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INCOMPLETE STATE-MAKING IN A DIVIDED POLITY:
HABSBERG AUSTRIA, 1618-1914

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COLLEGE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

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Widmung

*In Dankbarkeit an alle gewidmet, die mir geholfen haben.
Ihr wißt, wer ihr seid. —AEK*

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Abstract

Habsburg Austria is a unique case for the study of “state-making:” the creation of means by which a sovereign state asserts its ability to control its territory. Examples of state-making include the creation of a professional army and the means with which to pay for it, or the defense of state borders. This thesis examines two periods in Austrian history for evidence of how the Habsburg Austrian state succeeded or failed in this process. The first period centers on the Thirty Years War (1618-1648) which challenged the very existence of the state and which resulted in the establishment of Europe’s first professional standing army by the end of the war. The second period also features a challenge to the state’s existence. However, in this case, the Habsburgs were constrained by a variety of domestic and economic factors, which amplified their international challenges. Ultimately, their failure to engage in effective state-making combined with their desperate need to preserve their great-power status resulted in a decision for a war that would ultimately destroy the state.

Chapter 1: State-Making in the Salzburger Saalachtal

This thesis actually began some years ago, on a solitary hike in the Austrian village of Unken, as the author walked past the “*Kalte Quelle*” and towards the “*Festung Kniepaß*,” a small fortress overlooking the ancient road that runs deep into Salzburg’s *Pinzgau*. Partially due to its position about 20 meters above the road, partially due to its small size, and partially due to the wear of time, someone driving below the ridge it sits atop would hardly notice it. But those able to take a moment and examine the site will find a plaque, commemorating its erection in 1613 under Prince-Archbishop Markus Sittikus. In the years to come, this fortress and Unken’s *Landvolk* militia who guarded it would play a critical role in Salzburg’s efforts to remain unsnarled with the brutal fighting of the Thirty Years War and were charged with expanding it considerably during the 1630s to defend against a potential Swedish invasion.¹ However, this fortress served a larger purpose: it was an effort by the Prince-Archbishops who ruled Salzburg to delineate and defend their territory as a sovereign and autonomous part of the Holy Roman Empire, and to consolidate the means of effective force over this territory. The *Festung Kniepaß* was a

¹ Friederike Zaisberger and Walter Schlegel, *Burgen und Schlösser in Salzburg: Pinzgau, Pongau, Lungau* (Vienna: Birken-Verlag, 1978), pp. 143-145.

statement of sovereign authority, it was an act of state-making.

Modern Austria is full of tokens of the state-making process like *Kniepaß*, another example being the *Theresianum* Military Academy's large stone relief adorned with the letters "AEIOU" "Alles Erdreich ist Österreich untertan" or "All the world is subject to Austria," the motto chosen by the Holy Roman Emperor Friedrich III (1415-1493, HRE 1452-1493).² Many of the officers and generals who contributed to the achievement (or failure) of Austria's political and military goals, from the victories of the Napoleonic Wars to the destruction and defeat of World War I, spent their formative years training on the grounds of the *Theresianum*: their stories and failures are well known to students of European history. The *Theresianum* is significant for the history of Austrian state-making, as its establishment was another step in the creation of a professional standing army.³

The construction of the fortress in Unken or the opening of the *Theresianum* in Wiener Neustadt were both acts of state-making: the interlocking historical processes through which sovereign rulers established the institutions, practices, and norms that allowed them to assert their claim to rule over the territory they controlled. State-making

² Autorenkollektiv, "A. E. I. O. U.," in *Meyers Konversationslexikon* (Vienna: Verlag des Bibliographischen Instituts, 1885), p. 1.

³ At various points in this work, Austria, Habsburg Austria, Habsburg Central Europe, and Austria-Hungary are used to refer to the same political unit, which was centered on Vienna and ruled by a member of the Habsburg family.

was a process of capacity building, for example, the creation of a capable and professional army, relatively efficient means to collect taxes, and, as in Unken, the construction of fortresses from which agents of the sovereign might assert their claim to hold monopoly of legitimate force---their right to use violence to defend the state.⁴ A sovereign power can be generally defined as a political body that controls a well-defined space, is relatively centralized, and which differentiates itself from other bodies or corporate structures (e.g. the Catholic Church or a tribal group).⁵ Sovereignty is a result of state-making: a strong state is able to enforce its claims to a monopoly of violence and overcome challenges to its authority.

This thesis seeks to demonstrate how state-making was attempted within Habsburg Austria. The first case takes place during the Thirty Years War as Protestant invasion and revolt was a profound threat to the state's ongoing existence. The second case examines how Habsburg Austria-Hungary functioned as a confederation between an industrializing western half and a backward eastern half, and did so in an international context that became gradually more unfavorable to their continued survival.

⁴ Charles Tilly, "Reflections on the History of European State-Making," in *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*, ed. Charles Tilly (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), p. 27.

⁵ Tilly, "Reflection on the History of European State-Making," pp. 28-29.

Habsburg Austria is a peculiar case for the study of state-making because it is often claimed to have not achieved the full “promise” of a state as France or Britain are claimed to have done. For example, in his introductory chapter to *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*, Charles Tilly refers to Habsburg Austria as a “rickety federation” that remained “weakly subordinated to the imperial center.”⁶ This view is largely correct, but it misses a more important point: the Habsburgs were able to engage in the process of state-making, they made an effort to create a functionally unified political entity just as France or Britain did, even if the Habsburgs were ultimately less successful.

The Habsburgs did this in a context that was less conducive to the process than in Britain or France and which masks the nature of their efforts, leading to Habsburg Austria’s exclusion from the scholarly literature. Charles Tilly’s depiction of Habsburg Austria as a ramshackle confederation is correct for a time, but not for the whole period after 1648 as he seems to suggest. A more recent and prominent example is the work of Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson. Their analysis of the political incentives affecting the development or underdevelopment of European states in the nineteenth century fails to account for the division of Habsburg territories

⁶ Tilly, “Reflection on the History of European State-Making,” pp. 13 and 27.

between the Austrian government in Vienna and the Hungarian government in Budapest.⁷ In their telling, it makes no difference that serfdom was eliminated in the lands ruled by Vienna in 1781 but only in 1848-1849 in those lands ruled from Budapest. They ignore the fact that the end of serfdom encouraged industrialization in Austria, which began after the end of the Napoleonic Wars and the wars accompanying need for the labor which might otherwise work in new factories and workshops. Economic development and industrialization are important, as a competitive economy provided the funds necessary for state-making. In the case of Austria-Hungary, state-making was hindered by the positive decisions of Hungarian nobles that delayed industrialization in the Hungarian lands, as industrialization and development was well underway in the Austrian half. This thesis seeks to correct this inaccurate, caricatured view of development and state-making in Habsburg Austria, which is often found in work by non-subject specialists like Acemoglu and Robinson or those who romanticize Hungarian culture and politics like Alan Sked.⁸

⁷ Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson, "Economic Backwardness in Political Perspective," *American Political Science Review* 100, no. 1 (2006).

⁸ This matter will be taken up later, but see generally: Alan Sked, *The Decline and Fall of the Habsburg Empire, 1815-1918*, 2nd ed. (New York: Longman, 2001), Acemoglu and Robinson, "Economic Backwardness in Political Perspective," and Acemoglu and Robinson, *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty*. (New York: Crown Business, 2012), pp. 222-230.

Where Austria-Hungary succeeded and where it failed is an interesting and under-explored question. This thesis seeks to partially correct this oversight through an examination of how the state-making process succeeded and failed in two case studies. The first case study examines Austria's response to the revolt of Czech nobles who sought independence from Habsburg rule in order to establish a Protestant kingdom that would also preserve the feudal rights and prerogatives they felt were threatened by Habsburg centralization. This revolt was a fundamental challenge to Habsburg claims to rule and would require them to centralize and engage in acts of state-making. Over the course of the war, the Habsburgs would establish a professional army, develop means of efficient tax collection, and lay the foundation of a professional bureaucracy. Challenged to innovate and build a state or suffer defeat and likely the end of their rule in Central Europe, Habsburg Austria chose the former during the Thirty Years War.

The second case is the failure of Austria-Hungary after 1867 to continue to build a state in the nineteenth century and how that failure played out on the domestic, economic, and international levels. This failure took many forms, for example, the bifurcated nature of the post-1867 state acted to push the two halves of the state apart, instead of allowing them to develop and work in unison. Economically, they were anything but unified,

as Austria's industrializing economy required different policies than those of the backward agrarian Hungarian half. Failures on the domestic and economic levels made Austria less able to compete on the international level, for example protectionist trade policy cost Austria-Hungary numerous allies in the Balkans, as its borders effectively closed to their grain and animal exports. Combined with changes to the system of norms that ensured Austria-Hungary's recognition as a great power amongst other great powers, it was largely isolated and appeared to have little other choice than to declare war in 1914. The failure to construct a state capable of meeting challenges on the domestic, economic, and international levels, or even to do as it had done three centuries prior.

Habsburg Austria was never able to achieve the promise of a state, it was never able to administer its territories uniformly or establish a common patriotism. However, it did engage in the process of state-making, sometimes accidentally, sometimes with gusto, and sometimes half-heartedly. Its successes and failures are nevertheless illuminating and offer the chance to see a new perspective on state-making, that of Austria-Hungary's failure.

Chapter 2

State-Making in Early Modern Habsburg Central Europe, 1618 to 1648

Introduction

This chapter seeks to explain how the events of the Thirty Years War from 1618 to 1648 began to spur political development within the lands governed by the Austrian Habsburg monarchy. The outbreak of this war constituted a fundamental challenge to the Habsburgs ability to rule, as their rule had previously been dependent on the general support of a class of landholding elites with divergent interests from their own. The breakdown of previous conceptions of the relationship between governed and governor incentivized the development of new means with which monarchs might exercise a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence and coercion within the territories they claimed to rule.

