

# Precolonial Origins of State Capacity

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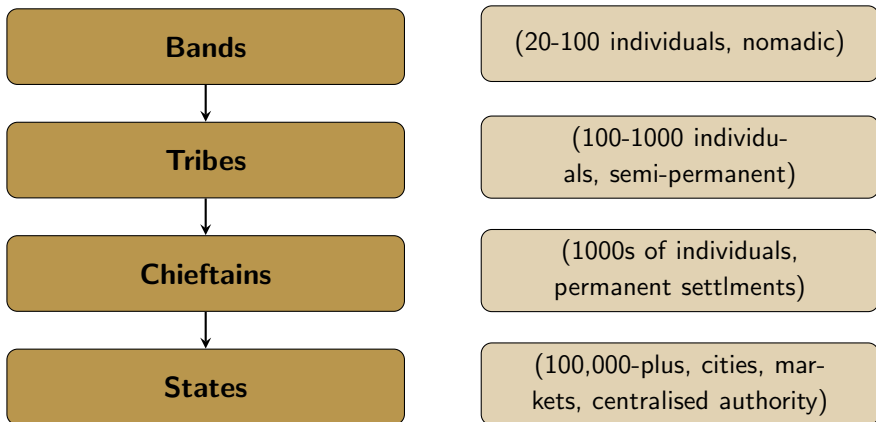
# We Live in a World of States

- large-scale societies ruled under a single government
- interact and cooperate with strangers with whom we share no kinship ties
- refrain from violence
- behave relatively impartially, follow universal laws and norms of conduct



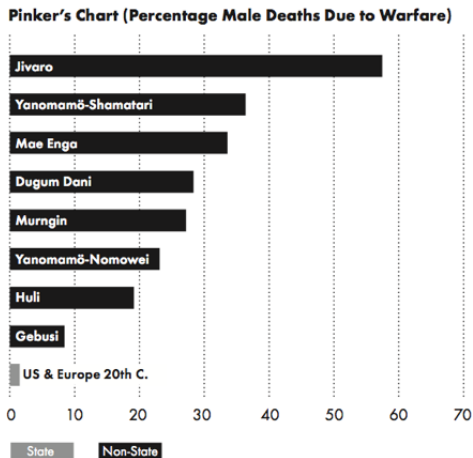
Cover to Hobbes' *Leviathan* (1651).

# The Evolution of Human Societies



From Elman R. Service (1975), *Origins of the State and Civilization: The Process of Cultural Evolution*. New York: Norton.

# Yet Our Evolutionary Environment was Quite Different



From Lawrence Keeley (1996), *War Before Civilization: the Myth of the Peaceful Savage*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

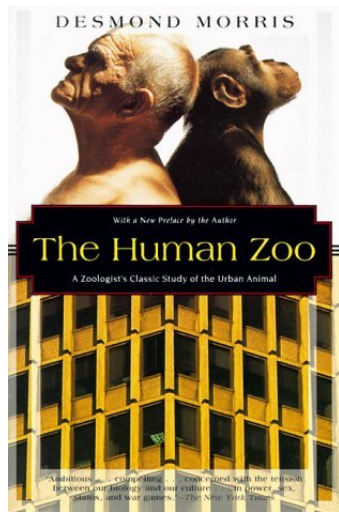


# Are People like Caged Animals?

Clearly, then,  
the city is not a  
concrete jungle,  
it is a human  
ZOO.

*Desmond Morris*

meetville.com



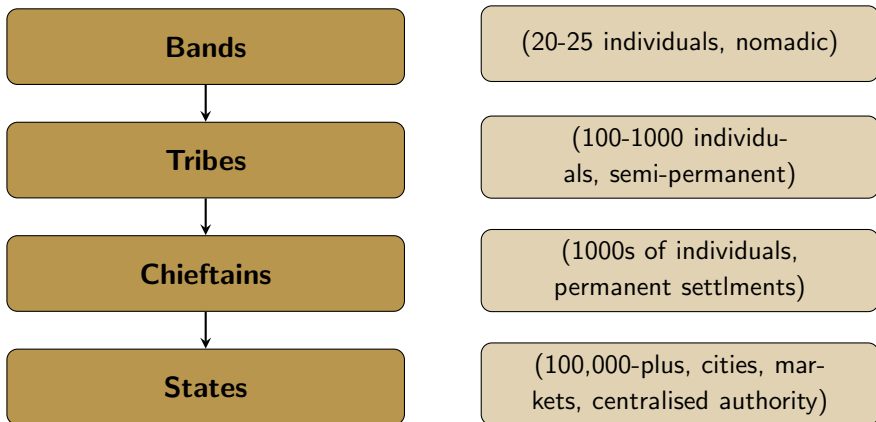
## Humans as Domestic Animals (continued)



Like humans, domestic cats exhibit attributes reflecting an evolutionary history as hunters and predators. Yet thanks to domestication, this cat would probably not survive long if actually returned to such an environment.

