

---

## PIRACY, STATE-FORMATION, AND THE BOUNDING OF SOCIAL SYSTEMS

Robert A. Denemark

*Efforts to bound social systems are important to the study of global development, but may be biased by definitions that are overly focused on terrestrial relations among contiguous polities. In this paper I consider the manner in which sea-borne interaction, specifically piracy, can generate state formation and monetization. Markets may be deepened, consolidated, and then extended by pirate activities. Select port cities are founded and strengthened, hinterlands integrated into broader regions, and boundary-extending trade and finance may be advanced. This reinforces the fuzzy nature of borders, especially those on navigable waterways, and demands additional care on the part of scholars working to establish the historical boundaries of various social systems.*

### Introduction

In this paper I consider the implications of piracy for attempts at establishing systemic boundaries for social systems at various times and places. Specifying the spatial and temporal boundaries of inter-polity systems across history is crucial for the study of long-term global change. Chase-Dunn, Inoue, and Neal (forthcoming) offer ‘high bar’ rules for determining the criteria for systemic interaction. Nested systems of networks for bulk goods, political/military interaction, prestige goods, and information, help differentiate forms of interaction. In each case the authors begin with a set of five contiguous polities, and set a threshold of 5 per cent of bulk goods and prestige goods levels (by volume) to deal with instances of occasional interaction, or fall-off. Prestige goods are also distinguished by the role they might play in maintaining, or altering, the social system of an area. A significant level of influence in creating or maintaining social structures is also required for determining the boundaries of a political/military network.

Difficult choices are required when demarcating systemic boundaries, and one of those decisions by Chase-Dunn and his colleagues may have included an unnecessarily terrestrial bias. In each case the determination of systemic interaction is founded upon a starting point of five contiguous polities and their interactions with neighbors. But it is possible that such interactions may be maritime in nature, not immediately contiguous. It is also possible that critical interactions may not be with polities.

A review of some of the history of piracy illustrates meaningful linkages in political/military networks and prestige goods networks without physical contiguity or relations with formal polities. In PMNs the traditional categories of wars and alliances are joined by elements of imperialism, attempts to establish recognition for polities, and various processes of state formation including the provision of necessary resources, expertise, and partnerships in state-building efforts. Piracy emerges as a potent facilitator of both the deepening and broadening of political linkages. In prestige goods networks piracy can create flows of specie sufficient to alter systems of political economy in fundamental ways, to deepen market relations, found or support the creation of cosmopoli-

*Journal of Globalization Studies, Vol. 8 No. 1, May 2017 48–64*

tan port cities, and to confer social status to new elites. Once again, the extent of economic networks can be extended, opening new trade routes or initiating new commodity chains.

To understand piracy's place in attempting to bound social systems we must alter our traditional understanding of the pirate enterprise. Piracy is usually understood as an illicit activity that threatens people, property, and legitimate authority, and which must be repressed by the state. If it is not repressed, it threatens states and the extension of market activities among them. This has certainly been true, but I argue that piracy has its origins in nascent state formation, and sometimes exists symbiotically with the processes of both state-making and inter-state trade. Piracy plays several important roles in the intensification and expansion of global commerce in a manner consistent with what is generally understood as 'globalization'. I will make these arguments historically, and provide a few contemporary examples as well.

I frame my argument in the wake of Charles Tilly's famous 1985 article 'War Making and State Making as Organized Crime.' The juxtaposition of states and criminal organizations is popular in some intellectual circles, and contemplated only painfully in others. After 30-plus years, the work has been popularized in two ways. The first suggests that states are simply a variant of criminal enterprise that extracts resources from legitimate earners and redistributes them in line with its own interests. The second suggests that states were formed as a result of having to better organize to deal with the threat of such illicit activity. Both popularizations do Tilly an injustice.

Tilly addresses the idea that states are essentially organized criminal enterprises. If an institution charges people for protection from actions it will otherwise take, it is engaging in a criminal enterprise. But if an institution charges people for protection from actions that others may take, it can be a legitimate protector. The more nuanced question raised by Tilly concerns whether '...the threats against which a given government protects its citizens are imaginary or are consequences of its own activities...' (Tilly 1985: 171). If this is the case then states are neither inherently licit nor illicit, but likely embody elements of both at nearly every point in time.

The second popularization concerns states learning to extract resources effectively, rule in an efficient manner, and (above all) to monopolize the use of violence. This monopoly is used to protect the population from criminal actions like piracy. Such a simplistic formulation assumes that on one side we have the legitimate forces of the state, and on the other side – the illegitimate forces of criminality. The former is said to offer the stability necessary for growth while the latter generates instability and degradation. Tilly's argument was never that simple. He viewed legitimate political entities as emerging from among a number of contenders seeking primarily to monopolize the means of violence. Units that prevailed did not necessarily begin the contest with any different attributes, strategies, or behaviors. They differentiated themselves by proving superior at extracting resources while protecting clients and extending their control over the means of violence. They accomplished these tasks by following a mixed strategy of coopting or attacking their (often self-similar) opposition. In making these arguments, Tilly credits Braudel with insights about the nature of piracy. Initially supported by cities and states, piracy was a behavior of both nascent and established 'official' forces, and those they courted as allies. Tilly focuses his arguments on Europe, and notes the effective end-point of this process: 'By the later 18<sup>th</sup> century ... monarchs controlled permanent,

professional military forces that rivaled those of their neighbors and far exceeded any other organized armed force within their own territories' (Tilly 1985: 174).

