The Indigenous Inheritance: Critical Antecedents and State-Building in Latin America and Southeast Asia

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ABSTRACT

In comparative-historical analysis, countries are often very different places before critical junctures set them on divergent political pathways. This essay elaborates the methodological and substantive importance of such “critical antecedents” by comparing the legacies of indigenous politics for the construction of state infrastructural power in postcolonial Latin America and Southeast Asia. The critical antecedent in each region was the inheritance at independence of a severe indigenous cleavage. This indigenous inheritance shaped social conflicts and elite coalitions in both regions during their eras of state formation, with similarly powerful path-dependent effects – yet in intriguingly divergent directions. A salient indigenous cleavage hindered (but did not preclude) state-building in 19th-century Latin America, while fostering (but not predestining) state-building in post-World War II Southeast Asia. We trace these regionally distinctive causal effects of the indigenous inheritance in the especially weak state of Peru and the exceptionally strong state of Malaysia. The divergent levels of state infrastructural power witnessed in these cases thus exhibit deep, if indirect, foundations in the identity cleavages of their pre-independence eras.

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Introduction

Comparative politics chronically confronts a methodological conundrum. Every country contains a set of similarities and differences with other countries, making comparison at once alluring and elusive. The similarities offer hope that controlled comparisons can be constructed, and causal inferences thereby drawn; but the differences make it devilishly difficult to control for all plausible alternative explanations. Gaining variation on the dependent variable (or expanding the “n”) inevitably risks losing control, while eschewing such variation (or maintaining a very small “n”) runs comparativists smack into the “degrees of freedom” problem.

This essay does not promise to cure this chronic disease; but it offers and employs a technique that we believe helps manage its nastiest symptoms. The concept we employ is “critical antecedents” (Slater and Simmons 2010; Slater 2010, Ch. 3). Rather than considering cases non-comparable because of deep historical differences, we argue that such differences should be incorporated into our comparative explanations, under the heading of critical antecedents. Critical antecedents can best be defined as factors or conditions preceding a critical juncture that – unlike other types of antecedent conditions – combine in a causal sequence with factors operating during the critical juncture to produce divergent outcomes (Slater and Simmons 2010 – see Figure 1). Bringing critical antecedents into our comparative arguments in a systematic and transparent way promises to shed new insights into how and why countries have come to look so different – and yet in other ways alike – over the longue durée.

INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE
The empirical puzzle we consider is a fundamental one in comparative politics and sociology: *why are some states so much more capable than others?* This puzzle takes vivid form in the two regions we study: Latin America and Southeast Asia. In our individual work, we have elaborated explanations for when and why states in our regions of interest diverged in their capacity to govern their territories and extract resources from their populations. Soifer (forthcoming) shows that the Peruvian state fell behind many of its neighbors in terms of infrastructural power in the mid 19th century, when rulers delegated authority to existing local elites rather than deploying bureaucrats to the provinces. Slater (2010) finds that the Malaysian state diverged from most of its regional counterparts in the wake of World War II, when the eruption of endemic and unmanageable forms of contentious politics pressed state leaders to extract more resources from socioeconomic elites and to reorganize their ruling institutions.¹

At a surface level, these arguments appear unrelated or even incompatible. The best-case scenario for knowledge accumulation would appear to be that Latin American states were built in one way, and Southeast Asian states built in quite another. To some degree this is true – but there are also fascinating commonalities that lurk beneath this seemingly mismatched surface, which we aim to unearth in this essay. Appreciating both the differences and commonalities in state-building processes and outcomes in Latin America and Southeast Asia demands that we escape the strictures of the existing “critical juncture” framework, and consider both the *critical antecedents* that preceded and the *causal mechanisms* that grew out of each region’s critical juncture period.

¹ Our books argue more than this, and are not squarely focused on the Peruvian and Malaysian cases; but for purposes of simplest exposition, we focus on these core arguments and cases here.
In short, states in these two regions diverged in strength during two temporally separate critical junctures, through the divergent effects of regionally distinctive independent variables. (See Figures 2 and 3.) Types of contentious politics shaped state power during Southeast Asia’s period of initial state formation, while types of territorial administration shaped state power in post-independence Latin America. Yet state-building in both regions was causally shaped in powerful ways by a shared critical antecedent: the inheritance of a salient indigenous cleavage at the time of state formation. The indigenous cleavage was salient wherever indigenous populations emerged from colonialism as demographically sizable, culturally distinctive, and geographically central. Even as this “indigenous inheritance” helped produce opposite causal effects in the two regions, it did so through a similar causal mechanism: the emergence of elite coalitions that supported or opposed state-building projects.

Under the existing critical juncture approach, scholars would be inclined to argue that Peru and Malaysia cannot be compared to neighbors such as Chile and the Philippines, because an indigenous cleavage has played a defining political role in the former cases but not the latter. Normally this would be a scope condition, forestalling comparison. By bringing the indigenous inheritance into both of our arguments as a critical antecedent, we aim to facilitate comparison. Since the most fundamental features

\footnote{By state formation, we do not mean the same thing as state-building. New states formed throughout Latin America and Southeast Asia during and following processes of decolonization, but they were built – i.e. gained capacity and strength – to wildly differing degrees.}

\footnote{Inverting these markers of salience, postcolonial countries lacked an “indigenous inheritance” wherever indigenous populations were significantly eliminated or assimilated under colonial rule, or where colonial settlement produced a new political and economic center far removed from significant concentrations of indigenes.}
of societies (e.g. the importance of indigeneity) are among the most fascinating foci of comparative politics, we aim to help construct a comparative method that includes such factors as causally significant rather than excluding them as causally irrelevant scope conditions.

By no means does our approach reveal that Latin America and Southeast Asia saw their states diverge in their infrastructural power through an identical causal process. Postcolonial state strength in Latin America depended on initial 19th-century successes at extending territorial administration. In post-World War II Southeast Asia, divergence emerged from differential initial successes at constructing coercive monopolies and extractive civilian administrations. Intriguingly, an inherited indigenous cleavage hindered (but did not preclude) such state-building processes in Latin America, and fostered (but did not predestine) them in Southeast Asia. The causal influence of the indigenous inheritance is powerful in both regions, and for much the same reason: because it helped shape the social conflicts and elite coalitions that emerged during the “critical juncture” of state formation. Yet the indigenous inheritance worked in opposite directions in the two regions. In the empirical sections that follow, we lay out these claims in our regions of interest, emphasizing the “indigenous effect” on state-building in the “negative” case of Peru and the “positive” case of Malaysia. In the conclusion, we consider the methodological and theoretical implications of our analysis more broadly.