# Puzzles

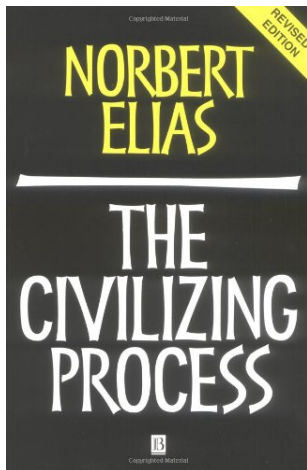
# Why is there no Atavism? Why do States Persist?



From Elman R. Service (1975), *Origins of the State and Civilization: The Process of Cultural Evolution*. New York: Norton.

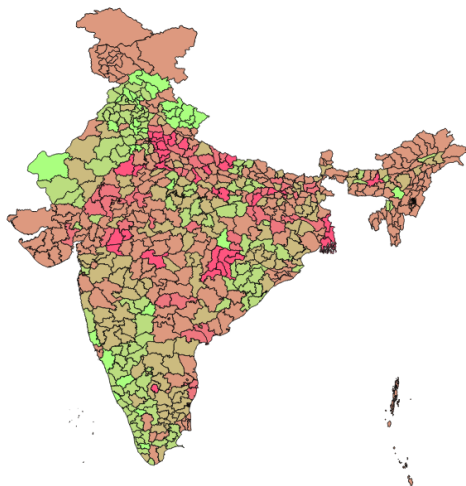
# An Answer: The Civilising Process

- Elias (1982), Freud (1930) and more recently Pinker (2011) have a different answer.
- Human nature and society *are* in conflict, and social order is preserved by the ability of social norms to 'override' natural instincts.
- States have to change the 'cultural software' in a fundamental way that 'locks in' the 'state-society' model
- This makes reversion to pre-state institutions somewhere between unlikely and impossible.



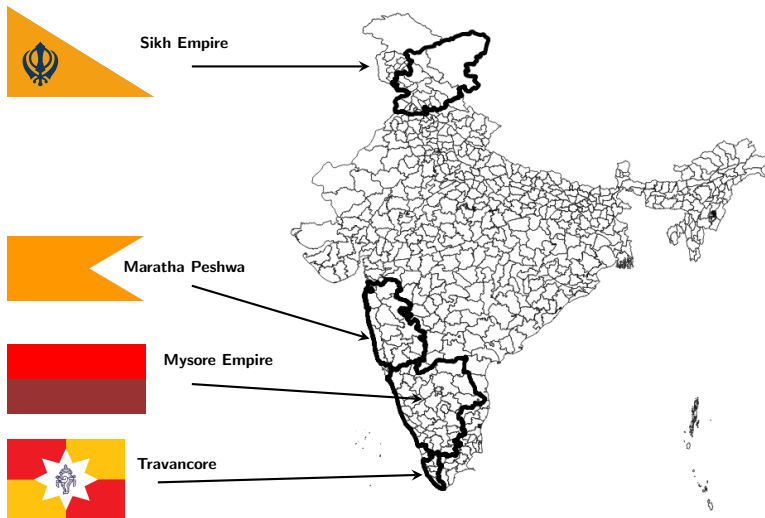
## Testing this Idea ... in India

# Reported Thefts, Kidnappings, Rapes and Robberies



Standardized mean across four indicators, 1980-90. Source: Iyer (2010).

# Drawing the borders of India's Precolonial Regimes

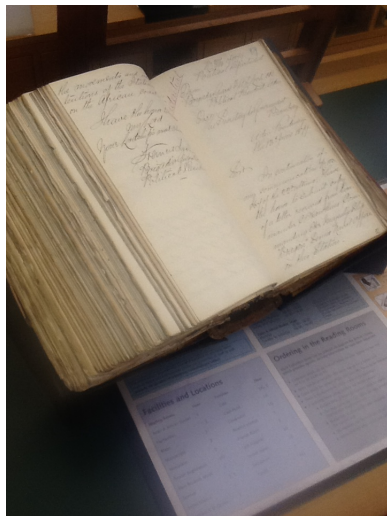


Derived from Schwartzberg (1992) and Gordon (1993) with additional checks for individual districts using volumes of the *District Gazetteer*.