Tilly's argument is sophisticated, but falls prey to three challenges that stand in the way of a better understanding of piracy, both historically and in the contemporary context. First, the weight of attempts by the state to delegitimize piracy are inherent in the very language we use. As a result, Tilly ends up posing piracy in juxtaposition to legitimate state action, even while working to avoid doing so. We will reinforce Tilly's argument and discuss the various ways in which piracy and state action are intimately related. Second, perceptions created by popular media paint pirates as loners and drifters who sail into the sunset for lack of an actual home. This is a fundamental error. We will discuss below the ways in which pirate home ports, havens, and settlements present a very different picture of the enterprise. Finally, Tilly's analysis of piracy in early modern Europe, and his suggestion that the eighteenth century marks the end of the era when pirates played a key role in state-making, is too narrow temporally both in its starting date and its ending date. Relevant activities emerged in the earliest Mediterranean civilizations, and extend at least into the nineteenth century (and may still be with us as we consider issues like the smuggling of refugees).

### **Defining Piracy and Identifying Cases**

It would be shocking if the definition of piracy was clear and easy to apply. Like the term 'terrorist', piracy is laden with value judgements and particularly vulnerable to use by those with power, and the desire to delegitimize others while engaging in or supporting the same set of actions themselves. As an example, the difference between a pirate and a 'privateer' or a 'corsair' (terms with positive vibrations) is not what they do, but the fact that one holds a warrant from a country that absolves them of guilt or responsibility so long as they do not attack individuals from that country. Stealing, raping, burning, pillaging, and killing are endemic to both, but one avoids those activities with regard to one particular country while the other treats everyone equally. (This is basically n-1 piracy.) For the purposes of this paper we will follow Heebøll-Holm's (2013: 9) definition: 'Piracy is the seaborne appropriation or destruction of goods and values in a maritime ... or a riverine space through violence or threats of violence.' I specifically ignore the way in which political authorities parse those actions, or define them away in time of 'war', as such parsings are usually designed to absolve those in league with a given power of any blame, while heaping scorn on others who may be doing nothing out of the ordinary (see especially Burgess 2014).

I forward the argument that piracy facilitates state formation in a positive (not a reactive) manner, and fosters globalization (defined as the extension of market processes). In doing so, they offer a challenge to terrestrial definitions of the boundaries of social systems. To substantiate such claims, I focus on four major pirate traditions that vary temporally and geographically. These include 1) the activities of those engaged in 'piracy' at the time of the earliest use of the term in the classical Greek and Roman contexts; 2) the most famous pirates in history, the Vikings; and 3) the early modern Mediterranean. With the issue of globalization I add 4) piracy in the apocryphal 'pirate kingdom' of Madagascar. I also report on a few additional examples that appear to be associated with piracy in these areas. I acknowledge the essentially western nature of these cases and look forward to adding additional insights from Asia as this work moves forward.

## Pirates and States

This section reviews how piracy and states were closely related in the Classical Mediterranean world, in the medieval period with the Vikings, and in the early modern period among the polities and autonomous religious orders of Europe. State-Pirate relationships remain similar into the current period, as will be illustrated with quick references to more modern cases in places like Peru, Greece, Thailand, and Somalia.

### *Classical Greece and Rome*

In the west, piracy emerges as a concept in the Homeric poems as early as the eighth century BCE. By the fourth century BCE piracy was an active diplomatic issue (deSouza 2014: 27–9). While this might give the impression that piracy was a rampant and illicit activity to be tamed by the forces of Greek and Roman civilization, the truth is far more complex. Seaborne raiding was an activity that grew and shrank for several reasons, but the response was not the search for some state-level form of protection. Instead, coastal communities would adopt the principle of reprisal. If someone from another community engaged in raiding, all members of that community became legitimate targets for counter-raiding. In this manner the practice of ‘piracy’ became institutionalized, grew exponentially until coasts fortified or depopulated, and then declined as a result (Anderson 1995: 177).

Institutionalized piracy and counter-piracy became an important form of warfare. The waging of war by local communities, and then larger polities, was built upon the logic of reprisal and the argument that it was the ‘opposition’ who were pirates. Both the Greeks and later the Romans subsequently used this handy rationale to justify imperialism. Cicero famously commented that pirates were ‘the scourge of all mankind’ in the first century BCE. His argument, which carried over into European law, suggested that promises made to pirates (regarding surrender, repatriation, immunity, *etc.*) did not have to be honored (Heebøll-Holm 2013: 2). Given the debates that emerged in the framing of early international law regarding the necessity of keeping promises, even to mortal enemies or heathens, this is a serious injunction (Denmark *et al.* n.d.). More importantly, this logic also provided significant legitimation to various forms of imperialist activity. DeSouza suggests that the most important classical example of realist literature in the history of global politics, Thucydides' *Melian Dialogue*, was an imperialist act justified by efforts to suppress piracy (deSouza 2014: 30).

Pompey's ‘Pirate War’ (circa 67 BCE) was justified on the grounds that piracy was rampant in the Mediterranean and needed to be suppressed. Pompey took to the sea with a flotilla and accomplished his task in only three months. Given the short time it took, it is clear that Pompey did not have to control hundreds of individual pirate ships (deSouza 2014: 32–4). What Rome did was to bring warring factions under its tutelage such that reprisals (‘piracy’) quickly declined. In this way Rome extended its empire under the guise of the suppression of piracy. Janice Thomson (1994) confirms that if you could not control those in your territory engaged in activities that dominant powers could label piracy, you were likely to be attacked as a result. We see this imperialist strategy used by various European powers into the late nineteenth century in places like Madagascar and Sarawak (Hooper 2011: 240; Anderson 1995: 191).

