

in any society

- I. People have competing ideas and interests and they express these through political struggle. In this sense conflict is a natural part of social life.
- II. The set of institutions and practices that arises as people seek to regulate their relations with one another through political struggle is the state. In this sense the state is a natural consequence of social life.
- III. The relative weight of institutions and practices varies among societies, although the balance has tended to shift toward institutions as social size and technological complexity have increased.
- IV. Since political struggle goes on incessantly (if only latently), the state--both as a reflection of past political struggle and as an instrument in present political struggle--is in a continual state of flux (if only latently).
- V. The state in the broader sense refers to practices, such as educational and religious ones, as well as to institutions. The state in the narrower sense refers primarily to explicitly political institutions.
- VI. The ideal-typical form of the state in the narrower sense is best conceived in simple, conventional terms as characterized by a two-fold distribution of power:
 - A. among the legislative, executive, and judicial branches (or their equivalents); and
 - B. among levels of government classified according to their geographical extent: federal-national, state-provincial, county-Regierungsbezirk, city, etc.

Thus the extreme distributions of power in each case produce four basic forms of the ideal-typical state:

DISTRIBUTION OF POWER

among levels of government

	centralized	decentralized
<u>among branches</u> centralized	Prussia	U.S. ?
decentralized		U.S.?

- VII. The form of the state and of its particular political-economic context are related but not necessarily tightly meshed. Together, however, they determine:
- A. what resources (financial, organization, institutional, etc.) are needed for political struggle;
 - B. what resources are available for political struggle; and
 - C. who has access to the use or creation of these resources.

THE HISTORICAL ARGUMENT: Prussia and the United States, 1830s-1860s

Prussia and the U.S., it could be argued, were at roughly equivalent levels of industrial development during this period, compared for example to Great Britain.

It could even be argued, all things considered, that they were at roughly similar levels of capitalist development during these decades.

However, there were obvious differences in their characteristic socio-political relations and these were the consequences primarily of differences in the form of the state in each country.

In Prussia, the form of the state was characterized by a two-fold concentration of power: at the federal-national level, and at that level in the executive branch, whose members sat not only in the legislature (when it existed) but also on the Ober-Tribunal, the final court of appeal in the judicial branch.

In the United States, the form of the state was characterized by a two-fold distribution of power: among the various levels of government, though primarily distributed between the federal-national and state-provincial levels; and among the three branches at the federal-national level. It is possible, however, that a) the judiciary may have provided an element of indirect centralization to the extent that challenges to decisions in all three branches at the federal-national level and at the state-provincial level were ultimately settled there, and b) the distribution of power at the state-provincial level may have been centralized in the executive branch in some states.

To Be Continued

[See Colleen A. Dunlavy, *Politics and Industrialization: Early Railroads in United States and Prussia* (Princeton University Press, 1994).]