Prior to the Protestant Reformation in 1517, Europe had generally conceived of relations between rulers as being subordinated to the overarching authority of the Pope and the Catholic Church under the name of Christendom: the idea of Europe as a spiritually united political, economic, and social whole, with its underlying consequences for the relations between rulers. Christendom formed a “normative community” that spoke a common language (Latin), that confessed a common faith,

and that recognized a single individual, the Bishop of Rome, as its supreme spiritual authority. Within Christendom, power relations were strictly hierarchical, with the Pope's authority superior to all other forms of power.⁹ Within individual kingdoms, this hierarchy extended to relationships between local kings and their subordinate nobles, and regulated the basis of their relationship. On the one hand, the subordinate lords owed kings fealty, paid the king taxes, and were in most cases required to perform a certain amount of military service per year. On the other, their kings had limited scope of action, for example their powers to unilaterally raise taxes and spend were checked by noble estates which had to approve increased taxation. Individual polities were generally weak, but the fact that no single authority could monopolize control was likely encouraged the acceptance of a broader conception of Christendom as a unifying principal.¹⁰

The coming of the Protestant Reformation in 1517 divided Europe into competing Catholic and Protestant halves and in so doing destroyed any chance of reunifying Europe or recreating the idea of Europe as a unified Christian space. This had profound consequences for the norms

⁹ Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), vol. 1, p. 420.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 412.

and practices that regulated relations between rulers, as it was at its heart a spiritual conception of power in which the “supra-territorial, cross-ethnic organizations of the Catholic Church” bound the system together.¹¹

The conflicts that resulted from the collapse of Christendom and which culminated in the Thirty Years War (1618-1648) all challenged rulers to defend their claims to lordship in ways that went beyond traditional claims of religious legitimacy. Instead, the war challenged them to build professional armies, create stable and reliable mechanisms for funding those armies, and break the power of entrenched noble elites. In sum, it encouraged them to build effective states.¹²

States are political units with relatively fixed borders, governed through durable and impersonal institutions that exercise their authority in a regular and generally standardized fashion.¹³ States draw borders to delineate the territory they control and generally assert the exclusive right to use coercive force within these borders. They create standardized, professional armies with which they might assert this right and maintain their control over their borders. The process of state-making is the

¹¹ Stein Rokkan, "Dimensions of State Formation and Nation-Building: A Possible Paradigm for Research on Variations Within Europe," in *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*, ed. Charles Tilly (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), e.g. p. 575 and Mann, *Sources of Social Power*, vol. I, p. 412.

¹² Tilly, "Reflections on the History of European State-Making," pp. 26-28 and Mann, *Sources of Social Power*, vol. I, pp. 475-490.

¹³ Tilly, *ibid.*

development of the state's ability to assert its the monopoly of violence, the creation of a standing army, and the means with which they might pay for it all: a system of efficient tax collection. Perhaps most importantly in contrast to Christendom, a state's claim to temporal authority stood above and outside the Catholic Church's claim to hold spiritual and temporal authority.¹⁴

In the case of Habsburg Austria, the process of state-making was haphazard and often seemed to depend on sheer luck alone. What is important for purpose of this chapter is to understand where they succeeded in building a state and how the Thirty Years War challenged them to do so.

The beginning of the Thirty Years War was a revolt by Protestant nobles who sought to defend their medieval rights and privileges against possible centralization by the Catholic Habsburgs. In offering the crown to a Protestant German speaking monarch, Christian V, they also asserted their right to act as veto players over any and all actions by the king, in effect rendering their new ruler unable to administer his new kingdom. Their actions left this newly independent kingdom unable to survive for

¹⁴ Joseph Strayer, *On the Medieval Origins of the Modern State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), p. 10 and Charles Tilly, "Reflections on the History of European State Making," in *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*, ed. Charles Tilly (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), p. 27.

long: there was no means for organizing an effective army nor any way to effectively raise revenue to pay for it. For these reasons, it should come as no surprise that Bohemia and Moravia were reconquered within a year of Christians coronation. The revolt and subsequent war were a challenge which could be overcome through state-making. In Habsburg Austria, the challenge posed to the right of Habsburg monarchs to rule was overcome through the creation of a professional standing army and a regular system of taxation that provided revenue to fund that army.¹⁵

This chapter begins with a discussion of the nature of Christendom and the development of sovereignty as an idea for organizing political life within Europe. It then considers the origins of the Thirty Years War as a struggle for competing conceptions of political organization within Austria. Finally, it demonstrates how the Thirty Years War challenged the Habsburgs authority and encouraged the Habsburgs to engage in state-making in order to overcome the grave challenges the war posed to their authority.

¹⁵ Tilly, "Reflections on the History of European State-Making," pp. 26-28 and Mann, *Sources of Social Power, vol. 1*, pp. 475-490.

Christendom, Modernization, and State-Making

To understand how state-making played out within Austria, our starting point must be some conception of the organization of political life at the beginning of the “modern” period: the idea of Christendom. But what was Christendom? Generally, it stood for the united community of (Western) Christians, held together by their common faith in the tenets of Christianity, as interpreted by the Catholic Church.¹⁶ Christendom united the Scandinavia with Spain and Scotland with Sicily. In sum, it was the universal commonwealth of believers, under the authority of the Pope as the leader of the Church.¹⁷

The proselytization and integration of non-Christian tribes across Europe in the centuries following the collapse of the Western Roman Empire are primarily responsible for the development of Christendom as a particular political and ideological community. Proselytization led to the creation of a rural noble elite who could maintain a semblance of order within the newly converted spaces, and created a layer of new rulers who were subject to the authority of both their immediate superior, for example

¹⁶ See, e.g., Mark Greengrass, *Christendom Destroyed: Europe 1517-1648* (London: Penguin, 2014), pp. 12-14.

¹⁷ The Pope’s actual authority during this period and every period, must be considerably qualified, as papal power was constantly contested and contingent. See, e.g.: John W. O’Malley, *A History of the Popes: From Peter to the Present* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2009).

the Holy Roman Emperor, but also the Pope as the pinnacle of power within Christendom. This political structure put the Church at the center of social life and made Christianity the primary source of social identity.¹⁸ In addition to its social role, the Church built itself into a political and economic juggernaut through a network of parishes, monasteries and their dependent lay personnel, and vast land holdings with their accompanying rents. One can view the significance of these holdings as attempts to maximize control and dominate the peasantry, or as an attempt to create order where none previously existed.¹⁹ In either case, that the Church exercised control to this degree and that its property and other temporal rights were respected, reinforced the existence of Christendom and the Church's dominance thereof as a political, social, and economic fact. Nevertheless, no single authority, neither the Church nor local rulers, were able to monopolize authority over an extended period, instead Christendom was diffused multiple sources of authority.

¹⁸ Mann, *Sources of Social Power*, vol. 1, pp. 335-338.

¹⁹ Francis Fukuyama, *The Origins of Political Order: From Prehuman Times to the French Revolution* (London: Profile Books, 2012), pp. 264-268. In this sense, Fukuyama hints at his view of nation-states ("Denmark") as the Hegelian end-point of political development, see the section on modernization theory below. Hedley Bull demonstrates the problem with a view like Fukuyama's in that Mediaeval Christendom failed to create actual order and was, in fact, a quite violent and probably unpleasant place. See: Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics*, 3rd ed. (New York: Palgrave, 2002), pp. 245-246.

The Protestant Reformation was a fundamental challenge to the existence of this system, as Protestantism objected to the union of spiritual authority with temporal power. One of Martin Luther's primary objectives was to develop a system where the two spheres were fundamentally separate so as to prevent secular interference in religious practices.²⁰ The role of a church was of a free congregation or community (German: *Gemeinde*) in which the faithful were prepared for salvation and protected from the temptations of the secular material world. The role of a ruler was to ensure order, by which he meant that property rights would be respected and social honor would be upheld. Therefore, truly faithful Christians could only subject themselves to the authority of rulers who respected these boundaries, no matter how fuzzy the boundary between the two became.²¹

²⁰ Martin Luther, "Von weltlicher Obrigkeit, wie weit man ihr Gehorsam schuldig sei," in *Dr Martin Luthers Werke* (Weimar: Böhlau, 1900), Weimarer Ausgabe vol. 11, pp. 250-252. See also: Søren Kierkegaard. *Practice in Christianity*. Translated by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong. Kierkegaard's Writings, vol. 20. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991, p. 68.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 265. Luther is referring in this section to Romans 13 (NASB) "Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God..." On the fuzziness of this boundary see: Benjamin J. Kaplan, *Divided by Faith: Religious Conflict and the Practice of Toleration in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), pp. 17-18, and Mann, *Sources of Social Power, vol. 1*, p. 467, see also: Alexandra Walsham, "Migrations of the Holy: Explaining Religious Change in Medieval and Early Modern Europe," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 44, no. 2 (2014).

If Christendom provided a basis for relations between rulers on religious terms, the schism of western Christianity demanded that relations between rulers be recast on non-religious terms. A first step in this direction was taken in the 1555 Peace of Augsburg, which established the principal *Cuius regio, eius religio* (whose land, his religion) of a ruler to determine whether their land would be Protestant or Catholic. In effect, this established a precedent of non-intervention by outside actors on the basis of religion.²² From this point, we can see how this would evolve into a more general principal that a ruler is “master at home, and an equal to other such rulers abroad,” as James Sheehan defines sovereignty, and the decline of a religion as a motivating factor for war.²³ Religion could no longer make a “cosmic” claim, that a heresy in France or Bohemia was sufficient grounds to invade another ruler’s land, as it had, for example, during the Albigensian Crusade. And while it is not reasonable to claim that the Peace of Augsburg alone established the principal of sovereignty, it is reasonable to view it as the fundament of the broader notion of sovereignty as an ordering principal.

²² Peter H. Wilson, "Dynasty, Constitution, and Confession: The Role of Religion in the Thirty Years War," *The International History Review* 30, no. 3 (2008)

²³ For the formulation, I am indebted to a lecture James Sheehan gave on the topic. See: James J. Sheehan, "The Problem of Sovereignty in European History," *The American Historical Review* 111, no. 1 (2006): p. 2.

James Sheehan defines sovereignty as making two distinct claims:

"Sovereignty assumes, first of all, that political power is distinct from other organizations in the community—religious, familial, economic. Second, sovereignty asserts that this public authority is preeminent and autonomous, that is, superior to institutions within the community and independent from those outside. In theory, the sovereign can be no one's vassal: at home, sovereigns are masters; abroad, they are the equals of other sovereigns."²⁴

Therefore, a sovereign state is one that exercises what Max Weber famously described as a “monopoly of legitimate force” within its established and acknowledged borders.²⁵ But how does a state exercise this monopoly? Rulers sought to construct institutions that might ensure that their control, their monopoly of violence, reached every corner of their territory.²⁶ This is the idea of state-making in action.

The term “state-making” first emerged as part of a broader scholarly dialogue within American social science in the years following World War II as scholars sought to find a universal and comparative basis for the development of states and state institutions. The goal was a theory that could not only explain development, but also one that could be operationalized to accelerate development in newly liberated or

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ See: Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), p. 78.