*Vikings*

In the late eighth and ninth centuries the Vikings emerged from Scandinavia and moved across the water to the west (all the way to North America), in a southerly direction in the Atlantic (into Britain and Ireland), and finally entering and raiding into the Mediterranean (all the way to the Italian peninsula). They also moved south through the rivers of Europe and all the way to Byzantium. The term 'Viking' can be traced to waterborne predators that sheltered in coves and attacked passing vessels (Forte, Oram, and Pedersen 2005: 3–4). They engaged in trading and coastal raiding. The Vikings created or facilitated the creation of states throughout their areas of activity. Where they found little opposition, they raided until settling and mixing with local populations. Where they found greater opposition, they organized into large groups and fought, allied, or merged with their opposition. Finally, significant resources were returned to Scandinavia where they play a crucial role in the consolidation of states in that region.

The first form of state-building appears where Vikings found little military opposition. Raiders eventually settled and merged with local populations in various ways. The resulting alliances were crosscutting, with the Vikings and the indigenous population intermingling, joining forces for convenience, and fighting others to secure towns and their resource-supplying hinterlands. This is very much the history of Ireland in the period after the first year-around Viking settlements at the end of the eighth century. Their raids were particularly successful given the low levels of organization in Ireland at the time. In the classic treatment of the subject, Daniel Binchy (1962: 119) argues that pre-Viking Ireland was 'tribal, rural, hierarchical, and familiar' meaning that it had only the most primitive social and political systems, and no significant towns or cities to speak of. Binchy highlights the small scale of political organizations and the weak position of 'kings' in the system. Early Irish 'kings' did not own their kingdoms, they had no judicial powers, they did not enforce private rights or punish others except for a few 'public' crimes. There was no government apparatus. The arrival of Viking raiders did not so much cause Ireland to unify (though Binchy does suggest it might mark the beginning of an Irish nationalism), but instead it led to greater or lesser Viking domination, depending on things like proximity to water, resource abundance, and the demography and geography relevant to the defense of hill forts (Binchy 1962: 119–132).

Once the Vikings were dominant in an area they tended to intermarry with the local elite families. By 842 the Norse Vikings made alliances with the Irish, often against the Danes or competing Norse trading towns, but sometimes against other Irish groups (Wilkinson 1991: 129). After 880 the Irish would occasionally defeat Viking armies (Valante 1998: 85). By the tenth century elite intermarriage in support of alliances was well along (Valante 1998: 123). Valante concludes that 'Involvement of the Dublin Norse in the Irish political scene [c. 930s] is a foreshadowing of events to come' and that in the 980s '... we see the Norse communities coming into conflict with one another because of their kinship ties with the Irish and their consequent involvement in Irish politics' (1998: 110; 125). The Vikings overlordship of Dublin was pushed out three times between 995 and 1014. But it was not simply an Irish army that opposed the Viking pirates – it was an amalgam of both groups fighting in rough alliances of convenience. State formation was facilitated by the Vikings, but not because the Irish had to consolidate to defend themselves. States formed with Viking participation and assistance.

An alternative model may be found in the Carolingian empire and Britain, where Viking raids had a somewhat different impact. In the Carolingian Empire we find piracy inspiring state capacity-building in the manner attributed to Tilly's argument (Forte *et al.* 2005: 59). Viking raids were so successful that they established towns at the mouths of the major Rivers of Francia. Raiding forced a number of downstream riverside towns to be abandoned (Price 2014: 57). Carolingian forces were finally marshalled and the Vikings had to develop varied strategies to continue their activities. The treaty of Saint-Clair-sur-Epte in 911 made Rouen a permanent Viking settlement, but at the cost of vassalage to the Carolingian empire. Medieval Viking influence is reflected in place names to this day – 'Normandy' derives from 'Normans' or 'Norse Men'.

In Britain, Viking influence grew so strong that kingdoms were established in several locations. They provided safe havens and resources to the raiders. Price (2014: 53–54) notes that the first history of Britain published in 1577 speaks of waves of Viking raiders who controlled the sea and engaged in seasonal raiding. They coalesced into an army with interests in Britain, other areas like Ireland or France, and dominant positions in Scandinavia as well. York was a Viking kingdom that ruled both a healthy swath of Britain and parts of Ireland, including Dublin. When Dublin was sacked by opposition Irish/Viking forces in the early eleventh century, the leadership retired to its possessions in York. Eastern Britain was established under the 'Danes Law' that referenced a large area of Viking control (Denemark forthcoming). Price concludes that the Vikings were catalysts for political change throughout Europe, but not because states emerged in opposition to their activities. The Vikings built states as havens for their activities (Price 2014: 63–64).

Finally, we note that piracy provided significant wealth and expertise that was transported back to Scandinavia. Given the unstructured and far-flung nature of Viking activities, this did not follow the classical imperialist process of collecting local taxes or imposing 'home charges' on subject populations. At the height of Viking control we find only a single report of a ship from home plying the waters around Ireland to demand tribute to take home to Scandinavia (Denemark forthcoming). But resources were still transferred. Vikings would engage in piracy and raiding, and then return with wealth and seasoned warriors to take control of local areas, or pledge their allegiance to various contenders. In 871, for example, King Olaf left Ireland to take up his father's kingdom in Norway (Holm 1986: 321). Olaf was part of an important family that siphoned resources from Ireland (and Britain) that enhanced the power of the heir apparent. (Olaf would later gather resources in the quickly growing and consolidating haven of Viking Kiev.) Attempts by Vikings to establish control and directly tax the resources of the Irish Sea on behalf of various kings at home continued through 1104 (Holm 1986: 345).

