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# Macroevolution of Statehood

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**In the paper I will present my own approach to the distinction of the stages of the evolution of statehood which develops and supplements Claessen – Skalník's ideas.**

**Instead of Claessen – Skalník  
scheme ‘early state–mature state’**

**I suggest**

**the sequence of three stages  
(early state – developed state – mature state)**

**The concept of the early state introduced by Henri J. M. Claessen and Peter Skalník was among the great political-anthropological theories which gave a new consideration of socio-political evolution, its stages and models.**

**It was fundamentally new to define the early state as a separate stage of evolution essentially different from the following stage, the one of the full-grown or mature state.**

**Thus there was formed exactly an evolutionary sequence of statehood:**

**the early state — the mature state.**

*The differences between the early and mature states*  
in Claessen and Skalník's opinion in general were described as the differences in ideology and the system of relationships between power and population. According to them:

The structure of *the early state* was based principally upon the concept of reciprocity and genealogical distance from the sovereign.

In *the mature state* the managerial and redistributive aspects became dominant. The mature state is based upon an efficient governmental apparatus and a new type of legitimation and ideology.

**Unfortunately, in *The Early State* the characteristics of the mature state were presented actually quite briefly. However this scheme was accepted by many researches. That is why it is necessary to point to the difficulties that originated from such a fragmentariness.**

**In general all researchers when using the term 'mature state' have in view a type of state with the presence of an effective bureaucratic apparatus. But with respect to the time of appearance of the mature state there are**

## **TWO DIFFERENT VIEWPOINTS**

**The first point**  
(Claessen, Skalník, and Bargatzky)

**proceeds from the idea that mature states are the second and the highest stage of the state organization which appeared already in Antiquity and is present until now.**

**The second viewpoint**  
(Shifferd, Cohen)

**divides the whole evolution of the statehood into early states and modern states (mature or industrial ones) but which appear only at least from the Modern Age. Such view has something in common with the approach dividing states into two groups: archaic and modern nation-states.**

**There is some truth in both viewpoints. On the one hand, the bureaucratic pre-industrial states of Antiquity and Middle Ages differ much from the weakly centralized 'reciprocal' early state. On the other hand, it is evident, that the European rational legal states of the Modern Age and especially of the industrial epoch differed in the most profound way from the complex monarchies of Antiquity and Middle Ages.**

So the sequence of two stages of the evolution of statehood must be re-examined and changed because the scheme '*early state – mature state*' is in no way complete.

I think it would be more correct to distinguish not two but three stages of statehood.

I have suggested adding one more stage, *i.e.* to regard

- the bureaucratic pre-industrial states as *developed* states;
- the industrial states – as *mature* ones.



Hence, we are dealing with the following sequence of three stages:

- **EARLY STATES**
- **DEVELOPED STATES**
- **MATURE STATES**

# EARLY STATES

- **are insufficiently centralized states;**
- **they organize politically societies with underdeveloped administrative-political and social structures.**

## **DEVELOPED STATES**

- **are the centralized states of the Late Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the Early Modern period;**
- **they organize politically societies with distinct estate-class stratification.**

# **MATURE STATES**

- **are the states of the industrial epoch;**
- **they organize politically such societies, where estates have disappeared, the bourgeois and working classes have formed, and representative democracy has proliferated.**

For each stage of statehood we can identify the following three types of the state: the *primitive*, *typical*, and *transitional* ones.

In the framework of this presentation the basic characteristics of the stages are identified on the basis of the middle or *typical* phase of each stage.

There were numerous versions of early states, but most of the early states did not have the minimal necessary level of centralization or/and some significant statehood attributes, or did not develop them to a sufficient degree. This is especially significant with respect to such statehood attributes as professional administration, control and repression apparatus, taxation, territorial division, as well as a sufficiently high degree of written law.

