility of a new evolutionary paradigm, Thompson mirrors the classic selection account of the dominance of states: “At a given point in time, there may be variation in the type of states (city-states, empires, nation-states)... Nation-states, by and large, have been selected over city states” (2001: 1).

According to Sterling-Folker and Spruyt, liberal IR theorists depend on the selection analogy just as heavily as their realist peers, even though the former are more Lamarckian and more likely to privilege economic factors, whereas the latter are more Darwinian (Sterling-Folker 2001: 65; Spruyt 2001: 110). Much of the literature on globalization has portrayed this process as an economic competition between states in which inefficient national economic models are selected out (Krugman 2009).

In terms of theory, the potential advantages of a Darwinian explanation in international relations are the same as those identified by Alchian for economists. If selection by elimination in line with competitive pressures is common, to the extent that scholars understand these pressures, they can create a powerful, parsimonious theory without the need to know about the nature or strategies of the units within the system (Wendt 1999: 184). Even more importantly,

the Darwinian model, whereby selection occurs independent of human forethought, calculation or learning, obviates the need to resort to unrealistic assumptions about rational maximizing behavior, a crucial point that has been overlooked or understated by Lamarckian critics of Darwinian evolutionary accounts, as discussed below.

PROBLEMS OF DARWINIAN SELECTION

If such a parsimonious, powerful Darwinian view free of unrealistic assumptions about the cognitive capacity of collective agents is in principle desirable, how well does it work in practice for the international system? In terms of the diffusion of the state beyond Europe in the last two centuries, and nature of the current international system, there are three serious problems. First, the rate of elimination of firms in competitive markets is vastly greater than that of units in the modern international system. Second, there is no discernible relationship between military weakness, or any other objective measure of lack of competitive prowess, and a propensity to be eliminated. Finally, the features that are associated with elimination favor a sociological explanation deeply at odds with realist logic, though this point is elaborated only in the section after this one.

Given the pervasive assumption that that we can understand the competitive selection of states through understanding the competitive selection of firms, how plausible is this analogy when it concerns promoting adaptedness by elimination? If elimination of units is rare, then there will be no selection effect, and the Darwinian view of the international system fails. In the United States currently there are approximately 13 million public and private firms. Around 2

million are created annually, and, depending on economic conditions, up to 1.5 million are eliminated each year. At current rates, there could be a complete turn-over in US firms within the decade. Indeed, for new firms the market is even more cut-throat, with a death rate of up to 90 percent shortly after founding (*Economist*, 16 April 2011, "Fail Often, Fail Well"). Such a high rate of elimination could very plausibly influence the form and strategies of units, in this case firms, within the system without any need to resort to an assumption of reasoned learning among these units.

While Fazal finds that 50 of 206 states have been conquered since the end of the Napoleonic wars (2007: 3), only 15 of these were actually eliminated. The remainder have been "resurrected" after a period of occupation (e.g. France 1940-44, Kuwait 1990-1991). Lake and O'Mahony find 29 state deaths in the period 1815-1998, though it is not clear if they limit their cases to only violent deaths (2004: 703). Either way, it is clear that the elimination rate for firms (something more than one chance in ten per year in the United States), is orders of magnitude greater than the elimination rate of states since 1815 (something less than one chance in a thousand per year). This vast difference between the elimination rate of firms versus units in the international system throws into doubt the analogy with firms in competitive markets. This extremely low rate of selection is not sufficient to impact on units' form or strategies (Wendt 1999: 323), given other confounding factors like environmental change, unless a learning component is built in. As discussed in the section on Lamarckian selection accounts below, the inherent difficulties of complex organizational learning mean that this high survival rate cannot credibly be put down to states adopting optimally efficient survival strategies.

But it is not just that the survival rate of units under anarchy is much too high for

Darwinian selection mechanisms to work. At least as great a problem is that the wrong kind of units are surviving. Since 1945 the multiplication and survival of tiny micro-states, at least 33 of which currently do not maintain any armed forces at all (Farrell 2005: 462), has been remarked upon by critics of realism (Jackson 1990; Finnemore 1996a; Spruyt 1994). Using duration analysis, Fazal finds no relationship in the period from 1815 between a lack of military capacity, or a lack of allies, or both together, and state death. Weak, isolated states are no more likely to be conquered than any other (2007: 4, 60-62, 234). This finding completely undermines the logic of Darwinian survival pressures promoting military effectiveness in the last 200 years. This is the very period in which the vast majority of the world's sovereign states were created, and when, thanks to decolonization, statehood eclipsed various imperial solutions for the governance of the large majority of the earth's area and people. In this period the explanans fails, because the elimination rate is too low, and the explanandum also fails, because weak states are no more likely to be eliminated than strong ones. To save the selection analogy in the international system, scholars have incorporated a provision for adaptation by learning. But in so doing, they respond to a major empirical problem in a manner that creates an equally serious conceptual shortcoming.

LAMARCKIAN SELECTION

The Lamarckian selection mechanism emphasizes rationality and learning among units in the international system to produce convergence on a Westphalian equilibrium. Unlike Waltz, most social scientists using the selection analogy are happy to attribute at least bounded

rationality to states as unitary actors (Kahler 1999; Modelski and Poznanski1996; Rapkin 2001: 56; Tang 2010: 34). In their explication of evolutionary economics, Nelson and Winter emphasize "our theory is unabashedly Lamarckian" in including a role (albeit limited) for the deliberate efforts of firms to improve their performance (1982: 11). In particular, units within the system will emulate military success as a reasoned response to the threatening environment of international anarchy. States will not only tend to redesign their militaries in line with successful models, but will also ensure the prerequisites for generating effective military capacity are in place by similarly adapting their internal political and economic structures, such as the fiscal system necessary to support professional standing armies. The faith that learning is generally successful is another tenet that informs much political science work:

> Most theories of choice present decisions as being, on average, sensible. In their political versions, choice theories assume that, on average, voters vote intelligently with respect to their interests; legislators organize sensible coalitions, given their interests; and nation-states voluntarily enter alliances that, on average, improve their positions (March and Olsen 1989: 5).