**Indigenous Politics and Infrastructural Power in Latin America**

As in the Southeast Asian cases we discuss below, the gap between strong and weak states in Latin America began to emerge during what might broadly be termed the era of
state formation, or the period when new institutions were forged in the construction of a postcolonial political order. By 1900, vast gaps already existed between the region’s stronger and weaker states. This gap has endured thereafter.

Peru had, by 1900, fallen far behind most of its neighbors in terms of state power. This can be seen in the development of primary public schooling: Peru had the second lowest literacy rate of any South American country, and lacked schools in many parts of the national periphery. The state was also weak in coercive terms: it struggled to contain banditry and enjoyed nothing resembling a domestic monopoly of force. When it fell into wars with its neighbors, the Peruvian state struggled to mobilize troops, to train them, and to get them to the battlefield. It also lagged in terms of infrastructure development: despite devoting about one fourth of guano revenues to railroad building, much of its territory and population remained isolated from Lima and other urban centers, as efforts to build roads and railroads foundered. (Hunt 1984, Belaúnde 1965) In terms of railroad density (km of track per square km of national territory), Peru had in 1900 one fifth the railroad development of Mexico, one fourth that of Chile, and less than Brazil. This striking weakness has persisted to the present, as the Peruvian state continues to be ranked among the weakest states in Latin America.

With economic recovery and emergent political stability in the mid-19th century, state leaders in most, but not all, countries in the region pursued ‘order’ and ‘progress’ by seeking to extend the reach of the state across their national territories. The success and failure of these initial state-building efforts rested on the institutions they designed to administer their territories and implement state policies. Institutional choice represented a critical juncture for Latin American state-building, setting countries on distinct and
durable trajectories of state capacity. The salience of the indigenous cleavage structured (but did not determine) institutional choice; thus it operated as a critical antecedent in producing state-building outcomes in Latin America.

This section shows the effect of the salience of the indigenous cleavage on state-building in Peru. It begins by elaborating the logic of the critical juncture argument, linking variation in the initial design of administrative institutions to eventual state-building outcomes, and showing that variation in local administration was crucial to the failure of post-independence state-building efforts in Peru, leaving it with a weaker state than most of its neighbors by the end of the 19th century. It then shows that Peru was different from other Latin American cases (such as Chile) in terms of identity cleavages before it diverged in terms of state-building. The indigenous inheritance in Peru, actualized in the chronic fear of massive ethnic revolt, structured the choice of administrative institutions, forcing leaders to face a tradeoff they did not confront in neighboring countries where the cleavage was less salient.

From Institutions to Outcomes: Local Administrative Design and State Development

The early 19th century saw the retreat of Spanish power from Latin America, but not the stabilization or consolidation of new national states. It was not until stability returned to mid-19th century Latin America that modernizing elites in most countries began to stamp their imprimatur across national territory. Such ruling elites believed that economic development and political stability could best be pursued by extending the reach of the

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4 This section draws on Soifer (forthcoming), which applies the institutional argument below to explain variation in state-building across four Latin American countries, and the persistence of the resulting levels of state power over time.
state. The state would, in their view, make *markets* by promoting agricultural and mining exports through transport improvements and increased security. It would make *societies* by spreading and systematizing education and promoting homogeneous national identities. And it would make political *communities* by tying the country together to tamp regional and ethnic divisions. The state, in other words, needed to develop its coercive, regulatory, and extractive power over society and territory, or infrastructural power, to bring ‘modernity’ to the newly independent countries.

To do so, leaders needed to rely on representatives in the national periphery to administer on their behalf and to report back to the capital on local conditions. This entailed new institutions of local and regional rule: a territorial grid of administration. The choices made in designing these institutions would have lasting effects. State leaders could opt for one of two models in local administration. First, they could administer through local elites - mainly large landowners who claimed Spanish descent – in a pattern of *delegated rule*. Alternatively, the state could fill its ranks with bureaucrats deployed from outside the community in a pattern of *deployed rule*. Deployed rule produced successful state-building efforts, while delegated rule doomed those efforts to failure. Thus, the choice of rule during the state formation era represents a critical juncture in explaining postcolonial state-building outcomes.

There are two reasons why deployed rule was necessary for state-building efforts to succeed. First, deployed rule facilitates the *sanctioning* of local administrators by the central state. Deployed bureaucrats generate their income from their office – whether

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5 Colombia was a rare but significant exception to this pattern.
6 For the best account of the state-building projects of the mid-19th century, see Gootenberg (1993) on the case of Peru.
7 Mann (1984)
from salary or from access to a share of revenues. This makes them responsive to policies emanating from the center, since they are vulnerable to removal from their posts. Under deployed rule, then, state-building initiatives of the central government will more likely be implemented at the local level by state administrators. Under delegated rule, by contrast, officials continue to generate income from landowning, which makes them less vulnerable to sanction by their administrative superiors. State-building initiatives of the national government are thus more likely to founder and erode at the local level under delegated rule than under deployed rule.

A second reason derives from the independent interest bureaucrats have in increasing state power in their communities. To the extent that local state agents can rely on authority deriving from their own status in the community, they have little need for the penetration of the state into their communities. But if they rely instead on the formal authority that derives from their postings, they draw on the legal/rational legitimacy of their title, and on the power of the state backing up their commands. Local elites, who represent the state under delegated rule, have more access to status-based authority than those deployed from outside, because they can draw on a legacy of local power. Thus deployed bureaucrats, more than their delegated counterparts, have an interest in the increasing and ongoing penetration of the state into their communities. This increased penetration can take the form of coercive power to facilitate enforcement, or of public good provision to win support from the community. In a longer-run manifestation of this mechanism, deployed officials may seek to increase state power to shape individuals and communities in ways that increase state legitimacy. The independent interest of local officials in increased state power leads them to champion its development, going beyond
compliance with orders from the capital to active pursuit of this goal via independent initiatives.

In cases such as Chile, deployed rule increased compliance by local officials, and also led them to press the central state to increase its presence. In cases like Peru, by contrast, the central state could not sanction the local elites on whom it relied, and these elites remained indifferent or resistant to state-building. These factors led to sharply divergent outcomes of educational and military development in Latin America; they explain why the choice of administrative institutions was a critical juncture, and other countries developed strong states by the late 19th century while Peru’s state-building efforts failed.