²⁶ Charles Tilly, "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime," in *Bringing the State Back In*, ed. Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985)

decolonized territories. More importantly for the policymakers who these theorists of modernization theory sought to influence (and obtain research grants from), this development process was meant to help create institutions and political practices that would draw these countries in to the US sphere of influence during the Cold War.²⁷

A state is a political unit that exists over an extended period, within defined, relatively permanent borders, and where a central authority can legitimately claim to hold a monopoly over the use of violence as a means of coercion. In an ideal-type state, the central ruler's authority is distinct from and superior to all other forms of power. State-making, therefore, involves the development of institutions with which the characteristics might be created and defended. A standing professional army is generally needed to defend the borders of the state and, possibly in conjunction with police forces, is needed to defend and assert the state's monopoly of violence, while impersonal and durable administrative institutions can reach the far corners of the state to carry out the directives of the sovereign. These state functions are supported by resource extraction mechanisms: systems of tax collection that go beyond tax farming and instead depend upon professional bureaucrats collecting regularized

²⁷ Nils Gilman, *Mandarins of the Future: Modernization Theory in Cold War America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), pp. 198-202.

amounts of taxes. Finally, and perhaps most importantly to distinguish a sovereign state from other forms of power, the power of the sovereign is superior to other forms of authority. This is a critical distinction, as it separates a sovereign state from a political unit operating within the framework of Christendom. In Christendom, there was no single superior authority, but instead a collection of diffuse authorities. An ideal type state is ostensibly superior to other forms of authority.²⁸

The question of whether a state is a state is not a binary one. Instead, theories of state-making assert that the process of becoming a state is dependent on the basis of the acquisition of state characteristics. The previous paragraph made reference to an “ideal-type” state, but it seems unlikely that any particular state during the early modern period could claim absolutely to have achieved these characteristics.

State-making can occur as the result of numerous catalysts, in the

²⁸ I specifically refer to ideal types, because this can be qualified to the point of meaninglessness. For an example of where states placed sovereign temporal power over spiritual claims to authority, consider Henry VIII’s abolition and sale of monasteries or the establishment of the monarch as the head of the Church in England under Elizabeth. On this question, see: Jerry F. Hough and Robin Grier, *The Long Process of Development: Building Markets and States in Pre-industrial England, Spain and their Colonies* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 144-149. This definition of states and state-making is synthesized from Tilly, "Reflections on the History of European State-Making," Mann, *Sources of Social Power, vol. 1, pp. 373-500*, Thomas Ertman, *Birth of the Leviathan: Building States and Regimes in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), especially pp. 6-34, and Youssef Cohen, Brian R. Brown, and A. F. K. Organski, "The Paradoxical Nature of State Making: The Violent Creation of Order," *The American Political Science Review* 75, no. 4 (1981).

example of Austria, the need to defend the sovereign ruler's claim to be the supreme authority in the lands he ruled. The Habsburg family's Central European crowns were often attained as the result of strategic marriages or other patrimonial arrangements, and not through conquest or other coercive means. They generally had less incentive to develop a professional standing army and could rely on irregular militias made up of peasants fulfilling yearly military service obligations. Contrast this with the later case of Prussia-Brandenburg, where dynastic survival was closely linked with the ability to fend off numerous aggressive neighbors with superior resource bases and more fertile soil. In the case of Austria, ad-hoc militias and feudal service obligations generally proved sufficient until the Thirty Years War.²⁹

State-Making in War and Crisis

How can we generally understand the meaning of the Thirty Years War and its importance for the state-making process? The war from 1618 to 1648 was neither an exclusively religious conflict, nor can it be masked as a subsidiary of a larger "General Crisis" in which all aspects of human existence were threatened by a transformation in economic, environmental,

²⁹ Frank Tallett, *War and Society in Early Modern Europe, 1495-1715* (New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 193-198.

political, and social practices.³⁰ Instead, the war was part of a broader conflict between conflicting views of the relationship between state and society and between states themselves. After the Reformation eliminated the foundation of the previous set of relationships, a new basis upon which order might be established became necessary. This new system of relationships between states required that that rulers be able to assert and defend their claims to sovereignty over the areas they ruled and maintain the means for doing so. To this end, we must recognize the Thirty Years War as a political and religious war that challenged rulers to respond in defense of their sovereign claims through the creation of institutions that allowed them to do so. This took on a special meaning for the Habsburg lands, as what became the Thirty Years War was more than a conflict between the Catholic Habsburgs and Protestant Czech Nobles, but a war between two conceptions of political organization. The war helped make a proto-Austrian state, as it spurred the creation of military and fiscal

³⁰ On conflicting theories of the Thirty Years War, see: Cornel Zwierlein, "The Thirty Years' War – A Religious War? Religion and Machiavellism at the Turning Point of 1635," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to the Thirty Years' War* (New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 241-242; Peter H. Wilson, "The Causes of the Thirty Years War 1618-1648," *The English Historical Review* 123, no. 502 (2008); and Peter H. Wilson, "Dynasty, Constitution, and Confession: The Role of Religion in the Thirty Years War," *The International History Review* 30, no. 3 (2008). For criticism of the General Crisis theory and of the exclusively religious theory, see: Niels Steensgaard, "The Seventeenth-Century Crisis," in *The General Crisis of the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Geoffrey Parker and Lesley M. Smith (Second ed. New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 36-39.

institutions and practices that subverted medieval conceptions of state and society and created the means by which a ruler in Vienna would be able to assert their authority across vast distances and challenging terrain.

Prior to 1618, rulers across Europe were bound by both normative traditions and practical institutional constraints that limited their ability to assert authority without the support of local lords and other members of a ruler's court, in a sense, these local lords constituted "veto-players" who were able to individually withhold their consent, thus denying the central ruler the use of the forces pledged to them (of whatever kind, a local peasant militia, knights or otherwise).³¹ There were either limited or no extant mechanisms through which a central ruler could exercise an independent claim to sovereign power.

In the century leading to the Thirty Years War, the Austrian Habsburgs came under enormous financial stress that strengthened the power of these local lords. In the east, the Habsburgs were challenged by the rapid expansion of Ottoman Turkish power which reached its peak with the 1529 Siege of Vienna and subsequent wars through 1606 that required

³¹ On the understanding of local lords as "veto-players" see: Mauricio Drelichman and Hans-Joachim Voth, *Lending to the Borrower from Hell: Debt, Taxes, and Default in the Age of Philip II* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), p. 276.

expensive and largely ad hoc mercenary armies.³² At the same time, tax collection by the Habsburg monarch was based largely on the irregular payment of limited fixed amounts, not a percentage of a given estates income. Rising agricultural prices meant that the incomes of these estates rose moderately, while the income of the Habsburg rulers in Vienna were strained by the expenses of the Turkish wars and inflation that ate away the purchasing power of the taxes they levied. The result was a heavily indebted Habsburg monarch in Vienna with no power to raise revenue.³³ Simultaneously, within the Habsburg lands, Protestant nobles grew increasingly frustrated, as Catholics were promoted to higher ranks of the nobility. Surprisingly, the reason for filling these positions with Catholics was not the fact that they were Catholic (though that constituted a secondary justification) but that the codification of Roman law and legal practices into a modernized civil and criminal law code in the Habsburg territories demanded experts in Roman law, most of whom were Catholic.³⁴ This resulted in the increasing polarization of nobles along confessional

³² Karin J. MacHardy, "The Rise of Absolutism and Noble Rebellion in Early Modern Habsburg Austria, 1570 to 1620," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 34, no. 3 (1992) and Wilson, "The Causes of the Thirty Years War 1618-1648."

³³ Jan de Vries, "The Economic Crisis of the Seventeenth Century after Fifty Years," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 40, no. 2 (2009): pp. 170-171 and Steensgaard, "The Seventeenth-Century Crisis," pp. 44-49.

³⁴ Charles Phineas Sherman, *Roman Law in the Modern World*, vol. 1 (New Haven: New Haven Law Book Company, 1922), pp. 222-224

lines, but in response to a secular political problem. By the 1610s, Protestant nobles within the Habsburg lands sought to “internationalize” their frustration, attempting to involve other rulers in Habsburg domestic affairs, a fundamental threat to the sovereignty of the state.³⁵

In this context, the so-called Defenestration of Prague represents the Protestant abandonment of legal means to secure medieval privileges against efforts by the Habsburg monarch to standardize the administration of the territories they govern against Protestant lords’ efforts to ensure decentralized and weak administration in the interest of their own rural estates. For this reason, defeating Protestant nobles and consolidating state power give the Thirty Years War its special designation as a war for state-making and accordingly an especially high degree of bellicosity: it was a war not between states, but between the idea of a state and a medieval conception of decentralized authority.³⁶

The 1618 Bohemian Protestant rebellion led to the creation of a short-lived polity that demonstrated their failure to respond to the new

³⁵ MacHardy, "The Rise of Absolutism and Noble Rebellion in Early Modern Habsburg Austria, 1570 to 1620," p. 424-427, and Henry Fredrick Schwarz, *The Imperial Privy Council in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1942), pp. 66-75.

³⁶ Johannes Burkhardt, "Die Friedlosigkeit der frühen Neuzeit: Grundlegung einer Theorie der Bellizität," *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 24, no. 4 (1997) and "The Thirty Years' War," in *A Companion to the Reformation World*, ed. R. Po-Chia Hsia (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), pp. 277-281.

world of centralizing state institutions. Their chosen ruler, Friedrich V of Rhein-Pfalz, was selected partially for his relationships with the other Protestant rulers within Europe and his promise to indulge the privileges they had lost under the Habsburgs.³⁷ Again, however, we see the clash of weak state institutions against medieval political practice: the Habsburgs were able to raise an army, collect taxes, and exercise force effectively. In contrast, the Bohemian estates made only limited financial contributions to the war effort, Friedrich's financial resources were conspicuously strained, and his supposed international connections failed to bring any significant level of support from other Protestant rulers.³⁸

There are legitimate reasons to argue, as Burkhardt does, that the Czechs were the modernizing state-makers, seeking to exercise almost proto-democratic control over an absolutist king, similar to Simon de Montfort's assertion of noble rights in thirteenth-century England. In doing so, however Burkhardt fails to recognize the fundamentally reactionary nature of the landed elites who sought to preserve a medieval order.³⁹

The key question remains: how did the Austrian Habsburg monarchy

³⁷ Joachim Whaley, *Germany and the Holy Roman Empire: From Maximilian I to the Peace of Westphalia*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 573-575 and Burkhardt, "The Thirty Years' War," pp. 277-281.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Burkhardt, "The Thirty Years' War," pp. 277-281, de Vries, "The Economic Crisis of the Seventeenth Century after Fifty Years," pp. 170-171, and Steensgaard, "The Seventeenth-Century Crisis," pp. 45-49.

respond to the challenges posed by the Protestant revolt and the beginning of the Thirty Years War? And how does their response to these events constitute state-making? The organization of the Habsburg monarchy complicates any attempt to understand it as a unified whole, as it would never achieve the degree of centralization that a state like France did. Furthermore, the realms remained for the most part separate, they did not come close to forming a single body until the 1806 dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire and the creation of the quasi-unified Austrian Empire. However, none of this can change the fact that the Austrian response to the war of 1618-1648 constituted state-making in three significant ways: it broke the power of the entrenched noble estates, it created a relatively coherent military organization, and established a degree of fiscal organization not previously realized.