Once again, however, there are problems with this selection mechanism.

In order for learning to be influential as a mechanism producing convergence on an efficient equilibrium, at least five conditions must be met. First, opportunities to learn must be fairly frequent, with regular feedback on organizational performance (Alchian 1950). Second, the pace of environmental change must be slow enough to allow the accumulation of knowledge and progressive advancement towards equilibrium (Powell and DiMaggio 1991: 33; Elster 1995: 408-409; Elster 1989: 80-81). Third, the causal relationships must be relatively straight-forward

between structures and strategies, on the one hand, and success or failure, on the other. Fourth, there should reasonably strong incentives to learn. Lastly, acting on lessons learned must be relatively easy, in terms of implementing knowledge acquired through observation. Though it is at least plausible that all these conditions might apply to firms within markets, there are good reasons to doubt that any of them apply to units in the international system.

Firms have a constant and obvious measure by which to judge their performance, realized profits, with feedback provided according to a ratio scale, money. In most industries firms are engaged in constant transactions, with a wealth of regularly-updated measures of costs, revenue and other performance indicators. The pace of change in the business environment varies from industry to industry, but this constant monetary feedback means that there is a good chance firms can accumulate knowledge faster than this knowledge becomes obsolete. Finding the causal relations between a particular form or strategy and business success may often be difficult and plagued by uncertainty. Nevertheless, the high volume of feedback relative to the rate of environmental change does provide opportunities for learning. Implementing drastic change is relatively common in firms; even the largest businesses are routinely restructured, reformed, split, merged, down-sized or liquidated. Because firms face a real threat of elimination (as discussed above), and have immediate individual and organizational rewards for better performance, they have a strong incentive to improve their adaptedness to the competitive environment. How do states compare?

States are said to judge their adaptive prowess with reference to major power warfare (Waltz 1979; Mearsheimer 2001; Resende-Santos 2007). These opportunities are very scarce, however, occurring perhaps a few times a century. There has never been a conflict between

nuclear-armed foes. Feedback may be mixed; the Red Army performed well against Japanese forces in 1939, but abysmally against Finland the next year. With such scarce and irregular indicators of performance it is highly likely that even if the right lessons are drawn at the time, this knowledge will be rendered obsolete before it can be put into practice, thanks to the environment changing more rapidly than information and knowledge accrue.

Determining what causes military effectiveness is fiendishly difficult, being a product of a huge range of complex, interacting factors (and perhaps luck too). In her study of effectiveness, Brooks argues that the global environment, national culture, and social and institutional structures may be as or even more important than narrowly military determinants (Brooks 2007). Low-equilibrium traps rule out trial-and-error approaches (Alchian 1950; Elster 2007). Even drawing lessons from the few examples that do exist is a vexed process, with different observers drawing radically different conclusions as to the causes of victory and defeat, even decades after the fact. One of the most perspicacious scholars of the subject maintains that a large majority of IR scholars are fundamentally wrong about the underpinnings of military power (Biddle 2004).

In the unlikely event states could learn what would make them militarily more capable, or better adapted to face systemic competition in some general sense, national leaders may well be prevented from implementing their designs. Militaries and even more so the societies and economies that ultimately underpin them are highly resistant to deliberate, planned change in line with the goals of a unitary actor, especially when it comes to fundamental social structures and cultural mores, let alone the global environment (Brooks 2007; Ralston 1990). For firms, being eliminated thanks to competitive pressure is a real and present danger; as established earlier, for modern states, it is not, and thus there is little incentive to learn.

It is not just the fact that each of these preconditions is individually difficult to satisfy that is so damning for Lamarckian selection; it is that they are probably each necessary conditions. A failure to satisfy any of the three first conditions (feedback, environmental stability, simple causation) rules out learning. Even if the first three conditions are perfectly satisfied, a government with no ability to implement change will not improve its fitness, and neither would a government without an incentive to do so. Individually, the chance that these demanding conditions will be met is small; the likelihood of all of them being satisfied seems remote indeed.

In sum, the common analogy between states' adaptation under anarchy and firms' adaptations within the market is highly misleading in crucial respects. The Darwinian mechanism is implausible because the rate of states being eliminated is too low, and there is no association between elimination and military weakness. Yet weakening the natural selection analogy by allowing units to improve their fitness through learning creates more problems. Lamarckian selection rests on unrealistic assumptions concerning the ability of units within the international system to judge and implement changes that improve their fitness. These failings are linked and reinforcing. Because of the inability of Darwinian selection explain the development of the international system, IR scholars incorporate rational learning. Yet as economists like Friedman, Alchian, Nelson and Winter appreciate (and sociologists like March and Olsen (1989: 7) and Strang (1991: 163)), demanding assumptions about actors' ability to learn are only tenable with a reasonably strong elimination dynamic. Economists can rely on descriptively inaccurate assumptions about learning precisely to the extent they have established a selection-by-elimination dynamic. Without such a dynamic these assumptions must be empirically substantiated, or abandoned. Thus rather than being separate and additive, Darwinian

and Lamarckian selection are actually mutually dependent.