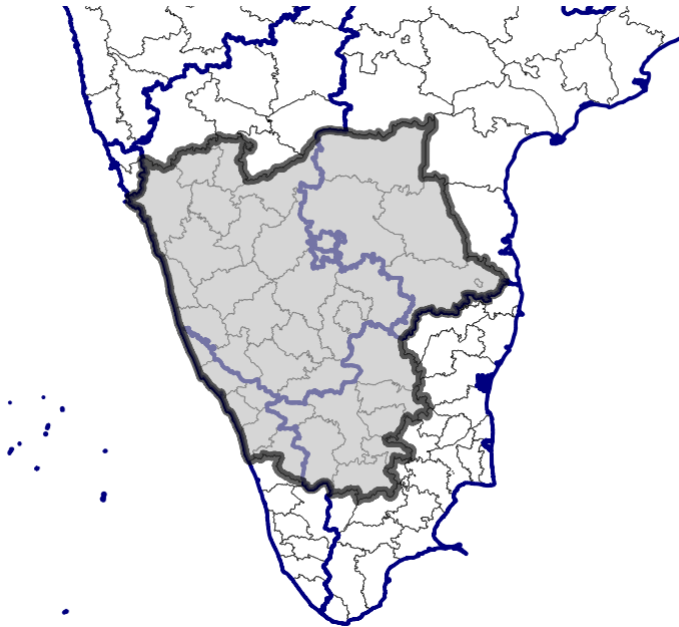


# Archival Research

- How do we test for a precolonial 'state effect' ?
- We can obtain data on precolonial boundaries from several sources.
- Schwartzberg's (1992) *Historical Atlas of South Asia* contains approximate boundaries for the late eighteenth century.
- We can supplement these using entries from the **District Gazetteer**, a district-by-district compendium maintained under the British Empire and kept at the India Archives in London and New Delhi.



Territories governed by the  
Mysore Empire at its maximal  
extent (gray) with current  
federal state boundaries  
(blue lines).



# Border Districts Only, With Controls (n = 65)

## Human Development Survey (2005)

- (1) Confidence in local govt.
- (2) Confidence in police
- (3) Households Reporting Theft

## Official Crime Statistics (1980-90)

- (4) Rate of 'Cheating'/Fraud
- (5) Rate of Robberies
- (6) Rate of Kidnappings
- (7) Rate of Rapes

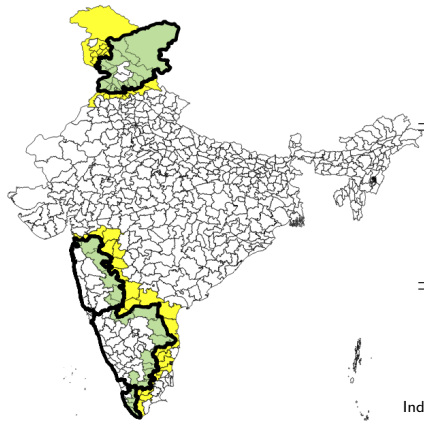
## Human Development Indicators (2011)

- (8) Literacy Rate
- (9) Male-Female Literacy Rate Gap
- (10) % villages medical dispensary

Independent Variable: Part of a Challenger State (0/1).

With Control Variables: Direct British rule (0/1). Federal States (Kerala, Karnataka).

# Border Districts Only, With Controls (n = 65)



## Human Development Survey (2005)

(1) Confidence in local govt.	+	**
(2) Confidence in police	-	
(3) Households Reporting Theft	-	**

## Official Crime Statistics (1980-90)

(4) Rate of 'Cheating'/Fraud	-	
(5) Rate of Robberies	-	*
(6) Rate of Kidnappings	-	
(7) Rate of Rapes	-	