Political histories of Sweden, Norway, and Denmark, consider the unification of (presently existing) states from Viking times forward, which would be an anachronism in most circumstances, but not in this case. Early and reliable evidence of the process of Scandinavian state formation, fueled by Viking resources, comes from foreign travelers in the eighth and ninth centuries who already wrote of three basic polities in the region. By the end of the ninth century Danish sources record the political dynamics of the three regions (Skovgaard-Petersen 2003: 169). The Danes had consolidated early, and gathered significant resources from their efforts in Britain and beyond (*Ibid.*: 172–173). The narrative regarding Danish political consolidation evidences successes and set-

backs, but the same Danish ruling family that rose to power in the tenth century has been in place ever since (*Ibid.*: 168).

Norway was slower at consolidation, but by 872 the few remaining contentious rulers were fighting to establish control over most of modern 'Norway'. By 1015 the rule of Olaf Haraldsson, fortified by wealth gathered especially in the riverine systems of Europe, helped him unite the region. Danish efforts to undercut his rule led Olaf to flee to the eastern empire where he lived with his brother-in-law who ruled Viking Kiev. His son led pirate, raiding, and trading parties all the way to Constantinople, where he served for a time in the Imperial Guard. He eventually returned to Norway with significant wealth and a well-seasoned retinue to capture the throne (Krag 2003: 194–6).

Swedish unification began later, in about the eleventh century, but evidence of public assemblies for collective decision-making in the ninth century, and planned communities in the tenth century, suggest early elements of state structure. By 1080 there were only two major political regions of Sweden (Lindkvist 2003: 225). Both were ruled by families that sent relatives abroad to gather resources to solidify their control. All three examples are consistent with Kristiansen's argument that piracy (plunder and conquest) facilitates the creation of states, if of a particularly decentralized nature (Kristiansen 1998: 46–48).

### *Early Modern Europe*

Piracy stimulated European state formation in three ways. First, it served as a tool of economic competition and was a well-accepted mercantilist policy. Second, piracy served to provide direct naval support in time of both declared and undeclared war. Finally, sufficient piracy on the part of actors that were not accepted as states led to their official recognition.

Tilly cites Braudel (1949) on the nature of brigandage and piracy in early modern European history. Braudel discusses the degree to which 'official' navies 'harbored privateers, made a living from privateering, and sometimes owed their origins to it' (Braudel 1973 [1949]: 869). Braudel lists several established polities across the Mediterranean that sponsored pirates (*e.g.*, Spain, Sardinia, France, and Venice), and grew wealthy and powerful in the process. Other quasi-sovereign entities, like the Knights of St. John of Malta (also known as the Hospitallers), supported themselves as pirates. They attacked not only Muslim shipping, but also the ships of contending Christian areas as well. Among the order's major enemies we find Venice, because the Hospitallers preyed on Venetian trade partners within Catholic Europe (Braudel 1973 [1949]: 875).

In the Atlantic, Great Britain institutionalized piracy and grew wealthy as a result. For 250 years the British were notorious pirates before finally beginning to suppress the practice among its navy and commercial fleet. Keynes notes that the rich takings of Francis Drake, as he preyed upon Spanish shipping from the new world, allowed Queen Elizabeth I to pay off the English foreign debt and found the Levant Company, out of which sprang the British East India Company and much of Britain's power and influence in the world. (For purposes of illustration, Keynes calculates that the original sum Elizabeth invested, plus the average rate of return, would account for the total value of British overseas investment in 1930!) (Keynes 1930: 156–7). While commenting on British demands for a free-trade regime in the nineteenth century, the noted mercantilist Friedrich List argued that liberal economics is simply the mercantilist policy of those who have captured certain efficiencies, primarily by using more traditional mercantilist

policies to develop a competitive economic system (List 1885: Bk 2, Ch. 11). It took two and one half centuries for Britain to accumulate sufficient capital, acquire valuable colonies, build their merchant fleet, and develop commercial expertise sufficient to allow them to benefit from 'free' competition (at least outside the empire). Before the British, the Portuguese had acted similarly, especially in the Indian Ocean (Amirell and Muller 2014: 18). Braudel argues that Europe's major interstate competition was carried out on the high seas in this exact manner (Braudel 1949: 880). Privateering, the practice of licensing pirates (and more critically, providing them with safe ports), was only outlawed by treaty in 1856. Spain did not sign the treaty until 1908. The United States never did (Amirell and Muller 2014: 19).

With such significant state interaction it is no coincidence that 'pirates' slipped in and out of that category with the shake of a hand. As states encouraged piracy, the practice grew. Anderson goes so far as to suggest that pirates were not just used by, but created by states (1995: 194). When the state wanted a competitive edge, or needed naval forces, they were explicit in asking for assistance from armed merchants and privateers, and the ranks of these 'pirates' swelled in response. Anderson notes the same process in England, Spain, the Netherlands, and elsewhere in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. As piracy grew, it also became more varied. Piracy was soon being 'exported' to new areas. 'Buccaneering' originated 'in the Caribbean Sea as a colonial extension of Euro National conflicts, exacerbated by trading exclusivity' (Anderson 1995: fn 64). When piracy did not exist, states created it to serve their own purposes. When states no longer needed the pirates they created, they released them to ply their trade elsewhere.