The remainder of the paper argues that a sociological institutionalist account is a better fit with the evidence on pattern of elimination, does not rely on unrealistic assumptions, and can provide a superior explanation of a most likely test of the economics-inspired selection explanation relating to micro-states. The triumph of the sovereign state in the international system occurred as cultural scripts provided a model for post-colonial polities to emulate, and secured these weak post-colonial states regardless of their functional failing and military weakness. The first task is to summarize the main tenets of world society literature and show how these relate to units in the international system. External cultural scripts or models are more important in explaining the diffusion of sovereign states and their contemporary form, even if the initial origins of this form may nevertheless be a product of functional advantage. Contrasting with the heavily quantitative cast of the sociological work, additional evidence here is taken from a qualitative study of tiny micro-states. This explores how units lacking both defensive capacity and allies survive against the expectations of the competitive selection model thanks to cultural scripts underpinning sovereignty.

THE SOCIOLOGICAL INSTITUTIONALIST ALTERNATIVE

Although this paper argues that other scholars have often misdiagnosed the nature of the mechanisms according to which units emulate one another, there is no denying the extent of emulation. Resende-Santos notes that nineteenth-century Latin American militaries not only copied Prussian officer training and conscription plans, but also their spiked helmets, parade

march, and military music too (Resende-Santos 2007: 1). There has been a striking convergence in the forms adopted by polities and the many institutions within them that cannot be explained as a response to local, domestic problems. Why so much sameness? While theories based on the analogy between firms and states provide one answer, sociologists provide another.

The key premise of sociological institutionalism is that organizational form and activities are structured in line with the need for internal and external legitimacy, produced by congruence with cultural scripts or models, rather than functional efficiency or technical effectiveness (Meyer and Rowan 1977; March and Olsen 1989; Powell and DiMaggio 1991; Krucken and Drori 2009; Meyer 2010). Widespread similarities, or isomorphism, arise as organizations, including states, adopt the forms of those they interact with. The cultural environment provides scripts which suggest appropriate ends, such as to what to be, as well as means. New entrants to the system, in this case the international system, generally mimic those perceived as more legitimate and successful according to the shared standards of the day (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Finnemore 1996b; Meyer et al. 1997; Strang and Soule 1998). The primary period of entry for sovereign states, when statehood became the norm, was in the twentieth century with the end of European empires and decolonization. Despite radically different circumstances and capacities, these new states have closely approximated the structures of long-established states in the system.

Most organizations can be confident of their survival largely independent of their efficiency, and thus are free to pursue acceptance and esteem even if this might conflict with technical efficiency (Powell and DiMaggio 1991: 78). Hospitals and universities are more interested in improving their prestige by following perceived best practice than they are in curing

the sick or educating students (Powell and DiMaggio 1991; Drori et al. 2007). Conformity may provide material rewards and actually enhance survival prospects, but such pay-offs are a product of similarity rather than efficiency. Deviants lose out because of their non-conformity, rather than because they fulfill tasks less well. It is better to be wrong with everyone else rather than right in isolation. Once again, the premium on conformity is consistent with the survival of small, weak states.

From this perspective, institutions create actors, rather than the other way around. For example, Strang notes that states do not arise and then seek out international recognition; rather, they are constituted by virtue of the fact that they are imbued with sovereignty when they are recognized as states (Strang 1991: 148; Weber 1996). Mimicry and isomorphism extend to military matters also. Thus for Farrell "military organizations embody legitimated symbols of statehood and highly rationalized scripts for military action" (Farrell 2005: 455). Eyre and Suchman argue that states' weapons purchases may owe a great deal more to symbolic than strictly military considerations (Eyre and Suchman 1996). This same process of mimicry also extends to the economic and political underpinnings of military power that constitute the domestic structures of units. The measures copied may confer functional benefits (Prussian officer training), or may be symbolic (Prussian spiked helmets and music).

COMPARING THE PERFORMANCE OF SOCIOLOGICAL AND ECONOMIC EXPLANATIONS

How does this sociological account fit with the rate and pattern of elimination from the

international system? Here it is argued that this alternative better explains both the low rate of elimination, and the lack of any association with military capacity and alliance than the competitive selection model, but also that it is strongly supported by the correlation between legitimacy and survival. Secondly, sociological institutionalism does not rely on unrealistic assumptions concerning the ability of collective actors to learn and adapt.

To say that the elimination of states is too rare to be consistent with a Darwinian version of the competitive selection model is not to say that elimination has not made a difference to the character of the international system. In fact, elimination has exerted a strong and pronounced logic, but one that has much more to do with culture and legitimacy than military power or economic efficiency. Here the most powerful evidence is provided by sociologist David Strang's account of the expansion of the state system beyond Europe. Even using an expansive definition of sovereignty over the period 1415-1987, Strang's central point is that once polities have attained sovereign status they are very rarely deprived of it: "In the language of stochastic processes, sovereignty is virtually an 'absorbing state' which once entered is not left" (Strang 1991: 154). Yet non-state units not recognized by European powers enjoy no such security, with 263 instances of unrecognized polities outside Europe becoming colonies or protectorates. Strang advances an explicitly cultural explanation for this pattern, arguing that the stability and security enjoyed by those units enjoying recognized sovereignty is a product of their mutually-acknowledged legitimacy (1991: 148).

Looking at the period since 1815 based on an expanded Correlates of War set, Fazal confirms Strang's thesis: the legitimating effects of international recognition provides a much better explanation of state death than either balancing behavior or military capacities, or both

together (Fazal 2007: 4). Significantly, most of those states that experienced "permanent death" had only tenuous international recognition. Nineteenth century non-Western casualties like Peshwa, Nagpur, East Turkistan, Annam and Fouta Toro, although concluding the occasional treaty with European powers, were not regarded as being within the international system by the dominant powers of the day. The only violent and permanent elimination post-1945, South Vietnam, was never a member of the United Nations.