## **The most important characteristics of the developed state that distinguish it from the early state**

- **The developed state possesses all the statehood features in a rather clear and systematic form: a special professional administration/coercion apparatus separated from the population; regular taxation; and an artificial territorial division. Also it always has a written law and a special culture of written documentation, registration, and control. Taxation becomes more regular and ordered. Archaic duties and revenues (tribute, gifts, labour-rents, etc.) disappear.**

# **The most important characteristics of the developed state that distinguish it from the early state**

- **The developed state is an estate-corporative state. The social structure of the developed state becomes represented by large social groups and not by numerous tiny social layers or socio-territorial units (like autonomous cities or temples with special privileges) which are found in early states. The state actively influences the social structure of society and acts as an intermediary between various estates/corporations.**



## **The most important characteristics of the developed state that distinguish it from the early state**

- **The developed state is always a centralized state; generally, it is much more durable and stable than the early state. If disintegration of such a state occurs early or later than they unite again with a new and tighter form of centralization within more or less the same territory. The developed state is supported by the development of communications, trade, a certain unification of money types, measures, law, and so on.**

## **The most important characteristics of the developed state that distinguish it from the early state**

- **In the developed state the social role of the state changes. As the state itself takes the function of maintaining social order, it reduces the possibilities of the upper strata to solve themselves the problems of coercive support of their position (for example, through the prohibition for them to have their own armed forces).**

**The most important characteristics  
of the developed state  
that distinguish it from the early state**

- **The presence of a new type of state ideology and/or religion. Political ideology in the wide sense of this term develops instead of primitive ideas of royal power (based on notions of mythical ancestors, royal supernatural abilities and so on).**

## THE DEVELOPED STATE PHASE

• *Egypt* entered the developed state phase at the beginning of the Period of the New Kingdom in the 16th century BCE.

• *China* reached this stage as a result of its first unification in the late 3rd century BCE under Qin Shi Huang.

• *Byzantium* was a developed state from the very beginning, as it was the successor of the Roman Empire.

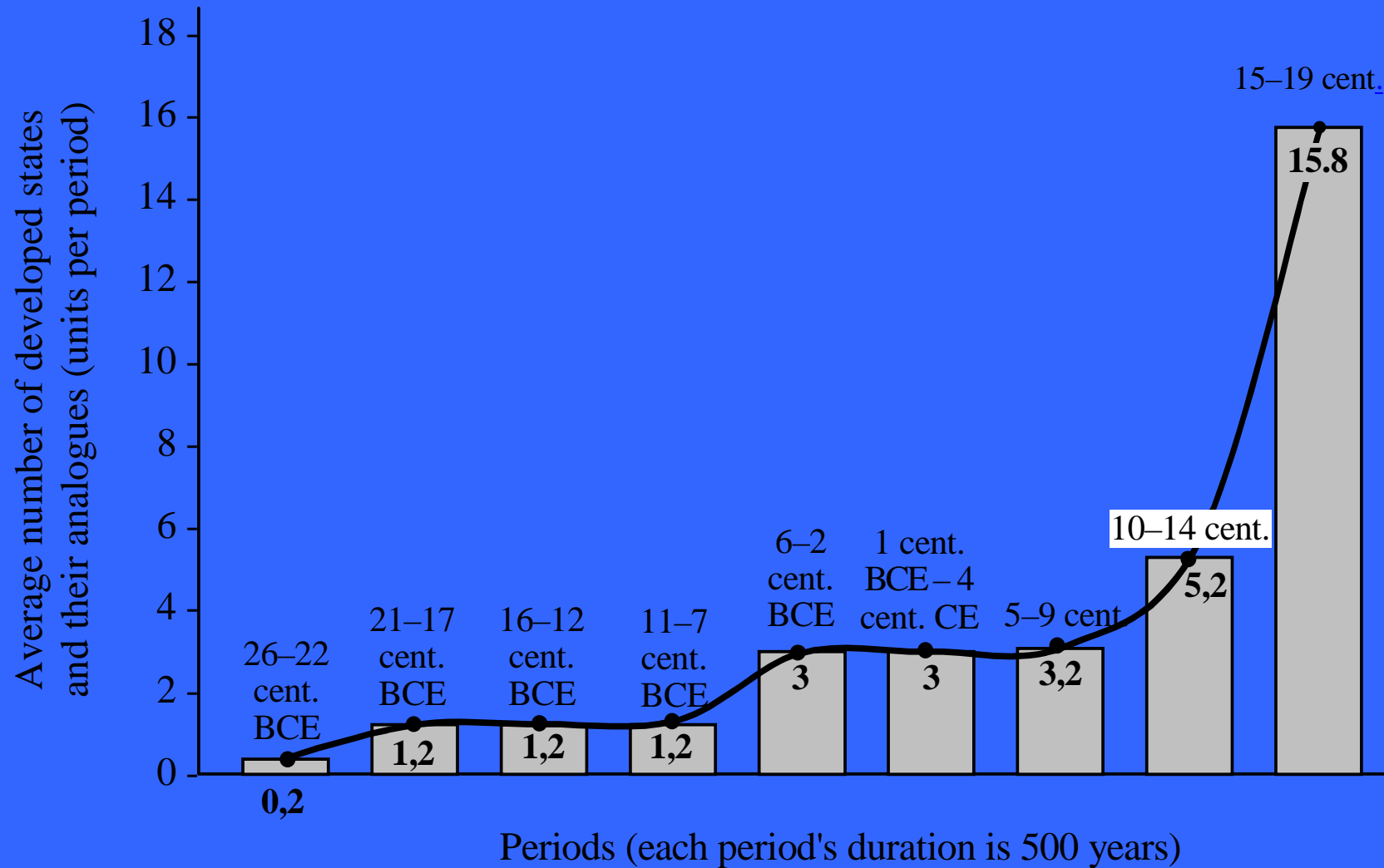
• *France* entered this phase in the late 13th century during the reign of Philip IV the Fair.