The Protestant revolt did not result in the reassertion of their power, but instead helped break the power of the estates as a force within both Austria and Bohemia.⁴⁰ The Austrian and Bohemian territories maintained separate but mostly equal systems of noble estates that exercised representative powers within their territory.⁴¹ The rebellion that began in

⁴⁰ Robert Bireley, *Ferdinand II, Counter-Reformation Emperor, 1578-1637* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 135-136.

⁴¹ The Austrian lands in question being Lower Austria (*Österreich unter der Enns*) and Upper Austria (*Österreich ob der Enns*).

Prague destroyed the relative equality between the Protestant dominated estates (Bohemia and Upper Austria) and Catholic Lower Austria. The reason for this was the abandonment of a relationship built upon trust and adherence to expected norms of behavior on the part of the Bohemians and Upper Austrians. Once the initial rebellion within Bohemia had been quelled in the 1620s, Habsburg territories continued to be ruled separately, nor were their fundamental political rights withdrawn in favor of a baroque absolutism. However, turnover within the ranks of the nobility, for example because of emigration to Protestant kingdoms, resulted in estates that were overwhelmingly Catholic. However, the important roles held by the estates, for example as the mediators of relations between monarch and peasants, were largely maintained.⁴² Where other rulers, for example his immediate predecessor, might have sought to engage in the complete reordering of state-society relations, Ferdinand II refused to abandon longstanding legal and social practices. Ferdinand did not, for example, invoke his rights under the 1555 Peace of Augsburg to force the conversion of his Protestant subjects to Catholicism.⁴³ Centralization and consolidation were achieved, the emperor had considerably more power to

⁴² Michael Hochedlinger, *Austria's Wars of Emergence: War, State and Society in the Habsburg Monarchy, 1683-1797* (New York: Longman, 2003), p. 29 and Bireley, *Ferdinand II, Counter-Reformation Emperor, 1578-1637*, pp. 135-136.

⁴³ *Ferdinand II, Counter-Reformation Emperor, 1578-1637*, pp. 135-37.

influence the actions of the estates, but in such a fashion that broadly respected the entrenched rights that Protestant nobles had feared losing in 1618.⁴⁴ Altogether, this resulted in a significantly more coordinated polity that spanned the Habsburg realms.

I have repeatedly argued that the keystone of state-making and sovereignty is the ability of a ruler to exercise a monopoly of violence within their realms. In addition to the possibility of localized rebellions as in Bohemia in 1618, the Habsburgs had dealt with multiple protracted Turkish wars from the 1520s to 1606, each one requiring the raising of a new army. This system primarily functioned through the estates of the constituent Habsburg territories, which were responsible for raising these armies and contributing to their upkeep.⁴⁵ As the Czech and Upper Austrian estates were in revolt, this presented a serious problem. In addition to a military crisis, the Habsburgs had exhausted their financial resources and lacked the means through which they could raise additional resources.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ These points are also made in William D. Godsey, *The Sinews of Habsburg Power: Lower Austria in a Fiscal-Military State 1650-1820* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), pp. 18-22. On the reorganization of the constitution in Bohemia, see Bireley, *Ferdinand II, Counter-Reformation Emperor, 1578-1637*, pp. 164-166.

⁴⁵ Michael Hochedlinger, "The Habsburg Monarchy: From 'Military-Fiscal State' to 'Militarization'," in *The Fiscal-Military State in Eighteenth-Century Europe: Essays in Honour of P.G.M. Dickson*, ed. Christopher Storrs (Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2009), p. 77.

⁴⁶ Geoff Mortimer, *Wallenstein: The Enigma of the Thirty Years War* (New York: Palgrave, 2010), pp. 26-27.

The initial response to the uprising in Prague assumed that the existing system of military and financial organization through the territorial estates would be restored at a later date. Interim solutions to both the military and fiscal crises were found in an army raised by Habsburg allied Bavaria and generous subsidies by the wealthier Spanish Habsburgs to pay for mercenaries.⁴⁷ Even after the defeat of the remaining Bohemian Protestant military opposition in 1623, little serious consideration appears to have been given to the possibility of further conflict.⁴⁸ The entrance of a new Danish army to oppose the Habsburgs in 1625 again revealed the need for new thinking, as the Habsburgs again found themselves without the means to raise an army and to engage in another battle.

Lacking the means to finance an army, the Habsburg Emperor Ferdinand empowered the wealthy and enterprising Catholic Bohemian nobleman Albrecht von Wallenstein to construct and direct an army on his behalf. Over the course of two years, Wallenstein was able to raise funds to pay and equip some 100,000 soldiers, through the use of private financing mechanisms he developed, the sale of confiscated lands, and forced

⁴⁷ Hochedlinger, "The Habsburg Monarchy: From 'Military-Fiscal State' to 'Militarization'," p. 77 and Bireley, *Ferdinand II, Counter-Reformation Emperor, 1578-1637*, pp. 113-115.

⁴⁸ *Ferdinand II, Counter-Reformation Emperor, 1578-1637*, p. 159.

contributions from the towns they occupied.⁴⁹ Furthermore, Wallenstein began to pioneer methods for mass producing uniforms, equipment, and other provisions, innovations that could not be matched by other contemporary forces.⁵⁰ By 1633-1634, he began to ignore orders given to him by Ferdinand and his deputies, commanding a military machine that potentially threatened its ostensible masters. For this reason, Wallenstein was assassinated, but only after the loyalty of the army to the Emperor was ascertained.⁵¹ The result was a relatively stable, well equipped, and effectively disciplined military force, under the direct control of a state sovereign for the first time in Europe.⁵²

Nevertheless, the need to support this new military establishment was still lacking. Initially, the estates of the realms were directed to coordinate the supply and pay of the troops garrisoned within their territory, which quickly proved to be haphazard and inefficient. A second attempt was made with the creation of a permanent obligation on the estates to provide

⁴⁹ The contributions were in exchange for not looting the town. See: Bireley, *Ferdinand II, Counter-Reformation Emperor, 1578-1637*, pp. 160-161.

⁵⁰ Hochedlinger, "The Habsburg Monarchy: From 'Military-Fiscal State' to 'Militarization'," p. 78

⁵¹ Bireley, *Ferdinand II, Counter-Reformation Emperor, 1578-1637*, pp. 260-267 and for more detail on the specific events preceding Wallenstein's downfall, see: Mortimer, *Wallenstein: The Enigma of the Thirty Years War*, pp. 199-253.

⁵² John A. Mears, "The Thirty Years' War, the "General Crisis," and the Origins of a Standing Professional Army in the Habsburg Monarchy," *Central European History* 21, no. 2 (1988).

an ill-defined level of financial and material support to the army.⁵³

Ultimately, however, a solution was only found with the introduction of a formal military tax ("*kontribution*") which was paid yearly to a newly created imperial office charged with the organization, management, and supply of the army, the *Generalkriegskommissariat*.⁵⁴

A ruler's need to enforce their monopoly of violence, to assert their claim to authority over the territory they claim as their own, led Habsburg monarchs in the seventeenth-century to reconsider the organization and use of their power. Faced with rebellion and near defeat, they asserted power in ways that were previously unthinkable, reorganizing the constitution of their lands and reducing the power of nobles, imposing standardized taxes on the regions to pay for an army, building an institution that could assert a ruler's authority directly. In sum, the creation of a military and financial establishment that would endure in some form until 1918, forged in the midst of crisis and near defeat.

⁵³ Hochedlinger, "The Habsburg Monarchy: From 'Military-Fiscal State' to 'Militarization'," pp. 78-79 and Mears, "The Thirty Years' War, the "General Crisis," and the Origins of a Standing Professional Army in the Habsburg Monarchy," pp. 134-139.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

Chapter 3

State-Breakdown in Late Habsburg Austria-Hungary, 1867 to 1914

„Kaiser Franz Josef ist die stärkste Bindung, die heute alle Nationen hier zusammenhält, und an ihn wendet sich das ganze Begeisterungsbedürfnis all dieser Völker, wendet sich statt an die Nation an eine Person und verwandelt sie in ihre Sache.“⁵⁵

Stefan Zweig, „Das Land ohne Patriotismus“ [The Country without Patriotism]

The Body Without a Soul

In 1909, the Austrian writer Stefan Zweig described Habsburg Austria as a country in which the individual parts all worked, but failed to work together.

The heart beat, the lungs breathed, the muscles of the legs moved the body slowly forward. But that uniting principle—a soul—could not be found. The only thing that could hold the country together, according to Zweig, was the elderly heart of Emperor Franz Josef, who embodied the whole of the Austro-Hungarian state.⁵⁶ Imperial bureaucrats, with their military style ranks and uniforms, tied the state together, just as they tied bundles of documents with gold and black strings, the colors that symbolized the thousand year old Monarchy.⁵⁷ The coming years would

⁵⁵ Stefan Zweig, "Das Land ohne Patriotismus," in *Die schlaflose Welt*, ed. Knut Beck (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 2012), p. 14.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.

⁵⁷ John Deak, *Forging a Multinational State: State Making in Imperial Austria from the Enlightenment to the First World War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015), e.g. p. 7. See also: Robert Musil, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* (Hamburg: Rowohlt Verlag, 1952), e.g. pp. 96-97 and p. 462.

serve to demonstrate just how frayed these strings had become, as Austria-Hungary collapsed under the weight of the First World War.

The previous chapter discussed the ways in which the Habsburg monarchy had begun to construct institutions that allowed it to effectively exercise control throughout its territory in Central Europe. Faced with defeat in the Thirty Years War, Habsburg Monarchs were forced to respond in innovative ways that reshaped the relationship between the political regime they embodied and the society over which it governed. During the Thirty Years War, the Habsburgs had engaged in state-making: they had a relatively effective standing army and had created fiscal mechanisms with which to help pay for it, and they used that army and those institutions to fight their opponents to a stalemate in a destructive war of attrition. The decision to maintain that army (albeit at a reduced strength) after the war meant that the sovereign ruler possessed somewhat independent means through which to assert their right to rule.

As has been previously noted, state-making generally is the process of developing the institutions and mechanisms that allow a state to maintain its territorial integrity, assert the monopoly of violence, and extract the resources that enable it to do so. The nineteenth century saw the rise of “modern” states that met those criteria and in addition featured streamlined legal codes, like the Napoleonic Code of 1804 or the

Allgemeines bürgerliches Gesetzbuch (General Civil Code) of 1811.⁵⁸ They also featured high degrees of centralization and relatively developed industrial economies. Habsburg Austria broadly met these criteria, but the Austro-Hungarian Empire did not.⁵⁹

This chapter begins with the results of the 1867 *Ausgleich* constitution that formally divided the Empire into two halves at a moment of considerable weakness. After the devastating Habsburg Austrian defeat in 1866 at the Battle of Königgrätz, Emperor Franz Josef sought to bind the empire together, lest the Hungarians seek independence or to replace him with another monarch.⁶⁰ With an incredibly weak negotiating position resulting from the Austrian defeat at Königgrätz, he lacked the ability to create the centralizing, modern state that might have overcome the domestic, economic, and international challenges that the Empire faced in 1867. Instead, the bifurcated and confederal nature of the Austro-Hungarian state resulted in decentralized and fractious polities, policies

⁵⁸ The code itself was published as: *Allgemeines bürgerliches Gesetzbuch für die gesamten Deutschen Erbländer der Oesterreichischen Monarchie*, (Vienna: Kaiserliche und königliche Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1814). On the importance thereof, see: Franz Klein-Bruckschwaiger, "150 Jahre österreichisches ABGB," *JuristenZeitung* 18, no. 23/24 (1960).