The data from Fazal but especially Strang further substantiate the sociological explanation of the development of the international system. Selection progressing according to a cultural logic eliminated non-state units outside Europe, while leaving the sovereignty of small, weak, isolated states untouched. The sovereign state only became the international norm, as opposed to just the European norm, in the twentieth century. The triumph of the sovereign state occurred with only with decolonization, which was primarily a product of the delegitimation of empires in favor of statehood (Philpott 2001; Crawford 2002; Jackson 1993). The same norms have secured the existence of dysfunctional and even completely unarmed states since 1945 (Meyer 1980; Jackson and Rosberg 1982; Jackson 1993; Finnemore 1996; Meyer et al. 1997). There are similarities here with the broader literature on the decline of war (Mueller 1989, 2009; Wendt 1999; Pinker 2011; for critics see Gleditsch 2013). However, there are two important caveats.

The first is that the decline of war as such does not explain the selection-by-legitimacy dynamics persuasively argued by Strang. The absence of war as a selection mechanism might be expected to promote diversity among units in the international system, yet we observe strong and even growing sameness between states with radically different material resources and histories.

Sociological institutionalism can explain this pronounced isomorphism in the absence of military selection in a way that the general decline of war literature does not. Second, the decline of inter-state war and conquest may not be associated with any decline of wars within states or other kinds of violence. The sociologist Ann Hironaka has put forward the provocative argument that the very absence of inter-state war and normative valorization of sovereignty has led to longer and bloodier civil wars as a result, though this thesis ranges beyond the argument presented here (Hironaka 2008; see also Jackson 1990). The sanctity of sovereign statehood may also actually encourage secessionist movements (violent or non-violent), as sovereignty becomes increasingly attractive and more and more secure (Fazal and Griffiths 2014). This dynamic is especially notable in Europe, but is also present in most other regions, and even in some micro-states as discussed with reference to St Kitts and Nevis below.

Beyond the question of the empirics of Darwinian elimination is that of the assumptions underpinning Lamarckian learning. For sociological institutionalists, uncertainty relating to the determinants of successful organizational performance is seen as pervasive and largely insurmountable, rather than being assumed away with the notion that, on average, actors get their means-end calculations right. Like Alchian before him, Elster has emphasized that for collective actors in complex situations, like states in the international system, uncertainty will usually be overwhelming, and he criticizes those using economic analogies for ignoring this point (Elster 2000: 693).

Information gathering is often pro forma or ritualistic, for example commissioning reports that are then never read (Powell and DiMaggio 1991: 3). Those making decisions are

backwards-looking rather than oriented toward the future. Observers will commonly not be able to work out the mechanisms in play (March and Olsen 1989: 56), technologies are poorly understood, and goals are ambiguous (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). Drawing accurate conclusions about recurring means-end relationships in the social world is extremely difficult. Influential theories of the history of science recount how evidence is almost always interpreted in the light of prevailing subjective beliefs, with disconfirming data usually explained away, rather than prompting changes in beliefs (Kuhn 1962). As a result, actors depend on simplistic and often inaccurate cause and effect stories (Strang and Meyer 1998). Rather than being decision-makers, actors are more often rule- or routine-followers, and as a result organizations often fall prey to local equilibrium or competency traps (March and Olsen 1989). Changes in institutions usually lag changes in the environment, which is something that shapes and creates actors, rather than simply being an object of study or a simple arena in which actors act. Organizational change is usually unplanned and only sporadically under the control of those in positions of erstwhile authority. Implementation is difficult, as the formal levers of control are often disconnected from actual organizational practices (Meyer 2009: 51).

MICRO-STATES: SECURITY AND CONFORMITY

Sociological institutionalism has generally made its scholarly mark through a combination of abstract theorizing and large-*N* statistical tests of global correlations. Even sympathetic critics have argued that the contentions at the heart of this approach would be strengthened by more focused case studies (Finnemore 1996: 339-341; Drezner 2007: 17-19). A

highly appreciative summary of Meyer's work similarly concedes that there is a general failure to consider the cultural and historical specificity of the societies portrayed as a relatively undifferentiated mass on the receiving end of inexorable global homogenizing forces (Krucken and Drori 2009: 20). This section aims to address these criticisms by presenting a case study of micro-states, focusing in particular on the Seychelles (the smallest state in Africa and the Indian Ocean region since independence in 1976, population: 90,000), St Kitts and Nevis (the smallest state in the Western hemisphere since independence in 1983, population: 43,000), and Nauru (the smallest state in the Pacific region since independence in 1968, population 11,000) based on fieldwork conducted in each country.

Why micro-states? In their piece on the "Incredible Shrinking State," Lake and O'Mahony describe the proliferation of small and essentially defenseless states over the twentieth century. They are puzzled, however, by the lack of functional explanation for states that face such daunting diseconomies of scale in military and economic terms (2004: 708-710). The competitive selection model argues that the ultimate force driving state survival and elimination is states' ability to respond to military threats. Being the weakest units in the international system, developing micro-states should be most likely cases for being selected out: "we would expect [micro-states] to face severe threats to their security more often than other states and at the same time be less able to deal with these threats on their own" (Wivel and Oest 2010: 435). Critics who dispute this line in arguing that such small places are less likely to be under threat face two difficulties. Empirically, each case was repeatedly conquered during the colonial period. Conceptually, if they were less vulnerable, realists are at a loss to explain why these countries have so closely mimicked the defining features of the sovereign state.