## THE DEVELOPED STATE PHASE

- For many *European countries* the 16th century was a ‘period of state construction’.
- But this century also appeared to be a turning point for the political evolution of such countries as the *Ottoman Empire, Russia, India* and *Iran* (where we also observe the formation of the developed state).

In the Diagram 1 below you may see the process of growth of the number of Developed States.

# Diagram 1. Growth of the Number of Developed States



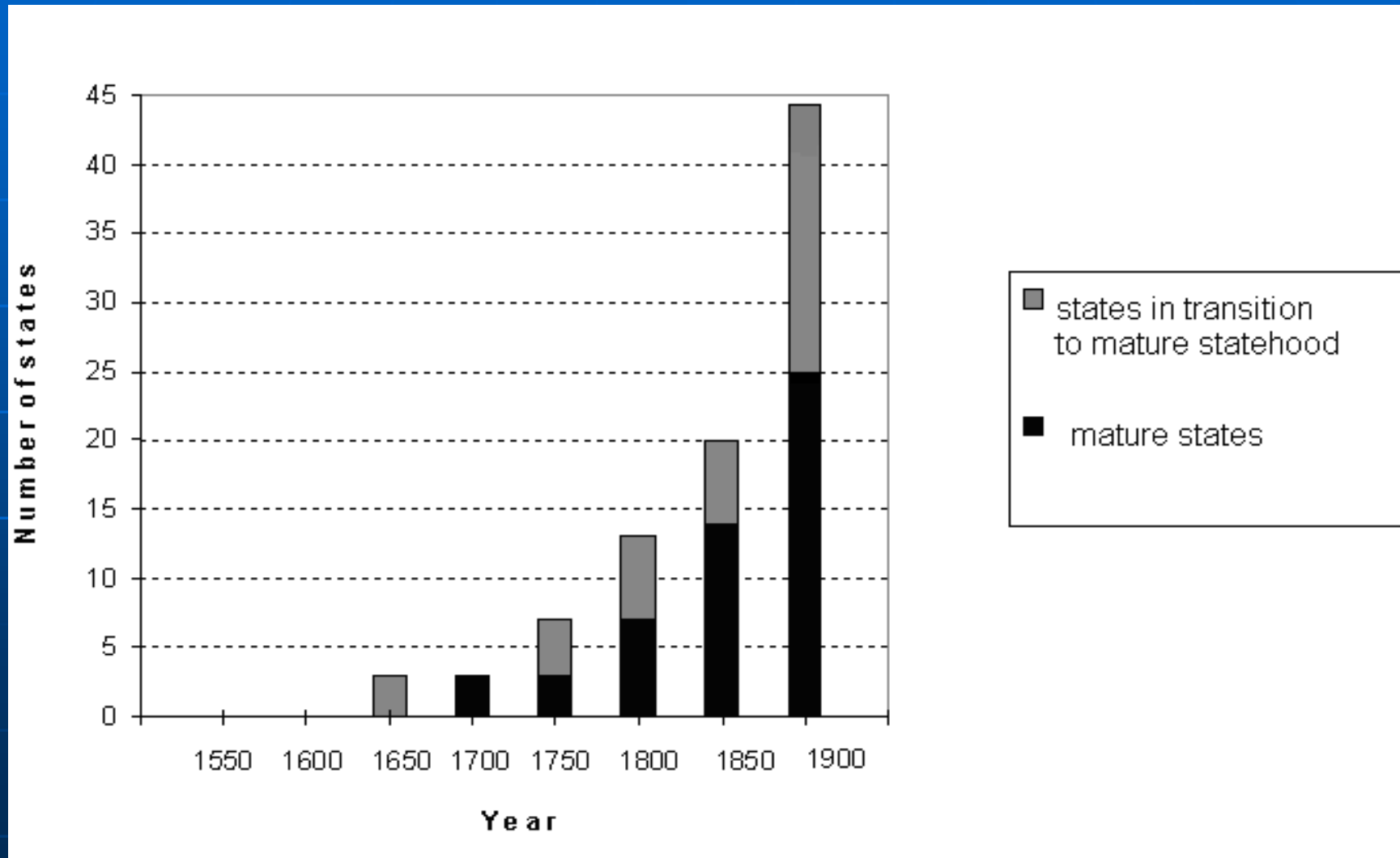
## **THE FIRST MATURE STATES**

**France in the reign of Louis XIV appeared in the late 17th century.**

**Yet, only in the 19th century they became dominant in Europe and the New World.**

In the Diagram 2 below you may see the process of growth of the number of mature States