Administrative Design and Educational Development

The role of local administrators in pushing for state development can be clearly seen in processes of educational development. State-building projects in many Latin American countries involved efforts to extend and systematize primary schooling in an effort to ‘civilize’ the population and thus promote social peace and economic development. Yet these projects met very different fates as they were implemented. Because it served as the linchpin of educational systematization, arguably the most important difference in the educational realm was in the inspection and oversight of the day-to-day operation of primary schools. Here Peru lagged far behind countries like Chile, which had by the 1890s a fully regimented inspection system that regularly visited essentially every public school in the country and reported back to Santiago. Peru, by contrast, saw limited
inspection capacity during the 19th century, and what did exist relied heavily on self-reporting by teachers.

The absence of systematic inspection tracks a broader trend: Peru lagged far behind other Latin American countries in educational development. Literacy and enrollment rates were very low by 1900. And as Table 1 (below) shows, the failures of state-building in this critical juncture have persisted to the present: the rankings of countries in terms of literacy in 1900 and 2005 are very closely related.

**INSERT TABLE 1 HERE**

*Delegated Rule and the Failure of Educational Development in Peru*

From 1845 to 1895, during the state-building efforts of the guano era and its aftermath, Peru relied heavily on local elites in a system of delegated rule. Despite efforts to build education, and high levels of spending, school provision per capita outside Lima declined by more than 50% over the late 19th century. Systematization was so lacking even in the capital city that an 1872 government report described their “disorder” as “complete,” writing that “each teacher teaches what they want, and to whom they want, the school year ends when they see fit, and the length of vacation is only measured by the teacher’s will or love for their job.”

Whereas local state officials under deployed rule were heavily invested in building and systematizing schools, Peruvian provincial and local authorities displayed

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8 Systematic data on educational development in 19th century Latin America can be found in Newland (1994)
9 This durability of rankings across long periods of Latin American history has been traced in great detail by Mahoney (2010).
10 This quote comes from the 1872 Memoria of the Education Ministry in Peru, p.6
little inclination to contribute to school building.\textsuperscript{11} Many failed to enforce the policies emanating from Lima.\textsuperscript{12} Some even did their best to “actively thwart education.”\textsuperscript{13} Many local officials with oversight over education policy held the view that the indigenous population under their purview could not be educated.\textsuperscript{14} One example of this view appears in the writings of Alejandro Deustua, who argued that the indigenous community “lacked all culture and had no notion of nationality.” He wondered what effect education could have on those who, to him, “were not yet people, who did not know how to live like people, and had not managed to differentiate themselves from the animals.”\textsuperscript{15}

Dan Hazen (1978, 427) describes the contrasting views of local elites and national leaders most clearly: “Even as many highlanders viewed indigenous education as a threat, more and more limeños felt that Spanish-language literacy and the inculcation of patriotic values would mold the conscious citizenry required in an industrial, capitalist society.” Yet without the collaboration of local officials, the efforts emanating from Lima foundered. Hundreds of government documents reviewed contain few instances in which local state agents complained (for example) about the quality of teachers in their districts. Whereas local officials elsewhere filed litanies of criticisms of the shortcomings of education, their Peruvian counterparts rarely complained, for example, about the quality of teachers they oversaw, and did not pressure the national government to develop the

\textsuperscript{11} See Soifer (2009) for evidence about the role of deployed bureaucrats in Chilean educational development.

\textsuperscript{12} Muecke (2004, 180-3)

\textsuperscript{13} This quote comes from Ernesto Málaga, cited in Montero (1990, 95).

\textsuperscript{14} Muecke (2004, 181)

\textsuperscript{15} This quote comes from an essay of Deustua’s, excerpted in Montero (1990, 85-7.)
school system.\textsuperscript{16} Also telling are the many instances when the national government had to pressure local authorities to account for education funding it had provided, and to explain why they had not met the goals put forward in Lima. Local officials rarely spent even the allocated funds, and did as little as possible to facilitate schooling. The result was that the intentions of the national government to spread quality schooling through the country were diluted in bureaucratic struggle and limited funding, and educational development languished.

Administrative Design and Military Development

The same dynamics underlying educational development can also be observed in the military context. Deployed officials were more likely than their delegated counterparts to comply with edicts emanating from the capital, and more invested in state-building more generally. In Chile, for example, local officials under deployed rule complied with orders to conscript despite their unpopular nature. The result was systematized military-building, and a more effective and loyal army, which overwhelmed Peru’s forces when war broke out in 1879. The inability of the Peruvian state to compel similar compliance, as described below, sowed the seeds for military collapse, leading to defeat in the War of the Pacific against Chile, and state crisis. This failure, once again, resulted directly from the reliance on delegation of administration to local and regional elites.

\textsuperscript{16} Muecke (2004, 180-1) points out that there was some pressure on the government to replace school heads and teachers, but this was limited to the moments of change of government, and derived from the fact that these were patronage appointments.
Conscription Under Delegated Rule

Conscription in 19th century Peru was overseen by local elites appointed as subprefects. Subprefects gained nothing from conscription, while it inflicted several kinds of costs on them. It created a national army that loomed as a threat to their local power. It removed economically vital Indian labor from their estates. Finally, conscription was an unpopular imposition on the population, which often resulted in reprisals against officials. And since they were able to draw on their connections and local power to raise private security forces, local officials in Peru did not need the national army to protect them against most threats to their power.

As a result of these incentives, local officials in Peru often shirked the conscription duties assigned to them and ignored regulations governing military recruitment. For example, not a single provincial leader complied with the military service law of 1872, which set a quota of recruits for each province based on population. Because local officials were reluctant to participate in conscription, military units had to fill their own ranks from the populations of the regions in which they were located. Conscription by military units operated by force, and thus lacked the legality of soldier recruitment elsewhere. It also led to a concentration of recruiting in the heavily indigenous southern highlands region of Peru, which saw “systematic annual recruitment drives, during which the army scoured the countryside of the altiplano from one end to another.” Due to their recruitment by force and by “notoriously cruel methods”,

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17 Kurtz (2009) explains the reluctance of Peruvian elites to engage in conscription by focusing on patterns of labor relations.
18 Muecke (2004, 175)
19 1845 Memoria of the Ministry of War, p.4.
20 Jacobsen (1993, 132-3)
Peruvian conscripts were not loyal to their army. Desertion by these impressed soldiers was consistently high.\textsuperscript{21} Officers were occupied just as much with policing new recruits for desertion as with battlefield training. Forceful recruitment by individual units also limited the army’s role in nation building. Unlike the regional heterogeneity of other Latin American armies, the Peruvian army was not a place where recruits came into contact with a cross-section of the nation. Instead they encountered their fellow poor from the province where the unit was most recently based.\textsuperscript{22}

Thus, the reluctance of local state agents to participate in conscription affected many aspects of the Peruvian army. Impressed troops were more likely to desert, more poorly trained, and less nationally representative than under deployed rule in Chile. The Peruvian army was far from the ideal of a ‘nation under arms’, had many discipline problems, and was relatively ineffective on the battlefield, leading directly to Peru’s defeat in the 1879-1883 War of the Pacific. As a result of its defeat, Peru lost substantial territory, and entered a period of state crisis for the next two decades. It would thereafter remain one of the weakest states in Latin America.