These tiny polities are well suited for testing sociological institutionalism also. In a landmark article, the sociological institutionalists anchor their argument in a thought experiment in which a small island state enters international society (Meyer et al. 1997). They predict that this new small island state would quickly adopt the standard, idealized models of sovereign statehood propagated by international organizations. They also predict that no matter how small and defenseless, this island would not be in danger of being colonized or conquered (Meyer et al. 1997: 146). John Meyer claims that the disconnect between functional imperatives and the contents of world-cultural scripts should be most evidence "in the furthest peripheries of the world" and the "furthest corners of the globe" (2009: 49; Meyer et al. 1997: 149). But there is no reason for these suppositions to remain only a thought experiment: isolated micro-states instantiate this hypothetical small island at the furthest periphery.

Given their extreme weakness and their place on the furthest periphery, micro-states approximate a most-likely test for both the competitive selection model and sociological institutionalism. The logic of most-likely cases was expounded first by Eckstein (Eckstein1975; see also Rogowski 2004; George and Bennett 2004). The force of such a test comes from the combination of the goodness of fit of the features of the example with the scope conditions and drivers of the selection mechanism (elimination), together with the radical difference between the end result predicted (disproportionate elimination of micro-states), and that observed (their survival and proliferation). The specified drivers of selection are present to an unusually clear degree, no militaries and no allies, and yet the result equally conspicuously is the opposite of what the explanation specifies should happen (George and Bennett 2004: 122). The persistence of micro-states is a clear anomaly, or rather repeated series of anomalies, which has a strong

impact on the plausibility of the general explanation (Rogowski 2004: 77-82). More generally, such a case study approach has particular advantages in investigating mechanisms, like the transfer of idealized models of the state, compared to large-*N* studies (Gerring 2004). However, it is important to state that a most-likely test is not the same as a test of a necessary or sufficient condition, and thus while the discussion of St Kitts and Nevis, the Seychelles and Nauru casts strong doubt on the competitive selection argument, it cannot conclusively disprove this account (Gerring 2004). With partial exceptions in the work of Lake and Krasner, the experiences of micro-states have been radically under-exploited in developing, testing and refining theoretical propositions in IR (Krasner 1999; Lake 2009).

St Kitts and Nevis and the Seychelles have defense forces used to back up the police, respond to natural disasters, and perform ceremonial duties; Nauru has no armed forces at all.[1] The obvious retort might be that such weak states instead protect themselves by allying with powerful states. Lake has argued that tiny states are most likely to trade off sovereign prerogatives (typically basing rights) to powerful patrons in return for security guarantees (Lake 2009). Yet none of the three states maintains any alliance with a significant military power, or plays host to a military base. St Kitts and Nevis is part of the Eastern Caribbean Regional Security System, whose most powerful member is Barbados. Nauru and the Seychelles have no alliances at all (Alliance and Treaty Obligations and Provisions dataset (http://atop.rice.edu)). Nor is the lack of both armies and alliances necessarily peculiar to developing island micro-states (Bartman 2002; Wivel and Oest 2010). In Europe, Liechtenstein and San Marino have maintained a strict policy of shunning bases and alliances, a stance that saw them pass unscathed

[1] This material is drawn from author interviews conducted with government officials in Basseterre and Charleston, St Kitts and Nevis, January 2004 and April 2013; Victoria, the Seychelles, May 2005 and February 2013; and Nauru, August 2008.

through World Wars I and II. Monaco has had a long-standing alliance with France, with the result that it was conquered by Nazi Germany (Duursma 1996).

Nor is it true to say that these kind of countries are simply too small to be worth conquering. St Kitts hosts the most extensive fortifications in the Caribbean, testament to the way it was keenly fought over by the French and British. The Seychelles also was captured from the French by the British in the early nineteenth century. Nauru was successively conquered from the Germans by the Australians in 1914, who were driven out by the Japanese in 1942, only to finally return in 1945. In line with Strang's argument, these islands were fought over as colonies, but have been unmolested as states. Thus for the competitive selection model these micro-states are notable anomalies: they lack any means of self-defense, have not cultivated great power protectors, yet have not suffered from the attentions of larger, predatory states. In interviews government officials from all three states maintain that an attempt by another state to conquer them is just not a threat they think about, non-traditional security threats like cross-border crime and climate change loom much larger.

In keeping with sociological institutionalism, the material constraints on these tiny polities have been no bar to their enthusiastic participation in the rituals of sovereignty. Thus the Ambassador of Nauru to the United States, United Nations and all other countries in the Americas was accorded exactly seven minutes to present her credentials to President George W. Bush (Author interview, Nauru, August 2008). Nauru recognizes the Russian-sponsored break-away regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, while like St Kitts and Nevis it also recognizes the Republic of China on Taiwan (such microstates are also sometimes courted by Israel for their votes in the UN General Assembly). A large part of the governmental activity is devoted to

interacting with international organizations and fora, according to sociological institutionalists the primary carriers of the idealized conceptions of what states should be, do and aspire to (Boli and Thomas 1997).

The main advisor to the first Nauruan president initially was successful in arguing that, since the country's population was the same size as a small town and the economy was (at that stage) self-sustaining, the government should behave like a municipal government, and ignore international affairs. This line was undermined, however, by the repeated press of international organizations, especially the United Nations and World Bank, inviting Nauru to join and become involved in their affairs. Australia, the former colonial power, also expected its diplomats to have Nauruan equivalents to liaise with (Author interview, Sydney, Australia, April 2012). The government became socialized into playing the role of a sovereign state in the international system, albeit on a Lilliputian scale.

Before independence, the first president of the Seychelles, James Mancham, tried to press the British to maintain their power over foreign affairs and defense. After independence in 1976, however, he experienced a complete reversal, and his government threw itself into the business of regional diplomacy in the African and Indian Ocean regional associations, as well as in the United Nations (Mancham's autobiography is revealingly titled *Seychelles Global Citizen*) (Author interview, Glacis, Seychelles, February 2013). Such activities may impose a substantial burden. Signing treaties often carries the obligation to legislate, and generally entails annual reporting also (Author interview, Victoria, Seychelles, February 2013). This may tie up very scarce personnel such as those drafting legislation; there are only 10 people in the Seychelles' entire Attorney-General's department, and two who write legislation (Author interview, Victoria,

Seychelles, February 2013). The result is that legislation to address local problems often takes second place to expressions of solidarity with the international community's priorities, however far removed they are from the particular circumstances of the Seychelles.