This sort of economic competition is just one short step from open war. Braudel even titles his discussion 'Piracy: A Substitute for Declared War' and identified ways in which states enlisted pirates in various parts of the world to pursue their interests (Braudel 1973 [1949]: 865). Anderson writes of a cycle of piracy: States sanction piracy and provide it with the ability to grow, it grows, it consolidates, pirates enter into alliances with states, and that helps it grow further. Gallant notes the same cycle for both brigandage and piracy as states attempt to consolidate control over coasts and borders, and land becomes a commodity (Gallant 1999: 46). The use of pirates in war was quite successful. French corsairs captured 4,000 ships in the War of the Great Alliance (1689–97) (Kaiser and Calafat 2014: 73). Piracy becomes institutionalized in that way. Success follows success. Indeed, piracy is associated with periods of commercial expansion; and not with decline (as noted by Braudel 1949: 883, and nearly everyone else I read). There is a tendency for piracy to become 'persistent' as it develops in tandem with states and increasing commercial activity.

Finally, piracy also 'creates' states in the odd fashion that states that are not recognized as such, but engage in the same piratical actions that others do, may eventually be accepted as legitimate sovereign entities. On the north coast of the Mediterranean we find Christian 'states' engaged in piracy, but on the southern coast we find Muslim pirates who were not recognized as representing states until they forced the Europeans to accept their terms for continued commerce. When European powers realized they could not control Muslim corsairs any longer, they had to extend diplomatic relations, reciprocity of various sorts, and agree on the costs (taxes, tariffs) of doing business. Kaiser and Calafat cite the work of Charles Molloy, an Irish lawyer, who suggested in 1682 that there was different treatment due 'pirates that have *reduced themselves* into a Government of State...' (Kaiser and Calafat 2014: 81, emphasis added). From this perspective, if naval



operations defined as 'piracy' are rampant and unmanageable (by others) a polity might gain formal recognition.

These various processes are not simply of academic interest. The contemporary world continues to evidence instances of state formation and failure, along with contests for legitimacy driven by little more than the desire to use official means to suppress political opponents. Nugent traces this exact incentive in contests for state power in Northern Peru at the start of the twentieth century (Gallant 1999: 99–128). Gallant adopts the term 'military entrepreneur' to help untangle the grammar that emerges from vain attempts to distinguish legitimate vs illegitimate uses of force in the process of state formation and consolidation (Gallant 1999). He notes the rise of piracy and brigandage as the exact result of state formation in places like nineteenth and even early twentieth century Greece. Dispossessed peasants take up arms and become guards or police or armies, fighting off other dispossessed peasants who took up arms and sought to become guards or police or armies by proving superior to the incumbents in such positions. If successful, they supplanted their opponents who then became the 'outlaws'. If not, they remained the 'outlaws'. Gallant predicts increased activity of this sort, particularly in growing semiperipheral actors (1999: 33–5).

State support for piracy is notable in three additional contemporary contexts. Hansen accuses Thailand of ignoring pirates who preyed on refugees in an effort to make their passage more dangerous and therefore provide a disincentive to head in their direction (Hansen 2014: 181). He also points, like Braudel and others, to the desire of states to enhance their markets. Pirates require markets, so long as stolen goods can be bought and sold like any others. States are often happy to enjoy the fruits of a vibrant market even under such circumstances. The extension of the word 'piracy' to include the counterfeiting of branded goods or the illicit copying of various media fits squarely into this genre.

The most interesting of Hansen's examples of states generating piracy is Somalia. Puntland redirected resources toward the capital for the building of various institutions in the hope of consolidating state power. This left local governments bankrupt. Unguarded coasts left the fishing grounds open to overexploitation by foreign fleets (Friman, personal communication, March 2016). Unpaid police facilitated safe havens for unemployed fishermen pursuing a livelihood from piracy. Hansen concludes that places without a history of state oversight often have less piracy than places where states are either trying to take root, or are in decline (2014: 181–2). This is another example of the fact that state-making or state-strengthening is not necessarily the cure for piracy, but may instead be its cause.

### **Piracy and Globalization**

The second half of my argument suggests that pirates do more to extend the reach of global commerce than to constrict it. This is counterintuitive if we begin with the simple assumptions that theft reduces returns to producers and exporters and thereby the incentives to produce or export. But this analysis also assumes that piracy is a serious impediment to export trade, and that the goods seized by pirates are 'lost' to commerce. Both are incorrect. First, the risks of seaborne commerce were so significant that piracy appears to have been only a minor addition to the challenges faced. Weather, navigation, mutiny, inconsistent port charges, as well as theft of cargo while in port, were all hazards to be faced. Heebøll-Holm concludes that 'In commercial history, piracy has been

treated as a “natural” hazard at sea akin to storms ... all other things being equal, this subject was not of great concern for commercial historians, since it was assumed that piracy had little over-all impact on maritime trade’ (Heebøll-Holm 2013: 1).

Piracy facilitated three important globalizing tendencies. The first was the founding of port cities. Cities are a significant locus of social and economic interaction. Pirates founded a number of important cities, and other cities grew by serving as sponsors or havens for piracy. Second, piracy pushed market relations farther into various hinterlands. Pirates sought markets and safe havens. They often found markets for their primary needs and acquisitions in established ports, but they sometimes moved into less well inhabited areas and introduced more advanced market relations and techniques there. Finally, new avenues of both trade and finance emerged as pirate enterprises grew in size and sophistication. (These issues will be considered thematically and not by historical group, as was done in the previous section.)