The Indigenous Cleavage and the Tradeoffs of Administrative Design

A crucial difference across Latin American countries shaped the institutional choices that set each on the paths to state-building success or failure. To see why 19\textsuperscript{th} century Peruvian state-building efforts failed while contemporaneous efforts elsewhere succeeded, we must consider ethnic cleavages. Yet this factor had no direct effect on

\textsuperscript{21} Contreras and Cueto (1999, 137)
\textsuperscript{22} For one example of this pattern, see the 1878 Memoria of the Ministry of the Interior, p.77
state-building. As we have just seen, state-building outcomes were determined by the nature of local administrative institutions. The salience of the indigenous cleavage mattered because it structured the calculus of institutional design. Where state leaders feared that indigenous revolts would threaten their hold on power, they felt pressed to use administrative offices to fortify alliances with local elites and thus lower the risk of revolt. This institutional design sacrificed effective administration, because local elites serving as administrators were both hard to sanction and had no independent interest in state power. Where the salience of the indigenous cleavage was low, state leaders faced much lower risks in deploying administrators from outside the communities in which they served. The result was not only more effective administration, but the creation of a bureaucratic corps which had independent interest in increasing state power because they could gain leverage over the communities they administered by doing so.

Thus the salience of the indigenous cleavage operated as a critical antecedent, distinguishing the constraints confronted by modernizing state leaders in the two countries. In Peru, state leaders were faced with a choice between near-term stability and long-term administrative effectiveness, while their analogues in cases such as Chile faced no such dilemma. The cases were different, then, before their states diverged. This difference led to distinct institutional choices as state leaders designed the territorial grid of administration designed to increase the state’s power, and those institutional choices created the divergent outcomes of state power in Latin America. By tracing the logic of delegation in Peru, this section shows that state leaders were influenced in their institutional choices by the salient indigenous cleavage. The result was delegated rule and a weak state.
Peruvian state leaders and Lima elites lived in constant fear of the ‘Indian masses’ of the highland interior. The Tupac Amaru revolt of the 1780s, after which the Spanish lost control of the highland regions around Cuzco for decades, was remembered with horror.\textsuperscript{23} The independence period also saw a wave of highland revolts after 1808 (highlighted by the 1814 Pumacahua rebellion in Cuzco), which made elites wary of the risks of social upheaval that seemed to arise whenever elites were divided.\textsuperscript{24} Upsurges of contention from below seemed to emerge whenever gaps opened in national stability – and these gaps emerged often, as seen in the 24 changes of regime in the first 24 years of independence “accompanied by untold hundreds of wars.”\textsuperscript{25} Any significant violence in the highlands was seen by Lima officials and social elites through the lens of ‘caste wars’, ‘Indian massacres’ and ‘racial terror.’ Though it tried various strategies of surveillance and control of the indigenous population, the 19th-century Peruvian state was too weak to construct an effective coercive apparatus that could stem the threat of revolt. Instead, much of the state’s response took the form of efforts to placate the indigenous population through negotiation and compromise.\textsuperscript{26}

Importantly for our purposes, the state fortified its alliances with highland elites by delegating to them authority over the regions where they lived. These elites were not the indigenous authorities through which the colonial state had ruled. Instead, Peru came

\textsuperscript{23} Walker (1999, 13)
\textsuperscript{24} Bonilla and Spalding (2001[1972])
\textsuperscript{25} Gootenberg (1989, 11)
\textsuperscript{26} Thus historians who have focused on negotiation between elites and subalterns in 19th century Latin America have found particularly fertile terrain to explore in highland Peru. See for example Mallon (1995) and Thurner (1997).
to be administered at the local level through non-Indian officials. This alliance was mutually beneficial: Peruvian elites, before the export booms of the 1890s, were relatively poor, and relatively weak vis-à-vis the local population. Highland landowners, like state elites, “constantly feared attacks” and were wary of any mobilization by indigenous communities. Positions in regional administration were useful to these elites in consolidating their positions in local society, in giving them an opportunity to extract wealth from the population, and in power struggles at the local or regional level. The state, in turn, benefitted from this alliance by gaining an ally at the local level, who could be counted upon to help suppress indigenous revolt, or at least not to seize leadership of contentious movements and lead them against the capital.

Positions in the local and regional administration, such as subprefectships that came with responsibility for taxation and conscription, were given to local elites, who were in turn given “free rein” in the districts they dominated. Tax officials, school inspectors, teachers, district governors, and other government officials were filled in this manner. Few Limeños would have been willing to bear the harsh climate and poor living conditions of interior Peru, and the state only rarely called on them to do so. Instead, local administration was quite “open to the provincial and local elite.”

Where the indigenous cleavage was absent or had limited salience, state leaders had no reason to sacrifice administrative effectiveness for stability. In these cases, such as

27 Thurner (1997)
28 Nugent (1997, 34-5)
29 Jacobsen (1993, 327)
30 Nugent (1997) emphasizes struggles among elites at the local level in explaining patterns of state-elite relations.
31 Muecke (2004, 38)
32 Jacobsen (1993, 147)
Chile, deployed rule was an easy choice – and the result was the emergence of a much more effective state. Though Chile did have a significant indigenous population which was never subdued by the Spanish, it was isolated in a remote region beyond the country’s de facto southern frontier. Even when conflict did break out in that region, state leaders never saw it as a threat to their hold on power. Governments did not see the need to strengthen the hand of rural elites vis-à-vis the rural subalterns by assigning government positions to those elites. Bureaucratic appointments were made with effectiveness in mind, and Santiago residents were commonly deployed to the provinces. The absence of an indigenous cleavage made the choice of deployed rule less risky, and laid the grounds for the emergence of a much more effective state in Chile than in Peru, one with a centralized public primary education system, regimented conscription, and effective tax collection.