⁵⁹ To clarify, Habsburg Austria being "Die im Reichsrat vertretenen Königreiche und Länder" (The Kingdoms and Lands represented in the Imperial Council), also known as "Cisleithanien" (the Lands west of the River Leitha).

⁶⁰ R. W. Seton-Watson, "The Austro-Hungarian Ausgleich of 1867," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 19, no. 53 (1939)

that hindered industrialization and development, and an ever worsening position within the European concert which altogether prevented state-making and instead resulted in state-breakdown.

State-making in Habsburg Austria was a response to crises, in the previous chapter, the Thirty Years War being the best example. In the period between 1648 and 1867, that continued to be the case. The efforts of the “Enlightened Absolutists” in the intervening two centuries did not alter this pattern. Maria Theresa’s near defeat in the Wars of the 1740s was the event that spurred both her own and her son’s efforts at the creation of a truly unified and cohesive Habsburg Austrian state.⁶¹ It is impossible to know with certainty, but perhaps not unreasonable to imagine that Habsburg Austria might have vanished without that and other near-death experiences to drive state-making forward.⁶²

What makes the case of 1867-1914 different from previous cases where crises inspired state-making was that the logic of Austro-Hungarian governance had become fixed on the idea of holding the empire together at all costs, not building a stronger state in order to more effectively

⁶¹ Hochedlinger, *Austria's Wars of Emergence: War, State and Society in the Habsburg Monarchy, 1683-1797* pp. 219-222 and H. M. Scott, *The Birth of a Great Power System, 1740-1815*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2013) pp. 39-71.

⁶² The end of the Holy Roman Empire was a similar type of crisis that inspired renewed efforts at state-making, see: Peter H. Wilson, "Bolstering the Prestige of the Habsburgs: The End of the Holy Roman Empire in 1806," *The International History Review* 28, no. 4 (2006).

exercise state power. Imagine for a minute the position of the Austro-Hungarian Emperor in 1867: he had lost any claim to leadership within the German nation after the Battle of Königgrätz, as Hohenzollern Prussia established itself as the preeminent German power. Only seven years previously at the Battle of Solferino, he himself in command of his own army, he oversaw a defeat which lost the considerable wealth and prestige of Milan and Austrian Lombardy. These defeats were considered to have been severe blows to the prestige of the Habsburg Monarchy itself (“zur Ehre Meines Hauses,” “for the honor of my Imperial House”) and no doubt to Franz Josef personally.⁶³ Given these circumstances, choosing a painful and ultimately disadvantageous political compromise with Hungary in order to hold the remaining kingdoms of Habsburg Central Europe together over the short to medium term appears reasonable. As the state-making in Austria was contingent on a monarch using crisis to drive the process forward, the warped political logic of post-1867 Austria prevented this from happening.

⁶³ Laurence Cole, *Military Culture and Popular Patriotism in Late Imperial Austria* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 45-47. “zur Ehre...” see: Franz Josef I and Karl Stürgkh, “An Meine Völker!,” *Wiener Zeitung* 29 July 1914.

The Ausgleich and Political Dysfunction

During his 1890s tour through Europe, Mark Twain spent a year in Vienna, improving his German and circulating within the higher ranks of Viennese society. Thanks to his social connections, Twain obtained a coveted ticket to the Reichsrat public gallery, from which he observed the twelve-hour filibuster speech of German liberal Otto Lecher.⁶⁴ Lecher's opposition to a bill allowing for Czech to be used by Czech speakers in the course of conducting government business encapsulated Austria-Hungary's domestic political crisis. What should have been a relatively simple and uncontroversial reform became incredibly polarizing and a cause for riots across the German speaking Austrian territories, resulting in the use of the army and the suspension of "normal" political life until 1907. The problem was not only the absence of a common national idea, it was that the bifurcated structure of domestic politics exacerbated this absence by magnitudes, especially when combined with evermore polarized political elites who sought to outflank their opponents through ever more extreme positions. In the Hungarian half, these problems were frustrated by the additional goal of asserting Magyar ethnic superiority.

⁶⁴ Twain's account is given in Mark Twain, "Stirring Times in Austria," in *In Defense of Harriet Shelley and Other Essays* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1918 [1898]). Cf. the critique given in Max Lederer, "Mark Twain in Vienna," *Mark Twain Quarterly* 7, no. 1 (1945): pp. 3-5. See also the account given in *The New York Times*: "Wild Tumult in Vienna." 26 November 1897, p. 1.

It is hard to imagine a less happy or functional institutional arrangement than Austria-Hungary's in 1867. From his ascent to the throne in the midst of revolution in 1848, Emperor Franz Josef had promulgated a series of constitutions aimed less at reforming and streamlining the functioning of the state and more at ensuring the stability and continuity of quasi-absolutist government. At the same time, Austria engaged in a renewed struggle over the future of the German speaking lands as a whole, seeking to maintain the equilibrium that had existed since 1815, in opposition to the Prussian drive for hegemony over the non-Austrian lands.⁶⁵ However, Austria's crippling defeat during the 1866 Battle of Königgrätz effectively settled this question, as it revealed the deficiencies of Austro-Hungarian power.⁶⁶ When confronted with superior force, the Habsburg Army did not stand to fight, but crumbled, hardly a cause to rally Hungarian peasants or Czech factory workers around.⁶⁷

Having lost both the small German states that were historical Habsburg allies and centuries of Habsburg claims to authority as leaders of the German nation, Franz Josef was forced to agree to whatever his Hungarian

⁶⁵ Enno E. Kraehe, "Austria and the Problem of Reform in the German Confederation, 1851-1863," *The American Historical Review* 56, no. 2 (1951).

⁶⁶ Geoffrey Wawro, *Warfare and Society in Europe, 1792-1914* (New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 87-89.

⁶⁷ A similar point was made in Cole, *Military Culture and Popular Patriotism in Late Imperial Austria*, pp. 45-47.

nobles demanded, in order that they not fracture the entire Empire.⁶⁸ What they received in the 1867 *Ausgleich* (Compromise) Constitution was exactly that. Gone was any pretension to a unified state, but instead two states in a kind of loose confederation with a common ruler and shared ministries for common finances, foreign affairs, and war. Both halves of the monarchy paid into a common budget, the *Quota*, but wildly disproportionately in Hungary's favor. State debts that were accumulated to the benefit of both Austria and Hungary under the prior system were made more or less the exclusive burden of Austrian finances.

The political logic of the post-1867 Austro-Hungarian order prevented the creation of effective political institutions that could effectively manage the problems the state faced, for fear of instability that could break the fragile whole. Instead of building itself up, as unified Prussian Germany succeeded in doing after 1871, it was cleaved into two unequal halves. Austria, ruled from Vienna, was able to build domestic institutions that

⁶⁸ For an excellent overview of the *Ausgleich* constitution see Seton-Watson, "The Austro-Hungarian Ausgleich of 1867."

However, one should always bear in mind the role Seton-Watson played in advocating for the dissolution of Austria-Hungary and in encouraging Slavic nationalism. On this point see Christopher Seton-Watson and Hugh Seton-Watson, *The Making of a New Europe: R.W. Seton-Watson and the Last Years of Austria-Hungary* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981) and a brief critique: Paul W. Schroeder, "Review of The Making of a New Europe: R. W. Seton-Watson and the Last Years of Austria-Hungary," *The Journal of Modern History* 53, no. 4 (1981).

could encourage a high degree of political and economic development, though inequality between the national groups was a constant source of tension.⁶⁹ The Hungarian half was ruled by elites obsessed with “Magyarization,” constant assertion of the proclaimed legal, political, and cultural superiority of Hungarian as the *lingua franca* within their borders, to the detriment of the half of their population that did not consider themselves Hungarian. Magyarization discouraged the teaching of non-Hungarian languages in schools, as reflected in the literacy rate. In 1910, Hungary reported that around twenty-eight percent of the population was illiterate, compared to sixteen percent in the Austrian half. In another multiethnic state, Belgium, only thirteen percent were illiterate.⁷⁰ Domestic political development occurred in Hungary, though not nearly as deeply as

⁶⁹ Hans Kohn, "The Viability of the Habsburg Monarchy," *Slavic Review* 22, no. 1 (1963) and Suzanne G. Kornish, "Constitutional Aspects of the Struggle between Germans and Czechs in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy," *The Journal of Modern History* 27, no. 3 (1955).

⁷⁰ These figures measure come from censuses performed in Austria-Hungary in 1910 and Belgium in 1911. Both surveys defined literacy as the ability to read and write in the individual's native language around age 10 to 11. Adalbert Rom, "Der Bildungsgrad der Bevölkerung Österreichs und seine Entwicklung seit 1880, mit besonderer Berücksichtigung d. Sudeten- u. Karpathenländer," *Statistische Monatsschrift* 40 [NF 19] (1914): p. 591. Berend and Ránki report a higher rate of thirty-three percent illiteracy in Hungary in 1910, though their source is unclear. See: Iván T. Berend and György Ránki, *Economic Development in East-Central Europe in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1974), p. 25.

in the Austrian portion, partially due to Magyarization's obsessive drive for uniformity.⁷¹

Those institutions within Habsburg Austria that could have provided effective domestic governance were also divided along ethnic, religious, and political lines. The scenes that Mark Twain famously described in "Stirring Times in Austria" were caused by only a small minority of German anti-Clerical Liberals from Bohemia.⁷² The 1875 *Reichsrat* standing orders allowed a small minority of lawmakers to hold proceedings hostage with only a few votes. Of the 425 members of the *Abgeordnetenhaus*, only fifty were required to demand a roll-call vote on almost any matter that could last hours, only twenty for an emergency debate.⁷³ It was all too easy to block further proceedings for days, entangling parliament in a procedural morass. Minority parties within particular ethnic groups sought to outflank their majorities by exacerbating ethnic conflict and blocking, as in the case of Otto Lecher, compromise legislation that promised to improve the relative equality between ethnic groups.⁷⁴

⁷¹ See, e.g.: Gary Cohen, "Nationalist Politics and the Dynamics of State and Civil Society in the Habsburg Monarchy, 1867-1914," *Central European History* 40, no. 2 (2007).

⁷² Lothar Höbelt, "Parliamentary Politics in a Multinational Setting: Late Imperial Austria," Center for Austrian Studies Working Papers Series (1992).

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 9 and 14-15.