#### *Port City Formation*

Cities have long served as nodal points for states and civilizations (Wilkinson 1993). They facilitate and expand trade. Pirates are not aimless loners who roam the seas perpetually. They have terrestrial homes and family ties, and require markets for the disposal of their goods, as well as provisions and ship's services. These are found most efficiently in ports. The Vikings were famous for founding port towns to serve their needs. In Ireland, the Vikings founded the first significant ports since the retreat of the Roman Empire caused the few existing fortified Irish landing points to be abandoned (Cooney and Grogan 1994: 220). The most important Viking trading town in Ireland was Dublin, founded in 841 as a mustering point and trade center (Valante 1998: 84). Once settled, raiding was joined by trading with the farms and villages that provisioned the city. Dublin needed its surrounding areas to support the export of ‘bulky essentials’ and ‘raw materials,’ as well as luxury goods to Scandinavia and Europe (Kuhn 1982: 42). There is a formidable list of Viking conquests in England, Scotland, and Wales from bases in Dublin; of Viking settlements outside Ireland; of inter-Viking violence that implicated Irish troops; and of Viking naval operations that included ships from around the Irish Sea (see Forte *et al.* 2005 and Valante 2008: Chapter 5). Cork, Limerick, Wexford, and Waterford (the first town founded solely for seaborne trading purposes) were also Viking enclaves (Valante 2008: 102). Older Irish centers like Armagh were sacked on multiple occasions and re-emerged in an inferior position to the newer Norse trading towns that offered ready access to foreign goods. The Irish did not urbanize. Their small proto-towns (mostly monastic villages) were constant targets since monasteries were repositories of local wealth. Binchy argues that ‘the idea of a town, with a corporate personality distinct from that of the rulers, was quite foreign ... until the Scandinavians set up their “cities”’ (Binchy 1962: 122). Irish urbanization was a Viking creation. Similarly the Vikings established, captured, and/or enriched port cities in Britain and across the channel at the mouths of important rivers in France.

Lesser well-known are the origins of Viking cities in central Europe. As the Vikings moved south to raid and trade along the Volkhov river they founded Ladoga, then Novgorod, which served as the ‘Rus’ capital by 860. As they worked down the Dnieper they founded Kiev, which succeeded Novgorod as the capital in about 900 (Graham-Campbell 1994: 189). All of these port towns were tied together by Viking commerce. Kristiansen (1998) identifies the Viking system as overtaking, deepening and extending

earlier pre-historic trade patterns, and McCormick refers to system as the 'Great Northern Arc' in the *Origins of the European Economy* (2001: 351).

In early modern times the vitality of cities formed or supported by pirates is easy to trace. Perhaps, the most famous example is Algiers. Braudel notes that pirate commerce increased its cohesiveness and the discipline of both city managers and the pirates who called it home. As Algiers globalized, pirates were further attracted to it. Eventually the pirates of Algiers raided all the way to the coast of England where they made alliances with Atlantic pirates (Braudel 1949: 885). As Algiers developed, a hybrid population evolved that extended trade in various directions. Algiers generated large profits from the exploits of the 'corsairs' who forced the Europeans to recognize it as a state. Such urban development models were hardly unique. Mercantilist cities are a staple of the early middle ages both in Europe and elsewhere. For example, Margariti (2008) recounts a similar history in the Red Sea as Aden was blockaded by 'pirates' from Kish in an effort to redirect trade. Braudel concludes that 'Behind piracy on the seas acted cities and city-states' (cited in Tilly 1985: 173).

#### *Extending Markets to the Hinterlands*

As states and commerce grew, so did piracy and the need to find safe havens. Port cities could be dangerous and expensive. Pirates often moved to the hinterland, extending and deepening market relations as they went. In Ireland, the very term 'market' had not existed prior to the arrival of the Vikings (Binchy 1962: 122). Ireland's first mint was established in Dublin in 997 under Viking rule (Wallace 2005: 837). Pirates seeking to establish themselves in Madagascar chose to settle on the sparsely populated (and politically uncontested) eastern coast. They bought food from more established communities to the west, built fortifications, introduced new goods from their plunder, and spread commercial expertise. Though they had superior weapons, they wanted a secure market and peaceful relations so they worked amicably with local rulers and eventually married the daughters of local elites (Hansen 2014: 182; Hooper 2011: 227–228). The pirate communities ultimately failed, but the organizational and commercial lessons learned led to the consolidation of Malagasy states and the growing sophistication of their trade relations. Pirate heritage was viewed as a source of political legitimacy on the island, as well as commercial legitimacy in relations with other western Asian or European powers (Hooper 2011).

The nature of this process is best described by Thomas Gallant (1999). In peripheral areas like nineteenth-century Greece, the transition from peasant subsistence farming to production and exportation from large estates generated banditry on land and piracy at sea. Each periodically sought shelter in areas beyond the reach of their opponents, marketizing those areas and bringing additional wealth. This was a symbiotic, not a parasitic relationship. Local merchants received an influx of goods and specie, creating new regional market centers and entrepôts. Gallant concludes, 'In sum, bandits and pirates, either by acting as merchants themselves or by introducing merchants into rural communities, hastened substantially the process of capitalist penetration of the countryside' (1999: 39). As weak states formed, pirates were engaged by more established polities to prey upon new entrants. Pirates could earn quick and easy wealth, and were sometimes further absorbed into the more dominant states to provide protection (as with Spain in the 1810s and 1820s, when the state could not police its coasts). Markets grew and con-

solidated as a result. Gallant concludes: '...illegal networks of armed predators played a crucial role in the spread and global triumph of capitalism' (Gallant 1999: 25).