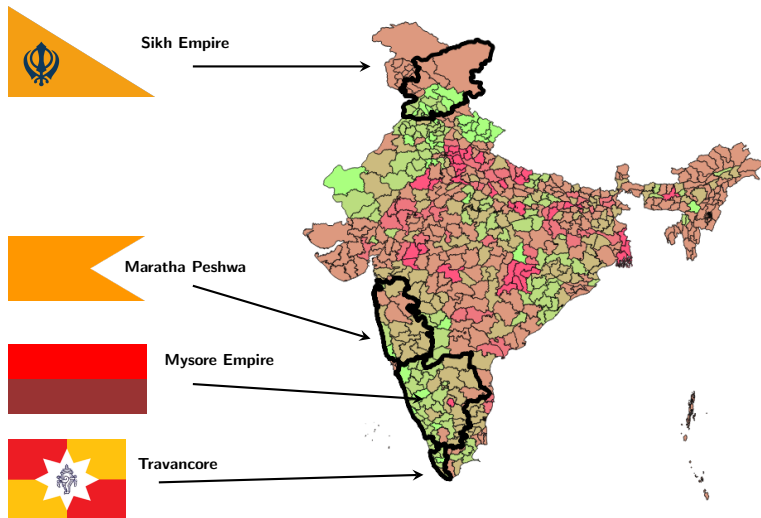
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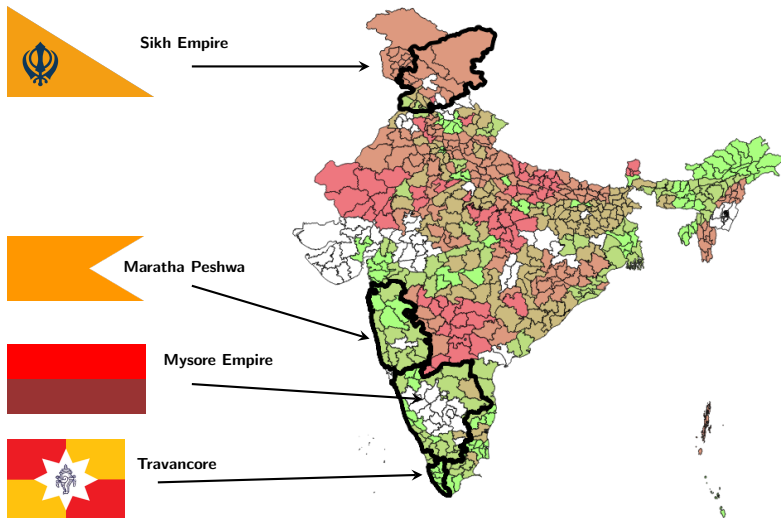
With Control Variables: Direct British rule (0/1). Federal States (Kerala, Karnataka).

# Reported Thefts, Kidnappings, Rapes and Robberies



Standardized mean across four indicators, 1980-90. Source: Iyer (2010).

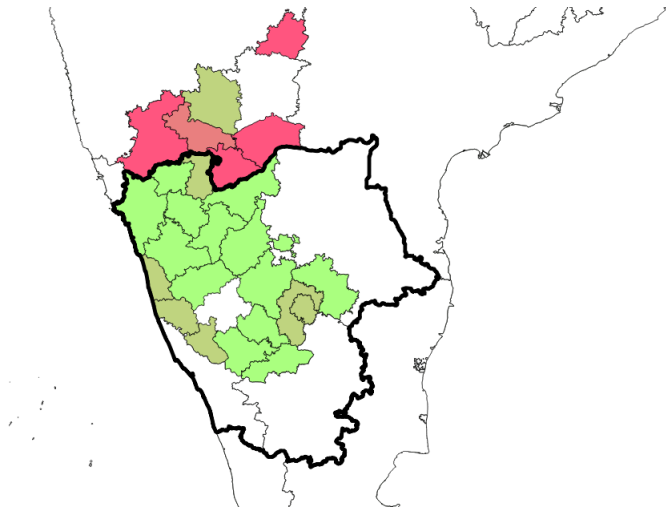
# Per Capita Education Spending in 1900-1



Per capita education spending by district, from the 1900-1 *District Gazetteer* reports.