From looking at the organizational structure of the government of St Kitts and Nevis it seems very much what one would expect from a country with 100 or 1000 times the population, with a ministry of foreign affairs, justice and legal affairs, homeland security, etc. Despite the differences in scale, the two island federation has 12 ministerial portfolios, while UK has 21. Like the Seychelles, St Kitts and Nevis faces a similar burden of incorporating both the formal treaties and informal expectations of the international community into its domestic law and policies (Author interview, Basseterre, St Kitts, April 2013). One person is responsible for negotiating all international economic issues, from every field covered by the World Trade Organization, to the more specialized areas like tax and insurance (Author interview, Basseterre, St Kitts, January 2004 and April 2013). The existential security threat facing the country is that the smaller island, Nevis (population 13,000), has a long-running secessionist movement aiming for sovereign independence as an even smaller micro-state to end perceived Kittitian domination (Author interview, Charleston, Nevis, April 2013; see also http://www.nevisindependence.com/).

Aside from the invaluable security guarantee that sovereign status provides in relation to inter-state aggression, this status is also associated with some compensating economic benefits. Above all, this refers to the ability to issue sovereign debt. All three countries have relied heavily on international concessional borrowing to finance development. This has resulted is the national debt of St Kitts and Nevis peaking at 154 percent of GDP at end-2011, the Seychelles' peaking at 178 percent of GDP in early 2008, and Nauru reaching an incredible 1,600 per cent of GDP by

2007 (IMF 2013; IMF 2009; Asian Development Bank 2007). It is highly unlikely that these governments could have had access to so much credit on such favorable terms but for their sovereign status. All three states have since enjoyed substantial levels of debt forgiveness as sovereign entities.

The thumb-nail sketch of the micro-states above tends to disconfirm key planks of the competitive selection model while supporting sociological institutionalism. Each state survives without meaningful defensive capacity or allies, despite being the target of sustained international contestation pre-independence. The starting point for sociological institutionalists is a "striking homogeneity of practices and arrangements" that seems unlikely to be the product of rational action (Powell and DiMaggio 1991: 9). These micro-states faithfully replicate the formal organizational structures of core states thousands of times their size, despite radical diseconomies of scale. Organizations put are said to put a premium on myths and ceremony (Meyer and Rowan 1977). There is a strong sense of actors playing a part (Meyer 2010). Micro-states enthusiastically participate in the rituals of sovereignty, despite the massive disparity between their formal sovereign equality and materially trivial resources.

CONCLUSION

Those looking to explain the development of the international system must account for a number of general regularities: the universal domination of states since the end of European colonial empires, the lack of correlation between military strength and survival among states, the low elimination rate of states in the last two centuries, and the much higher elimination rate of

non-Western non-state units in the same period. The single most common explanation among IR scholars of the development of the international system is premised on the analogy with efficiency-enhancing effects of competitive selection via the market on firms. Yet this is a poor fit with the regularities observed above. The sociological institutionalist alternative, which emphasizes that the demands of legitimacy routinely trump those of functional effectiveness and efficiency among organizations, including states, is a better fit. Here survival is a product of conforming to shared standards and recognition by organizational peers.

Lamarckian accounts depend on a number of unrealistic assumptions being met concerning the volume and clarity of feedback, rate of environmental change, the complexity of causal relationships, incentives to learn, and the ability to implement lessons drawn. Economists may be able to justify these as “as if” assumptions to the extent that markets eliminate firms at a high rate. IR scholars have no similar defense. Once again, the sociological institutionalist alternative proves superior because it makes much less demanding, more realistic assumptions. The social world is complex and changing, organizations have a hard time diagnosing causal relationships (just like social scientists), and so instead tend to rely on shared stories and routines. Implementing organizational reform is difficult, slow and prone to unintended consequences, so learning will promote efficiency rarely and weakly.

This paper has complemented the large panel regressions used by the sociologists with case studies of micro-states security. The micro-states in question predictably lack military self-sufficiency, but also have chosen to eschew alliances with great power protectors. In practice these states secure their independence by sticking closely to the script of sovereign statehood, which provides legitimating symbols and rituals rather than functional benefits.More broadly,

political scientists tend to consistently overstate the ability of agents to adapt institutions in a functionalist manner. Thus beyond the application to the development of the international system, this paper joins with other calls for more sensitivity and attention to persistent and widespread patterns of inefficiency, maladaption and failure to learn.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alchian, Armen A. 1950. "Uncertainty, Evolution and Economic Theory." *Journal of Political Economy* 58 no.3: 211-221.

Asian Development Bank. 2007. *Country Economic Report: Nauru*. Manila.

Bartman, Barry. 2002. "Meeting the Needs of Microstate Security," *The Round Table* (91): 361-374.

Biddle, Stephen. 2004. *Military Power: Explaining Victory and Defeat in Modern Battle*. Princeton : Princeton University Press.

Brooks, Risa A. 2007. "Introduction: The Impact of Culture, Society, Institutions and International Forces on Military Effectiveness." in Risa A. Brooks and Elizabeth Stanley (Eds) *Creating Military Power: The Sources of Military Effectiveness* Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, pp.1-26.

Bull, Hedley. 1977. *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Crawford, Neta C. 2002. *Argument and Change in World Politics: Ethics, Decolonization and Humanitarian Intervention*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

DiMaggio, Paul J. and Walter W. Powell. 1983. "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality with Organizational Fields." *American Sociological Review* 48 no.2: 147-160.