The appalling position of Jews in Austro-Hungarian political life served to provide a kind of cohesion to the political system. Their “function” as an “other” allowed non-Jews to portray them as something to be guarded against and compete on the basis of making the strongest appeals to antisemitism. Even where Jews were marginally accepted as leaders of the Socialist Party, their acceptance was contingent on hiding their Jewishness.⁷⁵ Efforts at “integration” into the German-Catholic social world were exemplified by the character of Dr. Goldenthal in *Dr. Bernhardt*: despite conversion to Christianity, choosing to have your children educated at Jesuit schools, etc. converted Jews could never pass the impossible tests of the German nationalist anti-Semites.⁷⁶ Austrian Jews would always remain damned to second or third class status.

Finally, efforts to reform the bureaucracy, for example the aforementioned Czech language reform, were constantly blocked by Lecher and others. Where it was possible for governments to carry reforms

⁷⁵ Anton Pelinka, "Anti-Semitism and Ethno-Nationalism as Determining Factors for Austria's Political Culture at the Fin de Siècle," in *Liberalism, Anti-Semitism, and Democracy: Essays in Honor of Peter Pulzer*, ed. Henning Tewes and Jonathan Wright (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 71-73 and Bruce F. Pauley, *From Prejudice to Persecution: A History of Austrian Anti-Semitism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), pp. 38-44.

⁷⁶ *From Prejudice to Persecution: A History of Austrian Anti-Semitism*, pp. 57-58 and Arthur Schnitzler, *Professor Bernhardt: Komödie in fünf Akten* (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam jun., 2005), pp. 109-138.

through, those reforms were only possible in conjunction with “pork-barrel” politics: the significant infrastructure investments of Prime Minister Ernest von Koerber’s 1902 “Koerber Plan” were tied to future votes on administrative and constitutional reform.⁷⁷ It should come as no surprise that the infrastructure projects passed easily, the political reforms not at all.

In sum, Austria-Hungary’s bifurcated structure made internal governance difficult under the most ideal of circumstances. Religious, ethnic, and ideological cleavages divided the public, while extremist minorities sought to outflank their opponents, worsening polarization among political elites and the public. In the Austrian half of the empire, domestic institutions were weak, resistant to reform, and often deadlocked by ethnic conflict. In Hungary, domestic institutions had the additional challenge of being subverted to the larger goal of asserting Magyar ethnic and cultural superiority, which hindered economic and political development, and inflamed ethnic division.

⁷⁷ Deak, *Forging a Multinational State*, pp. 237-240, Höbelt, pp. 7-9, and Alexander Gerschenkron, *An Economic Spurt that Failed: Four Lectures in Austrian History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), pp. 33-36.

The Politics of Development and the Politics of Backwardness

In the previous section, I set out to explain how the domestic structure of the post-1867 Austro-Hungarian state contributed to the regime's inability to build effective state institutions. Austria-Hungary's weak internal structure also had significant economic effects, as it prevented a coordinated approach to industrialization and deep economic integration. Instead, the Austro-Hungarian economic relationship was one sided to the benefit of Hungarian landowners, who were more concerned with maintaining their social status than in achieving broad based economic development. In the Austrian half alone, industrialization did occur, though the Austrian lands never completely closed the gap with Prussian Germany or the rest of Western Europe. Just as with the examples of domestic political life, however, the tale of industrialization and economic development in Austria-Hungary is the tale of two different economies. One developing industrial economy that could compete on the European stage, and one that instead remained backward as the result of intentional policy choices.

Theories of industrialization are tightly linked to theories of modernization and state-making, perhaps none more so than Alexander Gerschenkron's 1962 book *Economic Backwardness in Historical*

Perspective.⁷⁸ Gerschenkron sought to explain how industrialization worked across Europe during the nineteenth century, accounting for a wide variety of cases and political contexts. Gerschenkron's argument turned on the idea of an economic "spurt," a sudden burst of significant and extended economic growth. The longer a country waited to industrialize and the more backward it was, the more significant this spurt would be as evermore advanced technologies are introduced into a backward economy.⁷⁹ Similarly, the later industrialization began, the more likely it was to require state direction or intervention. Finally, the abolition of serfdom, for example in Austria (1781), Hungary (1848), and Russia (1861), along with more efficient and less labor-intensive agricultural practices provided a potential industrial workforce.⁸⁰

The long gap between the abolition of serfdom in the Austrian half of the monarchy and the Hungarian half speaks volumes about the different economic and political contexts in which Austro-Hungarian industrialization took place. The first signs of industrialization in Austria begin to emerge as

⁷⁸ Alexander Gerschenkron, *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962).

⁷⁹ Gerschenkron, *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective*, p. 44. Gerschenkron often compares the idea of an industrializing spurt to modernization theorist Walt Rostow's idea of a "take-off." See: Gilman, *Mandarins of the Future: Modernization Theory in Cold War America*, pp. 190-204.

⁸⁰ Gerschenkron, *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective*, p. 8.

early as the 1820s.⁸¹ From 1830 to 1913, total industrial production increased an average of between 2.8% and 3% per year.⁸² Gerschenkron is right to point out that a spurt could have been beneficial to the overall economic development of the Austrian half of the empire, and could have helped close the widening gap with the unified German Empire that emerged in the later nineteenth century.⁸³ However, industrialization had long been underway.

Austrian industrialization was stunted by Hungarian demands for tariffs that would protect Hungarian agricultural production (and Hungarian landowners) from external competition. This had a number of important effects, all of which hampered industrialization. First, the Austrian domestic market was held captive to Hungarian landowners, and the Viennese

⁸¹ Eddie, "Economic Policy and Economic Development," pp. 816-817 and John Komlos, *The Habsburg Monarchy as a Customs Union: Economic Development in Austria-Hungary in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), pp. 90-94.

⁸² Figures compiled in Eddie, "Economic Policy and Economic Development," p. 866. The average is my calculation.

⁸³ Gerschenkron, *An Economic Spurt that Failed: Four Lectures in Austrian History*, p. 52. Gerschenkron's hero in this work, prime minister Ernest von Koerber, proposed a series of infrastructure projects designed to link the underdeveloped parts of the Austrian lands and encourage industrial development. The infrastructure component is often compared to "pork-barrel" spending but was part of a serious if unsuccessful effort to bind the Austrian lands tighter together. For criticism of the plan, see: Höbelt, "Parliamentary Politics in a Multinational Setting: Late Imperial Austria," pp. 7-8. On the oft overlooked and important political purpose of the plan see: Fredrik Lindström, "Ernest von Koerber and the Austrian State Idea: A Reinterpretation of the Koerber Plan (1900–1904)," *Austrian History Yearbook* 35 (2004).

working class paid more for food than the working classes of London or Hamburg.⁸⁴ Second, retaliatory tariffs from key trading partners, for example the agricultural exporters of the Balkans, closed those markets to Austrian high value-added industrial and consumer goods.⁸⁵ A case in point: in 1884, 44% of Romania's total imports came from Austria-Hungary, while only 15% came from Germany. In 1894, this figure stood at 27% for Austria-Hungary and 28% for Germany. In 1910, 24% and 34% for Germany.⁸⁶ In terms of the value of goods traded in Europe, Austria had fallen from 4th to a distant 6th, ahead of only Italy.⁸⁷ From 1884 to 1913, Austrian goods made up an average of 82.9% of the value of all Austro-Hungarian exports, which demonstrates the continued gulf between

⁸⁴ Ifor L. Evans, "Economic Aspects of Dualism in Austria-Hungary," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 6, no. 18 (1928): p. 538.

⁸⁵ Andrew C. Janos, "The Decline of Oligarchy: Bureaucratic and Mass Politics in the Age of Dualism (1867-1918)," in *Revolution in Perspective: Essays on the Hungarian Soviet Republic of 1919*, ed. Andrew C. Janos and William B. Slottman (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), pp. 29-30 and pp. 44-45, Scott M. Eddie, "Economic Policy and Economic Development in Austria-Hungary, 1867-1913," in *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe from the Decline of the Roman Empire, Volume 8: The Industrial Economies: The Development of Economic and Social Policies*, ed. Peter Mathias and Sidney Pollard (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 827-828, Eugen von Philippovich, "Austrian-Hungarian Trade-Policy and the New German Tariff," *The Economic Journal* 12, no. 46 (1902), and Evans, *ibid.*

⁸⁶ Eddie, "Economic Policy and Economic Development," p. 827.

⁸⁷ Eddie, *ibid.*, p. 829. Comparing the development of Austria-Hungary and Italy in the nineteenth century would be an interesting case for future research, as both share similar economic and political divisions.

Austrian and Hungarian industrial production.⁸⁸ Finally, by closing the large Austrian market to the agricultural exports of key Balkan states, Austria unnecessarily antagonized those newly independent Balkan states, who began to deepen their ties with France, Russia, and Germany, losing the considerable political leverage it previously commanded.⁸⁹

If Hungary proved a net-negative for overall economic development and industrialization in Austria, the opposite was true in Hungary itself: it benefited enormously from holding the Austrian agricultural market captive, but also from unrestrained flows of capital from Austrian banks at favorable rates. As serfdom was eliminated only in 1848, grudging improvements in agricultural techniques and increased mechanization would eventually create a large pool of potential industrial workers, though the productivity and output gains of mechanization would be realized only slowly.⁹⁰ Where industrialization did succeed and where Hungary enjoyed a comparative advantage vis-a-vis Austria was in food processing: the introduction of

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 836. The average is my own calculation.

⁸⁹ Evans, "Economic Aspects of Dualism," p. 538.

⁹⁰ Janos, "The Decline of Oligarchy: Bureaucratic and Mass Politics in the Age of Dualism (1867-1918)," pp. 20-23 and *The Politics of Backwardness in Hungary* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), pp. 128-132.

steam powered flour mills would establish food processing as a key Hungarian industry for decades to come.⁹¹

Hungary's demand for ever higher agricultural tariffs in the years following the 1867 *Ausgleich* reflects both the limited nature of Hungarian industry and the damage these tariffs did to total Austro-Hungarian economic growth. Prior to the introduction of the most punishing tariffs 1880, the average profit margin for a flour mill in Budapest was 26.2%, with an export volume (to Austria and outside the monarchy) of around 250,000 tons, with approximately 110,000 tons entering the European market.⁹² In 1896, profits were still a healthy 7-10% and export volume had risen to 718,900 tons per year, but exports outside the monarchy increased only 8,800 tons, while 600,100 tons were exported to Austria, a growth rate of 413.5% and 8%, respectively.⁹³ By 1913, Hungarian exported 779,300 tons of flour to Austria and only 34,000 tons to the rest of Europe. At the same time, the average price of wheat in Austria was on

⁹¹ Iván T. Berend, *An Economic History of Twentieth-Century Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 32; Berend, *History Derailed: Central and Eastern Europe in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), pp. 170-171, and Komlos, *The Habsburg Monarchy as a Customs Union: Economic Development in Austria-Hungary in the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 136-137.