## Specific Boundaries

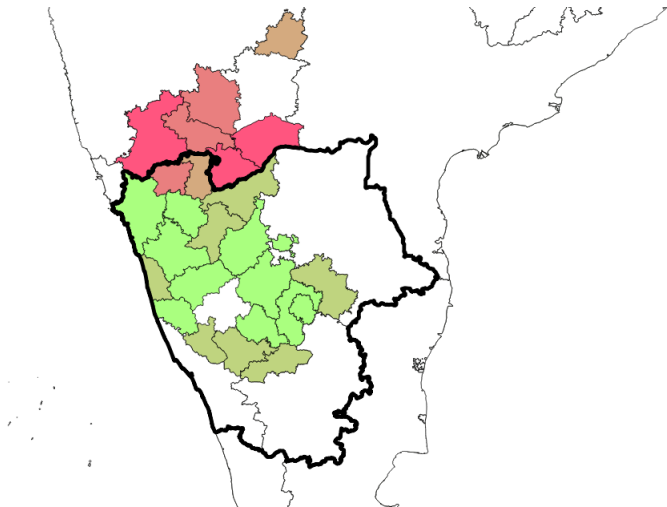
# Crime Victimization, Households Reporting Experience of Assault



Federal state of Karnataka, and Mysore boundary in 1782 (abolished 1799).

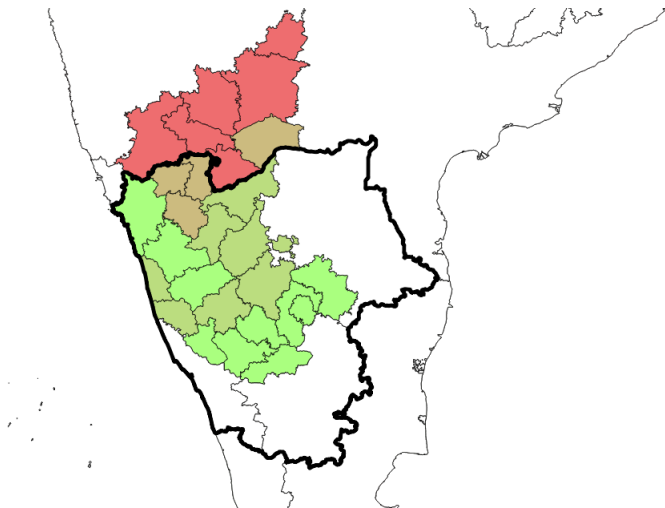


## Confidence in Local Government to 'Deliver Projects'



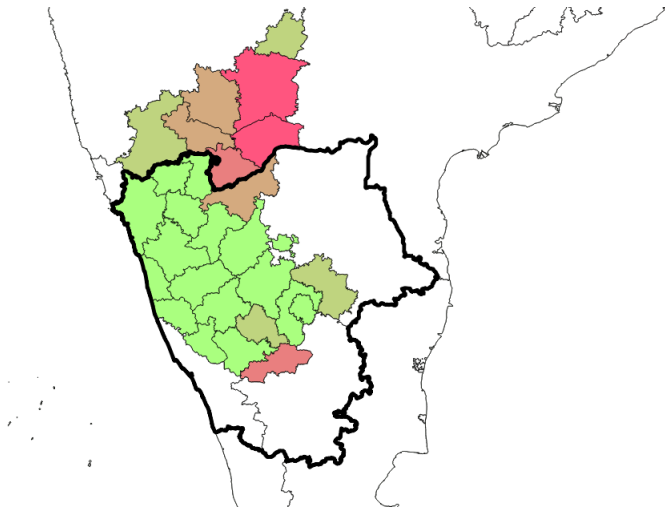
Federal state of Karnataka, and Mysore boundary in 1782 (abolished 1799).

## Health Spending per Capita, 1900



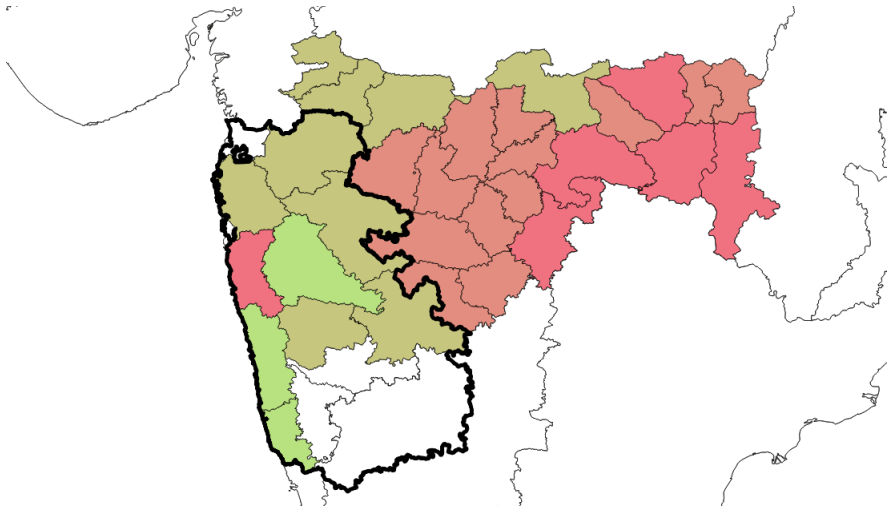
Federal state of Karnataka, and Mysore boundary in 1782 (abolished 1799).