#### *Global Expansion of Trade and Finance*

Pirates played a key role in the process of extending global trade and finance. By the end of the 900s the Vikings had circumnavigated Europe from Scandinavia, moved west into the Atlantic, south to the Mediterranean, and then east to the Italian peninsula. From Scandinavia they also moved south to Byzantium and into the Mediterranean heading west. Resources were drawn and traded from all the surrounding areas. So much silver made its way into Viking hands that it taxed the production capacity of the great Afghan mines and led to shortages in the Caliphate (Mitchiner 1987: 144). Silver coins were debased, in part to reduce the outflow of silver. Instability, likely aided by the silver crisis, led to disorder and the decline of the Samanids (*Ibid.*: 146). On the other side of the trade, silver flowed to Scandinavia in such quantities that it monetized the economy and helped transform 'money' from a mechanism for providing gifts or acquiring prestigious commodities to a mature medium of exchange in a more differentiated and advanced economic structure (Samson 1991). Expeditions no longer aimed at acquiring small individual hoards, but became a means to assure a continual (and necessary) supply of silver. Put differently, the drive for accumulation was becoming ceaseless.

The distances covered by commodities like silver also increased. Some 35 per cent of coins arriving in Scandinavia in the Viking period were oriental. As the Vikings were engaged with trade in Russia, and via Scandinavia through England, Ireland, and Iceland, these economies also felt the impact. The Russian trade expanded to include peoples farther away, even in the arctic north where an active fur trade was generated by the availability of silver for exchange (Noonan 1997: 142). McCormick argues that in the eighth and ninth centuries 'the pace quickens' in the economies of the south, the northern arc, Byzantium, and the vast Muslim economy. '...In the course of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, these different trading worlds began to intersect in new ways and new places' (McCormick 2001: 146; 612). Silver from Islamic areas began to show up in ninth-century France and England (*Ibid.*).

New classes of entrepreneurs emerged as well. As the ninth and tenth centuries wore on, the Viking population of Kiev began to merge with local Slavic peoples. There is a debate over whether the Vikings alone were referred to as the 'Rus' (founders of Russia) or whether this term gained greater use as the groups began to merge. Nearly all significant differences had disappeared by the start of the eleventh century except for the fact that Rus commerce with Byzantium was almost entirely monopolized by those of direct Scandinavian ancestry (McCormick 1999: 146). The rate of assimilation was apparently dependent upon occupational specialization.

The geographic extension of market relations emerges in several other contexts. Piracy opened new commodity chains for goods taken as prizes, and generated income from some unfortunate new activities. Mediterranean piracy in the early modern period introduced ransoming and gave rise to ports cities in Italy that specialized in the holding, taking of payment, and returning of hostages captured at sea (Braudel 1949: 887). Pirates were often the first to travel long-distances and assess far-off locations by raiding and trading (Scammell 1992). Some of these efforts were enhanced by various kinds of political and financial support, as noted above with regard to Caribbean buccaneering.

In a most interesting chapter in the history of piracy, Caribbean pirates chartered by the English and based in the American colonies found themselves in legal trouble when the English felt secure enough to dispense with their services. As the pirates became targets for military action, some fled to other venues (Burgess 2014). Once again, we need to understand that this was not a case of random wandering. Financiers in the American colonies provided capital to help pirates establish themselves in the Indian Ocean. The pirates of Madagascar were among those funded by capital interests in New York and other American colonial cities (Hooper 2011: 222 and 229). Funds flowed back to New York and helped strengthen the new city, while generating interest in separation from 'anti-pirate' Britain (Burgess 2014).

When the British suppressed piracy in Madagascar, they did so not to extend trading relations but to consolidate them. They wanted to return commerce to accepted British routes. They also sought to end the slave trade. Much is made of British attempts to end slaving. In the case of Madagascar, however, the logic was far from idealistic. Slavery was thought to stand in the way of access to other valuable trade commodities that required local labor. Hence its suppression would serve the dual purpose of increasing the production of traditional tropical goods in Madagascar, and forward them along older trade routes that served the Empire (Hooper 2011: 240). From this perspective, the pirates of Madagascar were the agents of globalization, while the British sought to roll back that expansion.

### **Conclusion**

The dominant legal and popular model of piracy comes to us from Cicero, who argued that pirates were a scourge to be eradicated by any means necessary. Pirates are said to stand in the way of civilization, weakening polities, and keeping us isolated and separated. But Cicero's famous statement ends up being little more than a popular justification for Roman imperialism. Less well known, and perhaps more accurate, is the formulation of a dialogue between Alexander the Great and a pirate attributed to St. Augustine:

Kingdoms without justice are similar to robber bands. And so if justice is left out, what are kingdoms except great robber bands? ... For it was an elegant and true reply that was made to Alexander the Great by a certain pirate whom he had captured. When the king asked him what he was thinking of, that he should molest the sea, he said with defiant independence: 'The same as you when you molest the world! Since I do this with a little ship I am called a pirate. You do it with a great fleet and are called an emperor' (cited in Heebøll-Holm 2013: 4).

The story speaks to the common origins of pirates, brigands, and those who eventually constitute the state. Tilly might suggest that the point of the story is that we consider the implications of that common ancestry and (hopefully) their subsequent divergence. The story also helps us avoid the myth that piracy leads to state-making only when one side (legitimate actors) seeks to control the other side (criminals). The historical record suggests a far more complicated situation. Not only did states and pirates emerge from the same stock, piracy plays a positive role in state formation and consolidation across geographic and historical contexts: founding settlements, consolidating regions, accumulating wealth, increasing market activity, providing resources and ex-

pertise to their home regions, augmenting the military, or even earning formal recognition for their nations. These are actions that strengthen polities and help tied them together, and that have done so from the Classical period.