⁹² *The Habsburg Monarchy as a Customs Union: Economic Development in Austria-Hungary in the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 141-143. Data for this period is spotty at best, though Komlos does his best to piece it together. These figures are approximate.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

average, considerably higher than in other major European cities. In 1880, the price of around 12kg of wheat flour in London was 24.5 Austrian Kronen (k) and in Vienna, k26.8. In 1892, k16.8 and k19.4 in London and Vienna, respectively. And in 1899, k14.5 in London while Austrians paid k20.1.⁹⁴ Austrian agricultural prices were on average much higher than the rest of Europe, held captive to Hungarian demands for ever higher agricultural tariffs.⁹⁵

In sum, the Austro-Hungarian economy was a tale of two separate economies. The Austrian economy began industrializing shortly after the Battle of Waterloo, as landless peasants, long freed from the obligations of serfdom and military conscription migrated at ever higher rates to urban centers, creating a pool of potential labor. Hungary, however, maintained traditional serf-peasant obligations through the first half of the nineteenth-century and was held captive by a powerful alliance of landed gentry and

⁹⁴ The data is from Roland Kühne, *Die Geschichte des ungarischen Getreidehandels und die Getreidepreisbildung in Oesterreich-Ungarn* (Magyaróvár: Druckerei des Mosonvármegye, 1910), p. 63, and is corroborated by Andrew C. Janos, *The Politics of Backwardness in Hungary* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), pp. 129-130 and Evans, "Economic Aspects of Dualism in Austria-Hungary." Unfortunately, Kühne does not tell his readers if the "metzen" he uses as a unit of measurement is Austrian, Hungarian, or German. Which could mean that k20.1 will buy anywhere between 20L and 75L of wheat flour. 20L appears to be the most common and comes to approximately 12kg when converted.

⁹⁵ Komlos, *The Habsburg Monarchy as a Customs Union: Economic Development in Austria-Hungary in the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 216-217 and Evans, "Economic Aspects of Dualism in Austria-Hungary."

conservative politicians who sought to defend their positions and economic power through high tariffs and rents.⁹⁶ Only when the benefits of industrialization were plainly apparent and, as Gerschenkron suggests, the relative backwardness to Austria became so pronounced, did they engage in grudging state-led efforts to industrialize in the late 1890s and early 1900s.⁹⁷

The history of Austro-Hungarian economic policy and the development of Austro-Hungarian state institutions demonstrate the divergent paths each half of the monarchy took. In the first case, efforts to reform the state, create an effective administrative infrastructure, and end serfdom all succeeded in the Austrian half. In the Hungarian half, the drive for reforms and administrative reforms that had proven themselves so successful in the Austrian half were fiercely resisted, as was the implementation of the 1781 decree ending serfdom.⁹⁸ In Hungary, the elimination of serfdom only followed after the military occupation of Kingdom by Austrian forces in

⁹⁶ Janos, *The Politics of Backwardness in Hungary*, pp. 118-121.

⁹⁷ Berend, *An Economic History of Twentieth-Century Europe*, p. 32 and Gerschenkron, *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective*, pp. 353-356, and Komlos, *The Habsburg Monarchy as a Customs Union: Economic Development in Austria-Hungary in the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 214-220.

⁹⁸ Gerschenkron, *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective*, e.g., p. 4, p. 8, and p. 35.

1849.⁹⁹ Underdevelopment, in Hungary at least, was an active choice made by Hungarian elites.¹⁰⁰ It was Hungarian elites who pursued a policy of Magyarization, who declined to embrace widespread basic education, and who repudiated Austrian bank investments in infrastructure that could have created “spurt” conditions sooner, rather than much later.¹⁰¹

From a purely economic perspective, the Austro-Hungarian Union left Austria worse off. For Austria, basic staples cost more while their ability to export their high value-added products was hindered by the retaliatory tariffs against those tariffs demanded by Hungarian agricultural interests. Had those tariffs not existed, competition for agricultural commodities could have lowered the prices paid by the developing industrial working

⁹⁹ Andrew C. Janos, "The Politics of Backwardness in Continental Europe, 1780-1945," *World Politics* 41, no. 3 (1989).

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. and Acemoglu and Robinson, "Economic Backwardness in Political Perspective."

I do not wish to engage the considerable but tangential problem that is raised by scholars like Acemoglu and Robinson who conflate the distinct and separate Austrian and Hungarian cases as a single case. This view is misleading in the extreme, as it allows them to construct an idea of Austria-Hungary as a unitary and powerful absolutist state, led by a monarch who resisted any and all attempts at modernization. In losing granularity, they deny themselves and their readers clarity and lose analytical sharpness. In their 2012 book, they also get many dates wrong, claiming, for example, that serfdom continued across the whole of the Empire through 1848 or that railroads were not introduced on a widespread basis until after 1848. See: *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty* (New York: Crown, 2012), pp. 222-230.

¹⁰¹ Komlos, *The Habsburg Monarchy as a Customs Union: Economic Development in Austria-Hungary in the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 214-220 and on the stark contrast in Austrian and Hungarian educational policy, see: Rom, "Der Bildungsgrad der Bevölkerung Österreichs und seine Entwicklung seit 1880, mit besonderer Berücksichtigung d. Sudeten- u. Karpathenländer."

class, boosted overall Austrian exports, and maintained positive relations with the Balkan states who turned against Austria after the tariffs came into effect.

International Crisis and the Decision for War in 1914

On 28 July 1914 the Austro-Hungarian newspaper of record, the *Wiener Zeitung*, published a declaration entitled “To My Peoples!,” detailing Emperor Franz Josef’s decision to declare war on Serbia. Austria-Hungary arrived at this point not only as the result of its declining international prestige, but as a result of its failures to build a cohesive state that could administer and unify the “peoples” ruled by Franz Josef. Furthermore, because of this state’s domestic challenges and bifurcated governance, efforts to build influence and political relationships through strong bilateral trade, especially in the Balkans, was often hampered by domestic challenges, especially internal conflicts over trade policy. When Franz Josef and his advisors made the positive decision to launch a war, it was as much an attempt to resolve internal challenges as it was to address Austria-Hungary’s precipitous decline as a great power or a response to the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand.

The two previous sections in this chapter outlined Austria-Hungary’s domestic and economic challenges in the years before the First World War.

This section integrates the findings of those previous sections with the historical analysis of the international challenges of the same period. Taken together, these challenges would prove overwhelming. Austria-Hungary failed to engage in cohesive state-making after 1867 because the logic of the bifurcated constitutional system made it more difficult—though not impossible—to solve the monarchy’s problems through centralization and cohesive state-making. With the particular interests of a tiny elite driving economic policy, the implementation of policies that could have promoted economic development across the whole of the empire were continuously blocked. Social challenges like illiteracy remained more widespread than in other comparable states, which no doubt also inhibited economic development and overall economic growth.¹⁰² Taken with the effect of Magyarization policies that for a large part of the empire proved antagonistic and which actively promoted division and ethnic tension, there was little chance for the kind of state-making that would allow the Austro-Hungarian state to manage these challenges.¹⁰³

¹⁰² Rom, "Der Bildungsgrad der Bevölkerung Österreichs und seine Entwicklung seit 1880, mit besonderer Berücksichtigung d. Sudeten- u. Karpathenländer," p. 591. Berend and Ránki report a higher rate of thirty-three percent illiteracy in Hungary in 1910, though their source is unclear. See: Berend and Ránki, *Economic Development in East-Central Europe in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, p. 25.

¹⁰³ Cohen, "Nationalist Politics and the Dynamics of State and Civil Society in the Habsburg Monarchy, 1867-1914," and Manfred Rauchensteiner, *The First World War and the End of the Habsburg Monarchy, 1914-1918*, trans. Alex J. Kay and Anna Güttel-Bellerts (Vienna: Böhlau, 2014), pp. 33-34.

The economic effects of this disunity were considerable and directly linked to Austria-Hungary's worsening international position. Instead of seeking to compete on the European market on the basis of price and quality or modernizing their cultivation methods and equipment, Hungarian landowners used their political power to erect both tariffs and non-tariff barriers to protect their domestic markets.¹⁰⁴ Punishingly high tariffs effectively blocked grain imports from the Balkan states, severely damaging political and economic relations. For Hungarian producers, it made no difference if their grain and refined products (e.g. flour) went to Serbia or Salzburg. But for Austrian industrial equipment or textile manufacturers, it made a significant difference, as they were shut out of important markets and lost considerable market share even where they still had access.¹⁰⁵

Losing market share and denying market access to Balkan producers in the Austro-Hungarian domestic market meant that they also lost political influence with the same. In the case of Serbia, the trade war that raged

¹⁰⁴ Eddie, "Economic Policy and Economic Development in Austria-Hungary, 1867-1913," p. 862.

¹⁰⁵ Roumyana Preshlenova, "Austro-Hungarian Trade and the Economic Development of Southeastern Europe Before World War I," in *Economic Transformations in East and Central Europe: Legacies from the Past and Policies for the Future*, ed. David F. Good (New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 236-243 and Eddie, "Economic Policy and Economic Development in Austria-Hungary, 1867-1913," pp. 833-838.

from 1906 to 1911 coincided with the crisis over the Austro-Hungarian decision to formally annex Bosnia in 1907/1908. Never mind the fact that the annexation was long foreseen by the other European great power statesmen and that Bosnia's protectorate status made it a province of Austria-Hungary in all but name.¹⁰⁶ The strained relationship between Austria-Hungary and Serbia due to the trade war taken together with Austria's decision to formally annex Bosnia provided Russia the perfect opportunity to encourage South Slav nationalism throughout the Balkans and within the South Slav territories of Austria-Hungary itself.¹⁰⁷

The significant domestic and economic challenges described above were only compounded by the changing norms of relations between European states in European (for lack of a better word, "Continental") affairs and the introduction of an "imperialist ethos" which supplanted the post-1815 Congress of Vienna equilibrium. Outside of the European continent, the "imperial scramble" was the search for territories to conquer, regardless of their economic or social value to the colonizing nation, in

¹⁰⁶ Paul W. Schroeder, "Stealing Horses to Great Applause: Austria-Hungary's Decision in 1914 in Systemic Perspective," in *An Improbable War?: The Outbreak of World War I and European Political Culture before 1914*, ed. Holger Afflerbach and David Stevenson (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007), pp. 34-38.