**Critical Antecedent and Critical Juncture in Latin American State Building**

In sum, the salience of the indigenous cleavage and the threat of indigenous revolt in Peru were causally significant in shaping the choice of delegated rule. The salient threat of indigenous revolt confronted state leaders with a difficult choice between the administrative efficiency of deployed rule, and the continued stability of state-elite alliances that delegated rule would facilitate. Pre-1895 Peruvian state leaders yielded to these constraints by choosing delegated rule, and state-building efforts foundered. The

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33 State-builders do not always yield to constraints, however. Hence this outcome was not entirely pre-determined. In Mexico, where state leaders faced similar constraints as in Peru, and the same tradeoff between stability and effectiveness, they opted for deployed rule. This choice risked (and produced) precisely the sort of heightened revolt by the indigenous population that Peruvian state-builders rightly feared, and reasonably avoided.
result was that the Peruvian state lagged far behind many of its counterparts, ranking by 1900 as one of the weakest states in Latin America – a ranking it would retain into the 21st century.

Indigenous Politics and Infrastructural Power in Southeast Asia

Slater (2010) offers a very different historical explanation for divergence in state infrastructural power in Southeast Asia than Soifer offers in Latin America. As in Latin America, states in Southeast Asia were built in highly path-dependent ways during the “critical juncture” surrounding processes of securing and consolidating national independence. These processes occurred over a century apart, however – in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars in Latin America, and World War II in Southeast Asia. The key to state power in this later period was not simply deploying bureaucrats to the provinces. In the face of swelling social tumult and fiscal demands, state infrastructural power in postwar Southeast Asia would be a matter of establishing an effective monopoly on the use of violence and extracting tax revenues from the elite groups possessing the bulk of private wealth. In the region’s domination cases (e.g. Malaysia), state-building restored political order and brought Leviathan unprecedented fiscal powers; but in its fragmentation cases (e.g. the Philippines), states buckled under the pressures of decolonization and independence, leaving much less infrastructurally capable states in place for the foreseeable future.

Slater argues that subtle variation in the type and timing of contentious politics after World War II explains the significant variation in state power we continue to see.

Thus the indigenous cleavage causally influenced, but did not causally predetermine, the choices of state builders.
throughout the region today. Where revolutionary leftist movements penetrated urban areas and exacerbated communal tensions during the critical juncture of postwar state consolidation, highly cohesive elite coalitions emerged in support of a stronger and more extractive state. Where mass mobilization either failed to have these threatening effects (as in the Philippines) or failed to arise until after the critical juncture had passed (as in South Vietnam and Thailand), much looser ruling coalitions and much weaker state institutions were the result. In short, “war made states” in Southeast Asia’s domination cases, but not its fragmentation cases.34

Divergent inheritances of indigenous politics shaped divergence in state infrastructural power in ways that were as profound as they were indirect. In cases where no sharp indigenous political cleavage was inherited, such as the Philippines and South Vietnam,35 postwar contentious politics was broadly perceived as episodic and manageable by political and economic elites, leaving them with little incentive to support a concerted state-building project. Where “indigenous-immigrant” tensions were far more intense, as in Malaysia, the postwar leftist upsurge worsened communal tensions, and was perceived as endemic and unmanageable under existing political arrangements. Only where an inherited indigenous cleavage exacerbated the threat of the radical Left did “protection pacts” emerge in support of a stronger infrastructural state.

34 We set aside cases from Slater’s third trajectory, “militarization,” namely Burma and Indonesia.
35 Leftist insurgency did not spark concerted state-building initiatives in South Vietnam until after the Tet Offensive in 1968, or nearly a quarter century after the initial rise of the Viet Minh. Even then, state-building confronted much more severe elite resistance than what was witnessed in cases such as Malaysia.
The Indigenous Inheritance in Southeast Asia

No Southeast Asian colony had an infrastructurally powerful state before World War II. Where prewar colonial practices differed most consequentially was not in state-building, but in nation-building. As in this essay’s previous section, the critical question was this: would decolonization and initial state formation occur against the backdrop of a highly salient indigenous political cleavage, or not? In British Malaya, the answer was a resounding yes. Prewar British colonial authorities fostered the rise of an ethnically plural society without undertaking the hard political work of bridging “indigenous” Malays with “immigrant” Chinese and Indians.\(^36\) The sharpness of the indigenous-immigrant cleavage would make postwar contentious politics much more threatening and difficult to manage than outbreaks of conflict in neighboring countries, notably the Philippines.

Far more than their colonial counterparts elsewhere in Southeast Asia, British authorities in Malaya relied on imported manpower – primarily Chinese, and secondarily Indian – for cheap labor in the colonies’ lucrative tin mines, rubber estates, and urban ports and enterprises. The British also encouraged the in-migration of Chinese capitalists to manage tax farms and export ventures, as well as Indian professionals and civil servants to staff the colonial state. Malaya’s indigenous majority group, ethnic Malay Muslims, remained somewhat of a collective bystander to these demographic and economic shifts. With the Malay masses concentrated in peasant production, and Malay elites predominantly employed in aristocratic service, relatively little social interchange took place among the colony’s sizable Malay, Chinese, and Indian communities before

\(^36\) Although stylistically burdensome, the quotation marks around “indigenous” and “immigrant” signal the vital point that these categories are socially constructed and politically loaded.
World War II. Since the British did nothing whatsoever to foster new political associations transcending communal lines, colonial Malaya became a paradigmatic plural society lacking institutions to manage inter-ethnic relations. As in Peru, indigenous populations in Malaya remained *demographically substantial* and *geographically proximate* to the non-indigenous groups that had arrived under colonialism, producing a sharply salient indigenous cleavage as national independence approached.

In institutional terms, communal fragmentation was most importantly expressed in the field of education. Whereas prewar national language policies fostered the integration of Chinese minorities in Thailand and the Philippines, British authorities made little effort to use English as an integrator of Malaya’s diverse communities. “The Chinese community continued to enjoy considerable autonomy in educational affairs despite attempts by the government to regulate the proliferation of Sino-centric activities in Chinese schools by requiring them to register with the Education Department after 1920,” Heng Pek Koon has written. “However, the government was unsuccessful in this effort,” because “the colonial government did not have the necessary Chinese-speaking administrators to effectively supervise the activities of the Chinese schools.”