DiMaggio, Paul J. and Walter W. Powell. 1991. "Introduction" in *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis* edited by Walter W. Powell and Paul J. DiMaggio. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp.1-40.

Drori, Gili S. John W. Meyer, Hokyu Hwang. 2007. "World Society and the Proliferation of Formal Organization." In Gili S. Drori, John W. Meyer and Hokya Hwang (Eds). *Globalization and Organization: World Society and Organizational Change*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Drori, Gili S. and Georg Krucken. 2009. "World Society: A Theory and a Research Program in Context." pp.3-35. In Georg Krucken and Gili S. Drori (Eds) *World Society: The Writings of John W. Meyer*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Duursma, Jorri C. 1996. *Fragmentation and the International Relations of Micro-States: Self-Determination and Statehood*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Eckstein, Harry. 1975. “Case Study and Theory in Political Science.” In Fred I. Greenstein and Nelson W. Polsby (Eds) *Handbook of Political Science*. Reading MA: Addison-Wesley.

Elster, Jon. 1989. *Nuts and Bolts for the Social Sciences*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Elster, Jon. 1995. “Functional Explanation: In Social Science.” In *Readings in the Philosophy of Social Science* edited by Michael Martin and Lee C. McIntyre, Cambridge Mass.: MIT Press, pp.403-414.

Elster, Jon. 2000. “Rational Choice History: A Case of Excessive Ambition.” *American Political Science Review* 94 no.3: 685-695.

Elster, Jon. 2007. *Explaining Social Behavior: More Nuts and Bolts for the Social Sciences*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Eyre, Dana P. and Mark C. Suchman. 1996. “Status, Norms and the Proliferation of Conventional Weapons: An Institutional Theory Approach.” In *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* edited by Peter J. Katzenstein. New York: Columbia University Press, pp.79-104.

Farrell, Theo. 2005. “World Culture and Military Power.” *Security Studies* 14 no.3: 448-488.

Fazal, Tanisha M. 2007. *State Death: The Politics and Geography of Conquest, Occupation and Annexation*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Fazal, Tanisha M. and Ryan D. Griffiths. 2014. “Membership has its Privileges: The Changing Benefits of Statehood.” *International Studies Review* (forthcoming).

Finnemore, Martha. 1996a. “Norms Culture and World Politics: Insight from Sociology’s Institutionalism.” *International Organization* 50 no.2: 325-347.

Finnemore, Martha, 1996b. *National Interests in International Society*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Fioretos, Orfeo. 2011. “Historical Institutionalism in International Relations.” *International Organization* 65 no.2: 367-399.

George, Alexander L. and Andrew Bennett. 2004. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge Mass.: MIT Press.

Gerring, John. 2004. “What is a Case Study and What is it Good for?” *American Political Science Review*. 98 no.2: 341-354.

Gleditsch, Nils Petter. 2013. “The Forum: The Decline of War.” *International Studies Review*

15: 396-419.

Grieco, Joseph M. 1993. “Anarchy and the Limits of Co-operation: A Realist Critique of the Newest Liberal Institutionalism.” In *Neorealism and Neoliberalism: The Contemporary Debate* edited by David A. Baldwin, New York: Columbia University Press, pp.116-140.

Hironaka, Ann. 2008. *Neverending Wars: The International Community, Weak States, and the Perpetuation of Civil War*. Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press.

International Monetary Fund. 2009. “Reforms, IMF Pull Seychelles Back from the Brink.” Briefing Paper by Paul Mathieu and Patrick Imam available at http://www.imf.org/external/country/syc/index.htm accessed 11 Feburary 2013.

International Monetary Fund. 2013. “St Kitts and Nevis: Fourth Review under the Stand-By Arrangement: Country Report 13/42.” Washington D.C.

Jackson, Robert H. and Carl G. Rosberg. 1982. “Why Africa’s Weak States Persist: The Empirical and the Juridical in Statehood.” *World Politics* 35 (1): 1-24.

Jackson, Robert H. 1990. *Quasi-States: Sovereignty, International Relations, and the Third World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jackson, Robert H. 1993. “The Weight of Ideas in Decolonization: Normative Change in International Relations.” In *Ideas and Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions and Political Change* edited by Judith Goldstein and Robert O. Keohane, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, pp.111-138.

Kahler, Miles. 1999. “Evolution, Choice, and International Change.” In David A. Lake and Robert Powell (eds), pp.164-96 *Strategic Choice and International Relations*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Keene, Edward. 2002. *Beyond the Anarchical Society: Grotius, Colonialism and Order in World Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Krucken, Georg and Gili S. Drori. 2009. *World Society: The Writings of John W. Meyer*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Krugman, Paul. 2009. *A Country is not a Company*. Cambridge Mass.: Harvard Business School.

Kuhn, Thomas. 1962. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lake, David A. 2009. *Hierarchy in International Relations*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Lake, David A. and Angela O’Mahony. 2004. “The Incredible Shrinking State: Explaining Change in the Territorial Size of Countries.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 48 no.5: 699-722.

March, James G. and Johan P. Olsen. 1989. *Rediscovering Institutions: The Organizational Basis of Politics*. New York: Free Press.

March, James G. and Johan P. Olsen. 1998. "The Institutional Dynamics of International Political Orders." *International Organization* 52 no.4: 943-969.

Mearsheimer, John J. 2001. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. New York: W.W. Norton.

Meyer, John W. and Brian Rowan. 1977. "Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony." *American Journal of Sociology* 83 no.2: 340-363.