# Literacy Rate, 2011



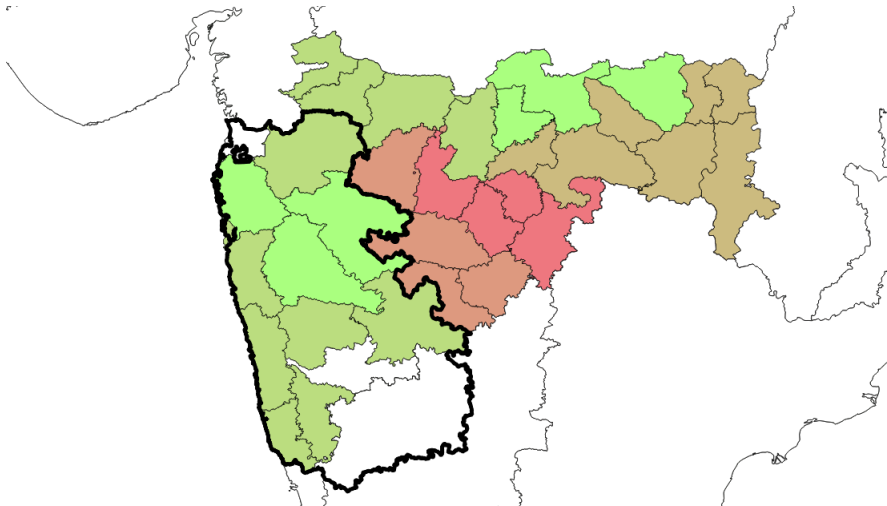
Federal state of Karnataka, and Mysore boundary in 1782 (abolished 1799).

## Roads per capita, 1900



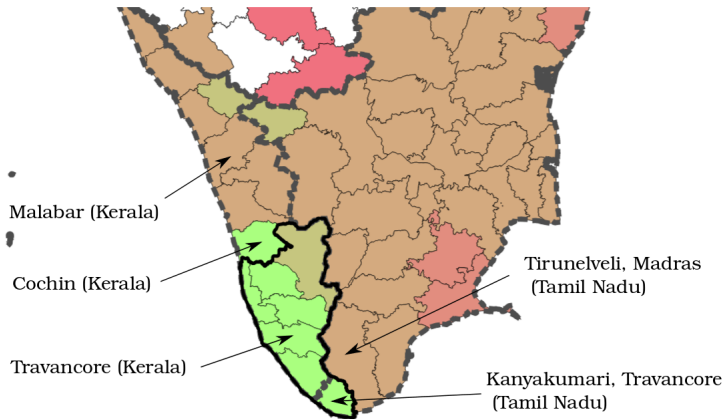
Federal state of Maharashtra, and Peshwa's boundary in 1800 (abolished 1814).

## Education per capita, 1900



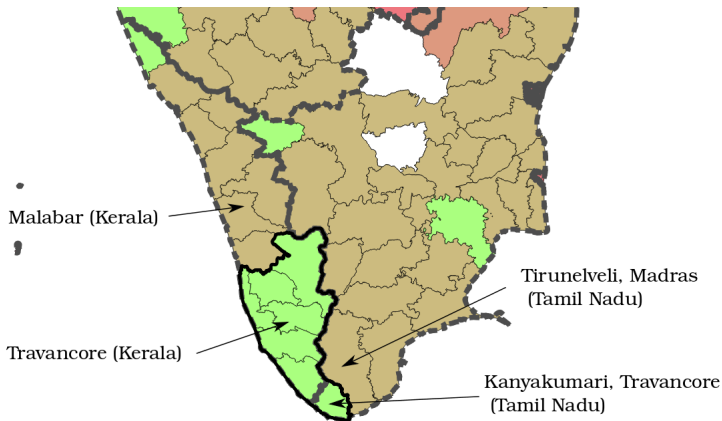
Federal state of Maharashtra, and Peshwa's boundary in 1800 (abolished 1814).