The most striking contrast with Malaya is the Philippine case, where colonialism spawned no such indigenous-immigrant cleavage. Linguistic and religious unification commenced under Spanish rule (1565–1898), which was largely conducted through religious authorities, under whose watch “a vast proselytization was launched which has resulted in the contemporary Philippines being 90 per cent Christian.”

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37 Heng (1988): 22. As of 1947, five times as many young Chinese studied in Chinese-language schools as in English-language schools (Ibid. 23).
many unconverted Chinese immigrants were expelled in the mid-eighteenth century, and Spanish authorities subsequently kept a much tighter lid on new Chinese arrivals. Chinese-indigenous mestizos converted to Christianity en masse, and became the backbone of the Philippines’ new landed elite.

Long before the American takeover at the turn of the twentieth century, therefore, the Philippines’ geographic center had largely rid itself of deep ethnic and religious cleavages. As in Chile, indigenous populations that had not been integrated into the predominant linguistic and religious community were relegated to the geographic margins, and hence the political margins. The American imperium did nothing to reverse these Spanish legacies, while doing much to overcome the archipelago’s linguistic fragmentation: first by introducing widespread primary education in English in the 1900s, and later by permitting Philippine elites to propagate Tagalog as a lingua franca in the 1930s. American colonial practice thus helped in some ways to consolidate the very Philippine nation that would later chafe under America’s postcolonial domination.

Hence when Japanese forces rampaged through Southeast Asia in 1942, they confronted a deeply divided society in Malaya and a relatively “homogenized” society in cases such as the Philippines. Anti-Japanese resistance movements flourished region-wide into armed and dangerous leftist movements after Japan’s defeat. But in Malaya this communist insurgency would exacerbate communal tensions, given the colony’s antecedent ethnic and religious divisions. Leftist rebellion elsewhere unfolded intra-communally, making it less existentially threatening to societal elites and less difficult for such elites to control without stronger state institutions. The nearly simultaneous periods
of communist insurgency produced strong elite support in Malaya for the construction of stronger state institutions, but little such effect in most of Southeast Asia.

Communalized Class Conflict and State-Building in Decolonizing Malaya

For most residents of Southeast Asia, Japan’s surrender in August 1945 marked a welcome end to a period of tyranny and state terror. But for most residents of Malaya, the sudden Japanese withdrawal meant being cast from the frying pan of brutal wartime occupation into the hellish fires of political anarchy and communal chaos. For nineteen frightful days (August 15th – September 3rd), British authorities remained absent from the scene, and the heavily armed Malayan Communist Party (MCP) – having enjoyed direct wartime British support in its guise as the Malayan People’s Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA) – essentially had the field to itself. Armed Chinese communists exacted revenge upon the majority Malay population throughout late 1945 and early 1946, repaying their rivals for their general attitude of accommodation toward Japan’s occupying forces. While this period of MCP domination and quasi-statelessness was brief, its effects were anything but. “Their short administration left an indelible impression on the minds of most people of how frightening communist rule might be,” writes Cheah Boon Kheng. “For Malays especially, distrust of Chinese and distrust of communism intertwined.”

In an effort to weaken popular Chinese resistance and replace “the ramshackle administrative structures of prewar days” with “a new single, unified, centralized

40 Heussler 1983: 92.
British authorities pressured the colony’s Malay sultans to accept a new constitution in late 1945. “The Malay rulers were to be stripped of even the symbolic and ceremonial political powers they had hitherto enjoyed and reduced to the status of priest-kings with some control over religious affairs,” writes Chandra Muzaffar. “The recently-domiciled non-Malay communities were to be granted citizenship on very liberal terms.”

Against the backdrop of mass mobilization among the armed forces of Chinese communism, these proposals hit the Malay population like political dynamite. Only a concerted Malay response could possibly force the British to rescind their plan once it had received official consent. Yet the Malay population lacked mass organizations of any kind, and the Malay aristocratic and administrative elite remained splintered along provincial lines. What emerged in response to this threat from below was UMNO: the organization which would become Malaysia’s ruling party.

The mobilization of UMNO represented a clarion call for reinforced British protection from a dreaded Chinese bid for power. When British and Malay leaders hammered out the compromise Federation Agreement in 1947, it continued to contain the Malayan Union’s provisions regarding the centralization of state power; but the proposed liberalization of prewar restrictions on Chinese citizenship had been thrown by the wayside. So long as the British did not use their powers to favor the Chinese, the Malay leadership was willing to see the British accrue the added political powers they desired. The 1945-57 period consistently shows Malay leaders welcoming, even inviting the expansion of the colonial state’s powers in response Chinese mass mobilization.

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41 Chandra 1979: 53.
42 Ibid. 53-54.
By mobilizing hundreds of thousands of Malays in opposition to the Malayan Union plan, however, Malay elites produced parallel trepidation and dread among the Chinese. Just as Malays mobilized across class lines to limit Chinese citizenship, Chinese initially did likewise to expand it. This took the form of a nationwide work stoppage in October 1947 to oppose the constitutional proposals. For a brief moment in late 1947, therefore, it appeared that Malayan politics might be defined by collective action within communal groups, while failing to generate elite collective action across communal boundaries. This is a recipe for strife, not stability. But Malay and Chinese elites alike were pressed to find common cause by the persistence of class-based mobilization throughout the mid-late 1940s. In a direct spillover from the chaotic postwar interregnum, a powerful, communist-led labor movement mushroomed throughout Malaya between late 1945 and 1948: the Pan-Malayan General Labor Unions (PMGLU) federation.

This continuation of class conflict did not so much overshadow communal frictions as it exacerbated them: “labor unrest had also a peculiar communal flavor.”⁴³ The PMGLU was dominated by non-Malays, especially Chinese. In the wake of the bloody communalism of the postwar interregnum, any Chinese-led labor movement was bound to be perceived as a renewed threat to the Malay community. Most Malays were unconvinced that “socialist equality provided an adequate safeguard against racial extinction.”⁴⁴

The ethnic composition of the labor movement not only made it especially threatening to the Malay population; it also made it exceptionally difficult for British authorities and their Malay collaborators to manage. Labor militancy thus sparked new

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⁴⁴ Funston 1980: 36.
state-building efforts by the British. This initially took the form of reorganizing the coercive apparatus. British authorities patently lacked the capacity to police the labor movement as it emerged, emboldened, from the ashes of Japanese occupation. British officials reorganized Malaya’s seven prewar police forces into a single national force, but the PMGLU was too strong of an organization to coerce into submission. Hopes for bridling the PMGLU rested upon a vigorous effort to register its member unions, as a prelude to tighter state supervision and control. Effective labor registration and control required heightened efforts to recruit and train non-Malay (particularly Chinese) locals to serve on the front lines of the state apparatus. The Trade Union Adviser took the lead, as he “built up a staff of local officials to tour the country persuading managers of the advantages of non-militant unions.” Such meetings provided a venue in which “the laborers discussed their own grievances with sympathetic officials who were of their own community and could speak their own language.”45 By early 1948, state efforts to register and de-radicalize the labor force had proven a considerable success.