¹⁰⁷ Preshlenova, "Austro-Hungarian Trade and the Economic Development of Southeastern Europe Before World War I," p. 241, Rauchensteiner, *The First World War and the End of the Habsburg Monarchy, 1914-1918*, pp. 16-21, and Richard C. Hall, *The Balkan Wars 1912-1913* (New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 7-21.

order that other European powers be prevented from obtaining whatever sliver of land they had won.¹⁰⁸ Within Europe, this attitude encouraged some powers to seek advantage at all costs, no matter what damage it might cause to the overall equilibrium of power within the continent.¹⁰⁹ Russian efforts to inflame ethnic tensions in the Balkans during and after Austria's formal annexation of Bosnia—despite their earlier acknowledgement and support of the de facto legality of the annexation—are indicative of this imperialist attitude.¹¹⁰

Austria-Hungary was uniquely unprepared to act as an imperial power within Europe or without, as it held no colonies and did not participate in the “scramble for Africa.” Instead of trying to use imperialist tactics in the

¹⁰⁸ This is of course to say nothing of the devastation wrought on the inhabitants of these colonized territories. The case of the genocide in German Southwest Africa being a particularly painful example. See: Jürgen Zimmerer, "Annihilation in Africa: The “Race War” in German Southwest Africa (1904-1908) and its Significance for a Global History of Genocide," *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute Washington* 37 (2005).

¹⁰⁹ Paul W. Schroeder, "The Life and Death of a Long Peace, 1763-1914," in *The Waning of Major War: Theories and Debates*, ed. Raimo Väyrynen (New York: Routledge, 2006), pp. 50-53, "Stealing Horses to Great Applause: Austria-Hungary's Decision in 1914 in Systemic Perspective," pp. 34-37, and Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power: Global Empires and Revolutions, 1890-1945* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 83-92.

¹¹⁰ Schroeder, “Stealing Horses,” *ibid.*

Other examples cited by Schroeder include the Italian attack on the Ottoman Empire in Libya and the Russian supported Serb-Bulgarian-Greek alliance against the Ottomans, both having significant and destabilizing consequences for the stability of continental Europe.

Balkans as the Russians had done, they sought to reestablish the trade relationships that had previously tied the Balkans to the Habsburg state to great effect. To this end, Austro-Hungarian banks extended cheap credit and manufacturers were incentivized to lower their prices for Balkan markets.¹¹¹ However, these policies ultimately had little effect, partially because Balkan importers had long since established deep trading relationships with other nations on equally or more favorable terms, partially because Austro-Hungarian agricultural import tariffs remained high, and partially because of Austria's support of the Ottoman Empire during the First Balkan War in the interests of European stability and equilibrium.¹¹²

In Chapter II, the analysis of the process of state-making primarily hinged on the creation of an effective and professional military force that was capable of exerting a monopoly of violent force across the territories claimed by the Habsburg Emperor. This chapter has attempted to demonstrate how post-1815 European state-making also involves the creation of a domestic political system that can effectively administer the

¹¹¹ Serbia was of course excluded as the aforementioned tariff war continued until 1911.

¹¹² Hall, *The Balkan Wars 1912-1913*, pp. 130-142 and Preshlenova, "Austro-Hungarian Trade and the Economic Development of Southeastern Europe Before World War I," p. 249-253.

There was also a lack of suitable transport links between Austria-Hungary and the Balkans, a fact that would emerge as a significant challenge during World War I.

state and a competitive industrializing economy. Unfortunately for Austria-Hungary, neither of these two elements can be said to have existed in their ideal form. And their absence makes the “classical” element of state-making, an effective army, almost possible to achieve, at least on paper. In both qualitative and quantitative measures, the Austro-Hungarian Army was poorly equipped and unable to meet the challenges that a general war would bring. As the administration of the army was a matter of joint concern, it was just another pressure point through which the Hungarian government could demand concessions from the Emperor and from the Austrian government. Only the Bosnian crisis of 1908 and the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 would convince the Hungarians of the urgent need for reform and improvement and even then, total military expenditure was still considerably lower than the nearest similar sized power. At the same time, the Balkan powers who had been spurned economically and politically had begun to invest considerably more than in previous years.¹¹³ The lack of investment puts this problem very plain: at the end of 1910, Austria-Hungary had a population of 51,306,620 and expended £21,060,797 on defense. At the same time, Metropolitan France had a population of

¹¹³ David G. Herrmann, *The Arming of Europe and the Making of the First World War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), pp. 199-210.

39,601,509 and expended £34,574,847. Put another way, Austria-Hungary spent £0.41 per person and France spent more than double with £0.87.¹¹⁴

The combination of a dysfunctional administrative state, relatively weak economy, and under equipped, poorly trained military left Austria-Hungary in a weak and worsening position in 1914. On top of these challenges, Austria-Hungary faced a worsening international environment, driven by the “new imperialism,” in which it was unable to compete. Making the decision for war in 1914, with the earnest and not totally unreasonable hope that it will remain a local conflict, does not seem to be a wholly unreasonable decision. It might even have been a consideration in the minds of some decision makers that war could have provided the catalyst for state-making, just as was the case in 1618.

¹¹⁴ The expenditure data is compiled using 1911 exchange rates in Hermann, *The Arming of Europe*, pp. 236-237. The population figures come from the figures compiled by the Austrian Statistical Office and published in: Kaiserlich-Königliche Statistische Zentralkommission, "Die Ergebnisse der Volkszählung vom 31. Dezember 1910," *Österreichische Statistik* 1, no. 1 (1912): p. 39.

Chapter 4

Conclusion: Das Kaiserliche und Königliche Ministerium für Administrative Angelegenheiten

All in all, how many remarkable things might be said about that vanished Kakania! For instance, it was kaiserlich-königlich (Imperial-Royal) and it was kaiserlich und königlich (Imperial and Royal); one of the two abbreviations, k.k. or k. k., applied to every thing and person, but esoteric lore was nevertheless required in order to be sure of distinguishing which institutions and persons were to be referred to as k.k. and which as k. k. On paper it called itself the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy; in speaking, however, one referred to it as Austria, that is to say, it was known by a name that it had, as a State, solemnly renounced by oath, while preserving it in all matters of sentiment, as a sign that feelings are just as important as constitutional law and that regulations are not the really serious thing in life. --Robert Musil, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften [The Man Without Qualities]*¹¹⁵

In 1618, the Habsburg Monarchy found itself in an existential crisis.

Long a collection of territories held together by the patrimonial rights of the Habsburg family, Protestant Czech nobles began to rebel for fear of losing their medieval privileges to check the power of the monarch. The Holy Roman Empire, the loose confederation of German speaking territories which the Habsburgs had dominated since 1440, found itself on the verge of dissolution over the issue of religion. This crisis would continue for the next thirty years in the form of a brutal, grinding slog of a war.

The outbreak of this war would result in the creation of a professional army that was, for the first time, directly accountable to the emperor whose territory it ostensibly represented. This army wore uniforms that were standardized and mass produced, and it was mostly financed through a tax system that was more efficient than any of its contemporary

¹¹⁵ This translation is from: *The Man Without Qualities* (New York: Vintage International, 1996), translated by Sophie Wilkins, p. 29.

standardized and mass produced, and it was mostly financed through a tax system that was more efficient than any of its contemporary Continental peers. And while historians may debate the outcome of the Thirty Years War and its meaning for the Habsburg Monarchy, these innovations ensured its survival after its close brush with extinction in 1618. The Habsburg Monarchy had engaged in the process of state-making: the creation of institutions and financial mechanisms to ensure the sovereignty of the territory they ruled.

However, the development of Habsburg Austria after 1648 did not ultimately result in a state that was able to strengthen and unite itself, as it did in the seventeenth century. By 1867, after multiple devastating military defeats, the Habsburg Monarchy found itself in a precarious position. Attempting to create a unified monarchy, Emperor Franz Josef was forced to agree to the bifurcation of his lands into a western Austrian half and an eastern Hungarian half. Domestic political challenges, for example the lack of a common national language and the use and recognition of minority languages, served only to polarize both the Austrian parliament and society generally. The two halves had different economic policy needs: the Austrian half had an export economy with high value added industrial products, and the Hungarian half had an agrarian economy dominated by large landowners. Punishing tariffs, introduced to protect Hungarian

agriculture, cut Austrian exports off from key markets, as retaliatory tariffs were erected in response.

	Domestic Challenges	International Challenges	Actions Taken	Outcomes
1618-1648	Powers to raise taxes, create army blocked by noble estates in revolt; core parts of Empire declare independence.	Thirty Years War; invasion by Protestant armies; potential destruction of Holy Roman Empire.	Taxation with limited noble approval and reformed tax collection; deepened alliance with Bavaria and Habsburg Spain; establishment of professional army.	More efficient taxation system; permanent standing army; survival of Holy Roman Empire; formal conclusion of war in 1648.
1867-1914	Widespread ethnic unrest; parliament unable to govern; division into two halves worsened governance.	Long series of significant military defeats prior to 1867; economic policy alienated former allies; changing rules of diplomacy within European affairs.	Formal annexation of Bosnia; Koerber Plan for infrastructure; reform of language laws.	Annexation inflamed tensions in Balkans; Koerber Plan largely abandoned; polarization within parliament worsened by language law debate.

Table 4.1: Comparison of Domestic and International Challenges, Actions Taken, and Outcomes

In both periods, domestic and international magnified the effects of the other. Protestant nobles who feared the loss of their privileges turned to other Protestants outside of Habsburg Austria for assistance. Eventually another German monarch, the Protestant Friedrich V, served as King of Bohemia until it was successfully reclaimed by the Habsburgs in 1620. During the second period, the agricultural tariffs demanded by Hungarian landlords cut Austria-Hungary off from key Balkan allies, many of whom subsequently allied themselves politically and militarily against Austria-Hungary.

These periods both feature the transformation of the rules governing the international system. In the first case, the Protestant Reformation

resulted in the end of an international system that was united by a single religion, Catholicism, and its replacement with the notion of sovereignty, which demanded the creation of state institutions that could defend a ruler's claim to sovereignty. Sovereignty is the principal that a ruler or government is the "master at home and an equal abroad." It demanded that a sovereign hold the exclusive claim to the use of violence as a means for coercion within that territory. As discussed in chapter 2, the Czech Protestant revolt was an example of a challenge to the sovereign authority of the Habsburg Monarchy. In the waning years of Habsburg Austria-Hungary, European continental affairs was driven by the "new imperialism" which encouraged European states to conquer territory simply to prevent other states from doing the same. Embracing this philosophy in 1907-1908, Austria-Hungary annexed its Bosnian protectorate, setting off an international crisis.

What distinguishes the two periods from one another is their outcome: in the first instance, the Habsburgs are able to engage in the process of state-making, creating an army and creating taxes with which to pay for it. In the second case, however, they were prevented from state-making as a result of a combination of international and domestic factors that had gradually narrowed their scope of action and weakened the cohesion of their state. The assassination of Archduke Ferdinand in 1914 was not

simply the latest in a series of international political defeats, but a challenge to the Habsburg Monarchy's sovereignty and the viability of the Austro-Hungarian state. A challenge, of course, that it would not overcome, and a tragedy for the fifty-two million Austro-Hungarians who suffered the hardship and death of World War I.

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