## Hospitals per village, 1980s



Federal state of Kerala, and Travancore boundary in 1800 (abolished 1956).

## Medical dispensaries per village, 1900



Federal state of Kerala, and Travancore boundary in 1800 (abolished 1956).

# Implications



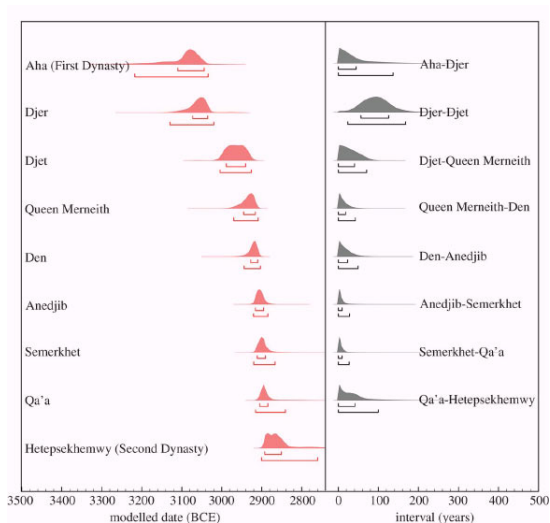
# Implications

- There is strong evidence that areas with centralized historical states have stronger cultures of compliance today - higher payment of taxes, obedience to the law, and lower crime.
- Also appears to be true from the archival data in 1900-1.

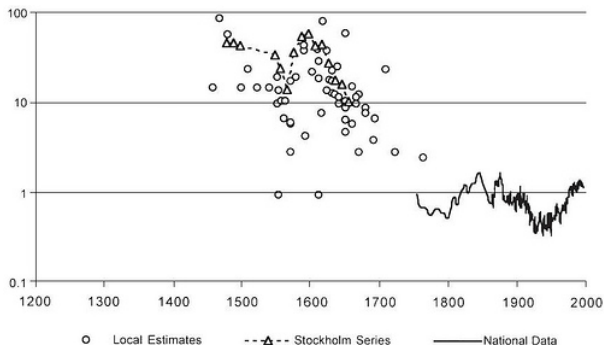


Further information: [www.roberto.foa.name](http://www.roberto.foa.name)

# The Ancient Egyptian State Persisted for Millennia



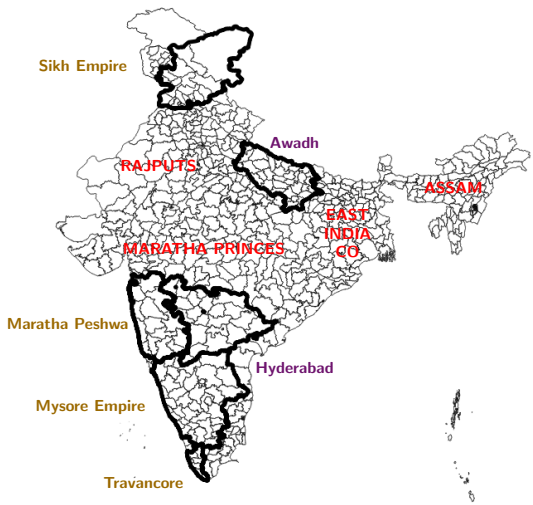
# Homicide rates per 100,000 population in Scandinavia, 1500-date



From Manuel Eisner, "Modernization, Self-Control and Lethal Violence. The Long-Term Dynamics of European Homicide Rates in Theoretical Perspective", *British Journal of Criminology*, (2001) 41 (4): 618-638.

# Challenger Regimes

# Successor Regimes



Classification as in the New Cambridge History of India (Ramusack, 2004)

This report was presented at the training methodological workshop  
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March 31 - April 6, 2015 – Turkey.

[http://lcsr.hse.ru/en/seminar\\_m2015](http://lcsr.hse.ru/en/seminar_m2015)

Настоящий доклад был представлен на методологическом учебном семинаре  
«Экономические и социальные изменения: оценка эффектов по всей Евразии».

31 марта – 6 апреля 2015 года – Турция.

[http://lcsr.hse.ru/seminar\\_m2015](http://lcsr.hse.ru/seminar_m2015)