## Diagram 2. Dynamics of the Mature States' Number (1500–1900 CE)

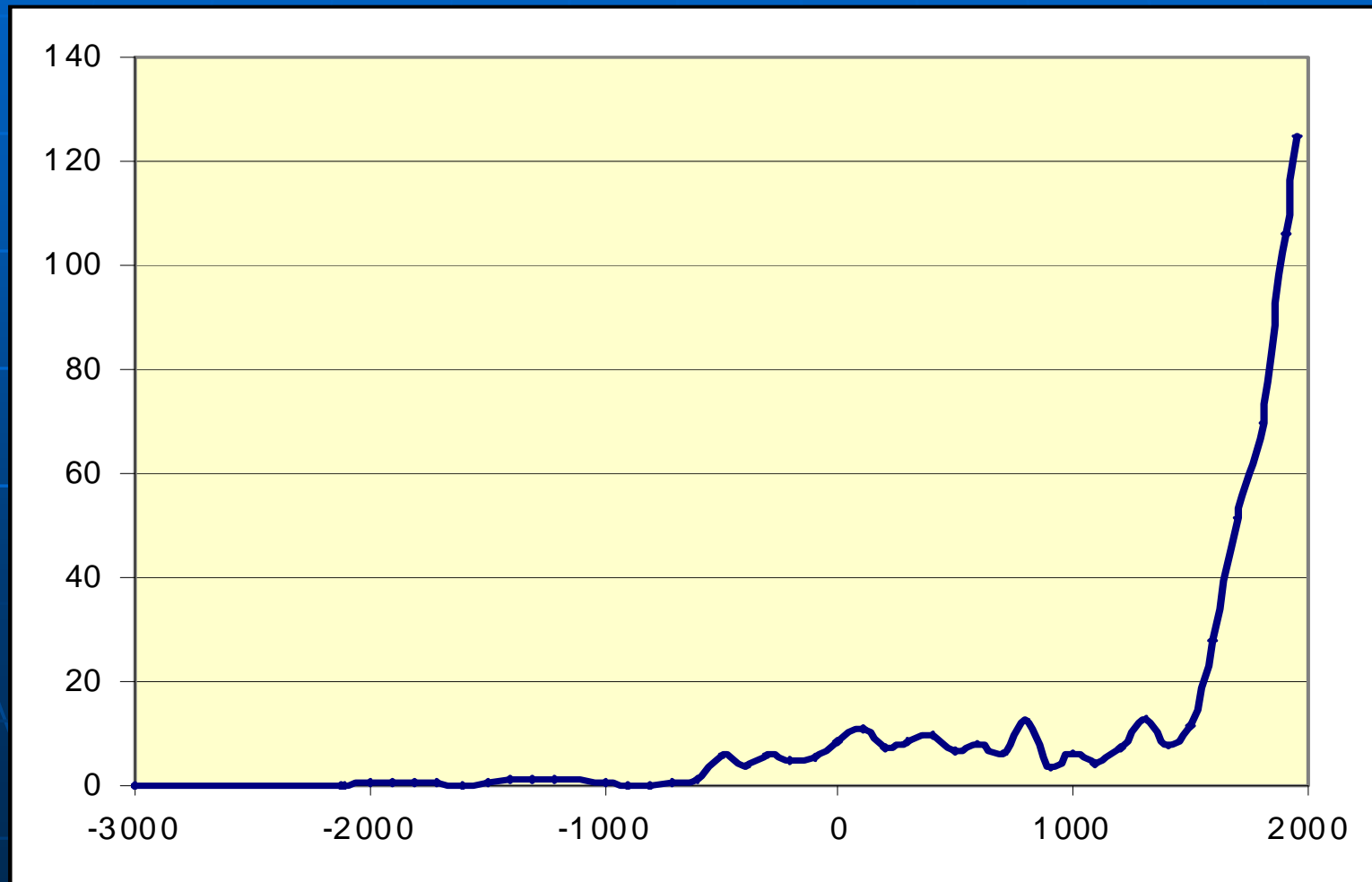




**So in general, the mature state is  
a result of the development of  
*capitalism* and *the Industrial Revolution*.**

**In addition to this, the transition to the  
mature statehood is connected with  
*the demographic revolution*.**

### Diagram 3. Dynamics of Territory Controlled by the Developed and Mature States (millions km<sup>2</sup>), till 1950



# Diagram 4. Dynamics of the Size of Territory Controlled by Developed and Mature States (in millions of square kilometers), till 1950 CE (logarithmic scale)



## **The main characteristics of the mature state**

- **it significantly surpasses the developed state with respect efficiency of its political organization and legal system; it necessarily has a professional bureaucracy with its definite characteristics, distinct mechanisms and elaborated procedures of the legitimate transition of power.**

## **The main characteristics of the mature state**

- **there are usually present worked out forms of constitutions and the division of powers, the role of law (especially civil law) and also the legal order significantly increases, which developed states often paid little attention.**

## **The main characteristics of the mature state**

- **It is based on a modern type of nation, that is why it can only exist within a society with a unified national culture. Mature state influences on culture, including control over language, religion, education and so on.**

**The ideology of the mature state always includes some nationalism (or some similar other ideas).**

## **The main characteristics of the mature state**

- **in connection with the growth of the role of property relations, the establishment of legal equality of the citizens, the abolishment of the privileges of the estates, the mature state is gradually transformed from the estate-class state to the purely class-corporate state.**

**Thus, here the role of new industrial classes increases within the state system. Besides it becomes necessary to have organizations and corporations that express the interests of certain parts and groups of certain classes. These are various organizations and political parties of both workers and bourgeoisie, as well as other social strata.**



**In Conclusion, it is worth paying attention to the fact that during the 20th century the social policy of advanced mature states experienced radical changes. Many present-day characteristics of the Western states cannot be regarded unconditionally as the ones of the mature state.**

**Thank you for attention!**