Meyer, John M. 1980. "The World Polity and the Authority of the Nation-State." In *Studies of the Modern World-System*, edited by Albert Bergesen (New York: Academic Press), pp.109-137.

Meyer, John W., John Boli, George M. Thomas and Francisco O. Ramirez. 1997. "World Society and the Nation-State." *American Journal of Sociology*. 103 no.1: 144-181.

Meyer, John W. 2009. "Reflections: Institutional Theory and World Society." In Georg Krucken and Gili S Drori (Eds) *World Society: The Writings of John W. Meyer* Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp.37-63.

Meyer, John W. 2010. "World Society, Institutional Theories, and the Actor." *Annual Review of Sociology* 36 no.1: 1-20.

Modelski, George and Kazimierz Poznanski. 1996. "Evolutionary Paradigms in the Social Sciences." *International Studies Quarterly* 40 no.3: 315-319.
Mueller, John. 1989. *Retreat from Doomsday: The Obsolescence of Major War*, New York: Basic Books.

Mueller, John. 2009. "War Has Almost Ceased to Exist." *Political Science Quarterly* 124(2): 297-321.

Nelson, Richard R. and Sidney G. Winter. 1982. *An Evolutionary Theory of Economic Change* Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press.

North, Douglass C. 1990a. *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

North, Douglass C. 1990b. "Institutions, Transaction Costs, and the Rise of Merchant Empires." pp. 22-40. In James D. Tracy (Ed.), *The Political Economy of Merchant Empires: State Power and World Trade 1350-1750.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Pierson, Paul. 2003. "Big, Slow Moving... and Invisible: Macro-Social Processes in the Study of Comparative Politics." pp.177-207. In James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer (Eds).

Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Phillips, Andrew. 2011. *War, Religion and Empire: The Transformation of International Orders*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Philpott, Daniel. 2001. *Revolutions in Sovereignty: How Ideas Shaped Modern International Relations*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Pinker, Steven. 2011. *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence has Declined*. New York: Viking.

Posen, Barry. 1993. "Nationalism, the Mass Army and Military Power." *International Security* 18 no.2: 80-124.

Powell, Walter W. and Paul DiMaggio. 1991. "Introduction." In Walter W. Powell and Paul DiMaggio (Eds) *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp.1-40.

Ralston, David B. 1990. *Importing the European Army: The Introduction of European Military Techniques and Institutions into the Extra-European World 1600-1914*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Rapkin, David. 2001. "Obstacles to an Evolutionary Global Politics Research Program." In William R. Thompson (Ed.), *Evolutionary Interpretations of World Politics*, New York: Routledge, pp.52-60.

Resende-Santos, Joao. 2007. *Neorealism, States, and the Modern Mass Army*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rogowski, Ronald. 2004. "How Inference in the Social (But not the Physical Sciences) Neglects Theoretical Anomaly." In Henry E. Brady and David Collier (Eds) *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*. Lanham MD: Rowman and Littlefield, pp.75-84.

Ruggie, John Gerard. 1998. *Constructing the World Polity: Essay on International Institutionalization*. London: Routledge.

Spruyt, Hendrik. 1994. *The Sovereign State and its Competitors: An Analysis of Systems Change*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Spruyt, Hendrik. 2001. "Diversity or Uniformity in the Modern World? Answers from Evolutionary Theory, Learning, and Social Adaptation." In William R. Thompson (Ed.), *Evolutionary Interpretations of World Politics*, New York: Routledge, pp.110-132.

Sterling-Folker, Jennifer. 2001. "Evolutionary Tendencies in Realist and Liberal IR Theory." In

William R. Thompson (Ed.), *Evolutionary Interpretations of World Politics*, New York: Routledge, 2001, pp.62-109.

Strang, David. 1991. "Anomaly and Commonplace in European Political Expansion: Realist and Institutionalist Accounts." *International Organization* 45 no.2: 143-162.

Strang, David. 1996. "Contested Sovereignty: The Social Construction of Colonial Imperialism." In Thomas J. Biersteker and Cynthia Weber (eds), *State Sovereignty as a Social Construct* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 22-49.

Strang, David and John W. Meyer. 1993. "Institutional Conditions for Diffusion." *Theory and Society* 22 no.3: 487-511.

Strang, David. and Sarah A. Soule. 1998. "Diffusion in Organizations and Social Movements: From Hybrid Corn to Poison Pills." *American Review of Sociology* 24 no.2: 265-290.

Tang, Shiping. 2010. "Social Evolution of International Politics: From Mearsheimer to Jervis." *European Journal of International Relations* 16 no.1: 31-55.

Thompson, William R. (Ed.), *Evolutionary Interpretations of World Politics*, New York: Routledge, 2001.

Tilly, Charles (Ed.). 1975. *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Tilly, Charles. 1992. *Coercion, Capital and European States, AD 990-1992*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Tolbert, Pamela S. and Lynne G. Zucker. 1983. "Institutional Sources of Change in the Formal Structure of Organizations: The Diffusion of Civil Service Reform, 1880-1935." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 28 (1): 22-39.

Walt, Stephen M. 2002. "The Enduring Relevance of the Realist Tradition." In *Political Science: State of the Discipline* edited by Ira Katznelson and Helen V. Milner New York: W.W. Norton, pp. 197-230.

Waltz, Kenneth N. 1979. *Theory of International Politics*. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley.

Weber, Cynthia. 1995. *Simulating Sovereignty: Intervention, the State, and Symbolic Exchange* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Winter, Sidney G. 2005. "Developing Evolutionary Theory for Economics and Management." Wharton Business School Working Paper, University of Pennsylvania.

Wivel, Anders and Kajsa Noe Oest. 2010. "Security, Profit or Shadow of the Past? Explaining the Security Strategies of Micro-states." *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 23 (3): 429-452.