This administrative success would have been unthinkable were it not for growing perceptions of the need for elite collective action both within the colonial state itself, and between the state and economic elites. Economic elites urged state officials to restore labor control with an iron fist rather than a velvet glove. Yet the business community’s growing pleas for protection provided the state with growing leverage to deal with labor as it saw fit. State officials doggedly resisted pressures to deny official recognition to radical unions, recognizing that registration would give the state more capacity to monitor labor over time.

State elites were thus acting collectively with economic elites to manage labor unrest – but essentially on the state’s terms. The vulnerability of the business community to state demands became starkly evident during the colonial government’s push to impose direct, progressive income and corporate taxes in late 1947. When business representatives on the Advisory Council outvoted labor representatives 13-2 in rejecting the tax proposals, British officials vetoed the decision, imposing direct taxation by fiat in December 1947. The shift would prove to be among the most significant in Malaya’s economic history, as “the introduction of income taxation underlined a fundamental change in colonial Malayan fiscal objectives,” notes Martin Rudner. “Henceforth the government would pursue increased progressivity in revenue collection,” by “placing the burden squarely on the broadest shoulders.”

By early 1948, then, the colonial government had responded to the postwar outbreak in worker militancy with considerable state-building efforts, placing itself in a much stronger position to confront radicalism of the PMFTU (as the PMGLU had been renamed). After the assassination of three British planters in the state of Perak in June, the British declared a colony-wide state of Emergency and banned the MCP and PMFTU outright. With its coercive power firmly reestablished in all of Malaya’s major towns, the state quickly succeeded in uprooting communist elements from their familiar urban nests. “The whole of the trade union structure had now collapsed and the Party, being isolated in the jungle, had lost touch with the majority of the working class.”

This would present British and Malayan elites with a whole new set of challenges in the years to come. Denied a mass base in both the peasantry and the urban workforce, the

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47 Gamba 1962: 373.
MCP mobilized most of its support among Malaya’s enormous population of ethnic Chinese squatters. This population had ballooned to 500,000 by 1945, as urban Chinese fled Japanese massacres. Although many squatters returned to urban settings after Japan’s defeat, most did not. At the time Emergency was declared in June 1948, the squatter population was still estimated at over 300,000.48

That these demographic statistics are only rough estimates helps explain why the squatter problem was so difficult for the British and their local allies to manage. Unlike workers on estates or plantations, squatters in Malaya were almost completely ungoverned, and highly “illegible” to state authorities. “During the immediate post-war years,” Heng writes, “squatters had opened up huge tracts of land miles away from government administrative centers, and the Malayan Union Government found it lacked manpower in the District Offices and Agricultural Department to control and administer them.”49

The MCP could only be wiped out after the British and their local allies mustered the elite collective action necessary to counter the communists’ edge in Malaya’s squatter settlements. This was primarily expressed through the continued strengthening of the colonial state. Extending even basic police and intelligence capacity into Chinese squatter settlements presented an enormous task. Intelligence-gathering authority was entrusted to the police’s Special Branch, but the unit got off to a “meager 1948 start,” as it still only employed a paltry staff of “12 officers and 44 inspectors (few of them speaking Chinese).”50 The Special Branch was thus described as “chronically understaffed,” and

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“failed to generate enough intelligence – in some areas virtually any intelligence – to make army action effective.”\textsuperscript{51} Nor did British authorities initially make headway in coordinating the colony’s multiple coercive agencies.

By February 1950, “it was becoming evident that the Government was losing ground to the MCP,” prompting British High Commissioner Henry Gurney to recommend the creation of a new post of Director of Operations. Upon his arrival in Malaya the following month, Lieutenant General Harold Briggs’ first task was “to co-ordinate the activities of the police and the military” for the first time.\textsuperscript{52} Given the failure of coercive tactics at reducing the insurgent threat, such concentration of authority was insufficient (if clearly necessary) for the tide to be turned.

Briggs was convinced that victory over Malayan communism required stronger institutions as much as strong-armed repression. More importantly, he found considerable elite support both locally and among his Western backers for his efforts to elaborate a more administrative approach to counterinsurgency. The core of the new approach was squatter resettlement. Whereas in 1948 such a “perceived intrusion into what was considered to be state jurisdiction was hotly contested as a matter of principle,”\textsuperscript{53} by 1950, the worsening conflict had broken Malay resistance. Briggs “encountered little of the initial recalcitrance shown by the state governments on the subject of resettlement. He was therefore able to concentrate the resources of both federal and state governments on the comprehensive New Village resettlement scheme known as the Briggs Plan. Two

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid. 5.  
\textsuperscript{52} Stubbs 1989: 98.  
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid. 79.
years after Briggs’ arrival in Malaya, the plan had largely been implemented: 470,509 squatters were now resettled in 440 New Villages.54

Even this did not suffice to take the wind out of the insurgency. Most “New Villages” did not receive their promised public services between 1950-52, as colonial officials hesitated to post civil servants to rural bailiwicks that Malay officials still considered their own. Forced resettlement thus worsened rather than alleviated squatters’ antagonism toward the state. The nadir was reached in October 1951, when High Commissioner Gurney was assassinated in an ambush on his motorcade by MCP guerrillas. Further attacks made the subsequent six weeks the bloodiest since the beginning of the Emergency. Worsening conditions inspired the appointment in February 1952 of Gerald Templer to serve simultaneously as Director of Operations for the Emergency and as High Commissioner of Malaya. Hence, “from the beginning, Templer was armed with some of the most comprehensive powers ever given a British colonial official.”55 Given the growing unmanageability of MCP rebellion, elites from all groups welcomed the concentration of power in the hands of this new “civil-military supremo.”56

This broad elite support helped Templer erase the manifold institutional divisions between military and civilian policing and intelligence functions. Meanwhile, aggressive recruitment – notably of Chinese to serve in the Special Branch – made the Malayan police grow “from around 11,000 (1948) to over 73,000 (1952 peak),”57 or “easily larger than the rest of the British colonial police force combined.”58 Such growth was not

54 Ibid. 104.
55 Stubbs 1989: 140.
56 White 1996: 123
58 Zakaria 1977: 79.
permitted to compromise either capacity or coordination: “At the same time that there was expansion, training was not curtailed.” It was the persistence of a highly threatening and challenging threat from below that helped the Malayan police overcome the factional tensions that had divided the forces since World War II. As Zakaria Haji Ahmad states the counterfactual: “for all the bitterness and schisms that existed, the exigencies of the Emergency situation evaporated those conflicts that otherwise would have led to an enduring lack of cohesion in the officer corps as a whole.”

Contentious politics was thus the primary shaper of state infrastructural power in decolonizing Malaya. Yet it was not merely the severity of the leftist insurgency, but its type that made it so difficult for state-builders to manage without root-and-branch reform of coercive and administrative institutions. Of particular importance was the role of the “indigenous-immigrant” cleavage in heightening felt elite needs for a stronger state to bridle contentious politics. The contrasting case of the Philippines helps make this point especially clear.

After the end of World War II, insurgency broke out across Southeast Asia. But it was perceived as less unmanageable elsewhere because the ‘indigenous-immigrant’ cleavage had been resolved. In the Philippines, for example, elites faced a leftist insurgency that emerged from within their own ethnic and religious community. They combated it with pre-existing forms of social control and a brief increase in state coercion, rather than needing to undertake a transformation of state infrastructure as in Malaya. Revolt led to a degree of military development, but not to the assertion of state authority: the Philippine state failed to impose new fiscal demands on the very economic

59 Ibid. 73.
60 Ibid. 71.
elites it was helping to protect from rural unrest. Thus the absence of an ‘indigenous-immigrant’ cleavage in the Philippines meant that leftist mobilization did not press its caciques to “crawl together under the apron of the military” or to support the building of stronger national-level institutions more generally. The self-confidence of elites was largely a consequence of the absence of any communal implications in the unrest they faced. Contentious class politics is more likely to spur state-building when it exacerbates ethno-religious divisions because elites tend to perceive such conflicts as more endemic than episodic. The emergence of politicized, mobilized communal cleavages, as in Malaya, gives economic elites a particularly acute need for long-term state protection, setting its trajectory of state development apart from its neighbors.

Conclusion and Implications

In this paper we have shown that the salience of the indigenous cleavage plays a crucial but complex causal role in the emergence of variation in state power. In so doing, we have demonstrated that the concept of the critical antecedent facilitates historical comparison across broader ranges of cases than is possible in the standard critical juncture framework. In a standard critical juncture framework, it would be impossible to study Peruvian state-building in comparison to Latin American countries where the indigenous cleavage had limited salience in the decades after independence. Similarly, a comparison of Malaysia to other countries in its region such as the Philippines would be vulnerable to criticism of an omitted variable. Yet we currently lack a framework that would allow comparative scholars to consider the indigenous cleavage a variable at all.

61 B. Anderson 1998 [1988]: 225
The presence of a salient indigenous cleavage in Malaysia made contentious politics there more menacing and challenging to elites than the contemporaneous outburst of contention in cases like the Philippines; the result was the emergence of a more tightly knit elite coalition and more capable state institutions. The presence of a salient indigenous cleavage in Peru forced state leaders to consider building suboptimal alliances with regional elites; these were cemented through administrative patronage, with the result of undermining efforts at state-building. State leaders in other Latin American countries like Chile did not see indigenous revolt as a threat, and opted for more effective strategies of administrative extension.

Because Peru and Malaysia had relatively salient indigenous cleavages before state-building commenced, a traditional application of the critical juncture framework would have concluded that they could not be compared to their neighbors. Yet each regional study showed that the indigenous cleavage affected the ‘value’ taken by the independent variable that would produce state-building outcomes, and thus it must be integrated into explanations of the origins of state-building. Adding the critical antecedent to our analytic toolkit allows us to remove the overly restrictive scope conditions of perfectly controlled comparison, and to see that similar causal chains drive state building in countries that are different in important ways.\(^{62}\)

\(^{62}\) Notably, however, this does not imply that the indigenous cleavage has a direct effect on state-building outcomes. Were that the case, we would have to view it as an alternative explanation to the institutional and coalitional arguments developed in this paper. Indeed, scholars in the Latin American context have often proposed a relationship of this kind. For example, statistical evidence from a cross-national study of the Americas (Mariscal and Sokoloff 2000) shows a negative correlation between the indigenous composition of the population and the provision of education. This correlational evidence is also consistent with the critical antecedent explanation here, and process-tracing evidence shows that the direct relationship posited as an alternative cannot be sustained.
Though our region-specific arguments are distinct, our studies of Southeast Asia and Latin America coincide in finding that variation in state power has deep, if indirect, colonial roots. We coincide in the view that the salience of ethnic cleavages at the end of colonial rule shape post-independence state-building trajectories. We also coincide in rejecting direct links between demography or ethnic diversity and state building, showing instead that the indigenous cleavage matters only because it shapes state-building coalitions and the institutions they construct. Indeed, though the effect of the indigenous cleavage on state-building is distinct in each region, we coincide yet one step further: in both regions, as the salience of the cleavage increases, elites are driven to rely on one another for protection against the looming instability it portends.

Having come so far together, why do we propose no unified theory of post-colonial state-building? Because, we suggest, there is no unified outcome to be studied. State building is an umbrella concept that describes various efforts by elites to increase the state’s power; but that power can take various forms. In each of our regions, state building took a distinct form. Southeast Asian state-building was a response to contentious politics that led elites to construct protection pacts: arrangements that centered on effective extraction of elite wealth. By contrast, post-independence state-building in Latin America centered on the territorial extension of state administration. State leaders, in other words, were making choices about distinct kinds of institutions in each regional context. Since the content of state-building was different, it is no surprise that the salience of the indigenous cleavage shaped elite thinking in distinct ways in each region.
Yet the fact that state builders responded to the salience of the indigenous cleavage in both regions, and that they did so by fortifying their relationship with elites, suggests something fundamentally common was at stake. The threats state leaders face shape choices about institutional development; these choices have dramatic long-term consequences. The fundamental locus of those threats, pace Tilly and other scholars of European state building, is domestic rather than international. Interstate war does not make states in the post-colonial world. Instead, we must look to patterns of domestic conflict to understand both the motivations and the choices of state builders.
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