The founding, strengthening, or fostering of major port cities; the extension of markets into various hinterlands; and the broadening of global trade and finance; are textbook elements of the process we refer to as globalization. As a result, attempts to bound a given social system, necessary for the study of globalization over the long term, must beware of any unintended terrestrial bias. Chase-Dunn *et al.* (forthcoming) argue for a 'place-centric approach' that begins with 'five adjacent autonomous territorial polities' in part as 'all known interpolity systems display systemic interaction among directly adjacent territorial polities.' As interactions diminish over distance, systemicity weakens and may become insignificant. But land borders are not the same as the coasts of navigable waterways. There are no interceding polities to contend with, and systemic connections may be enhanced by geography instead of being retarded. Of the four nested systemic interaction networks Chase-Dunn *et al.* identify, piracy has been noted above to have significant implications for prestige goods, political/military, and information networks.

Examples of the significant expansion of political/military networks because of piracy are found through the classical Mediterranean world of both Greece and Rome. Britain, Ireland, and much of Central Europe are integrated by Scandinavians. Various states of the early modern Mediterranean (both European and North African), and the later Caribbean, are likewise integrated into broader political/military networks. Examples of fundamental social alterations brought on by pirate-driven prestige goods networks are manifest at all points along the route that sent silver from the far reaches of the Samanid Caliphate (where political instability ensued), to Scandinavia (where the beginnings of market capitalism and state formation was the result). A similar process on a much smaller scale is evidenced in Madagascar. Finally, information about distant places and new socio-political processes were spread by pirate forays from Europe and the Americas into the Indian Ocean and farther east into Asia. This process continued through the nineteenth century. Direct contact, and not just trade, drove many of those changes. These areas were not terrestrially contiguous, but piracy brought them together as if they were.

Pirate activity across maritime frontiers will inevitably create a 'fuzzy zone' in the same way that Hall (forthcoming) traces interactions across various forms of terrestrial frontiers. But pirate activity should not derail the important work of the project to identify systemic boundaries. One alternative is to look at maritime boundaries in a different light. Contiguity might be amended to include direct relations across water. Other forms of capturing systemicity might also be adopted. Chase-Dunn *et al.* identify an alternative method of understanding systemicity proposed in work by Robert Hanneman *et al.* (forthcoming). Network analysis is used to identify regions and their various attributes. While this method is likely to be difficult to adopt given the need for more specific data, it seems better suited to dealing with those challenges posed by piracy. The two perspectives are compatible, and results could be compared to adjust for any terrestrial bias in the project to identify systemic boundaries.

### Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Christopher Chase-Dunn, Richard Friman, Thomas Gallant, Thomas Hall, Hiroko Inoue, Mary Valante, and Matthew Weinert, for various sources, insights, feedback, and unpublished materials. The faults of this paper remain very much my own.

### REFERENCES

- Amirell, St., and Muller, L. 2014. Introduction: Persistent Piracy in World History. In Amirell, S., and Muller, L. (eds.), *Persistent Piracy: Maritime Violence and State-Formation in Global Historical Perspective* (pp. 1–23). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Anderson, J. L. 1995. Piracy and World History: An Economic Perspective on Maritime Predation. *Journal of World History* 6 (2): 175–99.
- Binchy, D. A. 1962. The Passing of the Old Order. In Ó Cuív, B. (ed.), *Proceedings of the First International Congress of Celtic Studies, Dublin 1959* (pp. 119–132). Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies.
- Braudel, F. 1973 [1949]. *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*. Volumes 1 and 2. Translated by Sian Reynolds. New York: Harper Colophon Books.
- Burgess, D. 2014. *The Politics of Piracy*. Lebanon NH: ForeEdge.
- Chase-Dunn, Ch., Inoue, H., and Neal, T. Forthcoming. High Bar Rules of Thumb for Time-Mapping Systemic Interaction Networks. In Chase-Dunn, Ch., and Inoue, H. (eds.), *Systemic Boundaries: Time Mapping Globalization since the Bronze Age*. New York: Springer.
- Cooney, G., and Grogan, E. 1994. *Irish Prehistory: a Social Perspective*. Dublin: Wordwell.
- Denemark, R. Forthcoming. The Irish and the Vikings on the Edge of Central Civilization. In Chase-Dunn, Ch., and Inoue, H. (eds.), *Systemic Boundaries: Time Mapping Globalization since the Bronze Age*. New York: Springer.
- Denemark, R., Hoffmann, M., and Yonten, H. N.d. *The Foundations and Practice of Cross-Faith Multilateral Treaty-Making*. Unpublished manuscript.
- deSouza, Ph. 2014. Piracy in Classical Antiquity. In Amirell, S., and Muller, L. (eds.), *Persistent Piracy: Maritime Violence and State-Formation in Global Historical Perspective* (pp. 24–50). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Forte, A., Oram, R., and Pedersen, F. 2005. *Viking Empires*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gallant, Th. 1999. Brigandage, Piracy, Capitalism, and State-Formation: Transnational Crime from a Historical World-Systems Perspective. In Heyman, J. (ed.), *States and Illegal Practices* (pp. 25–61). Oxford: Berg.
- Graham-Campbell, J. 1994. *Cultural Atlas of the Viking World*. New York: Facts on File.
- Hall, Th. Forthcoming. Bounding the Fuzzy Zone at the Edges of World-Systems. In Chase-Dunn, Ch., and Inoue, H. (eds.), *Systemic Boundaries: Time Mapping Globalization since the Bronze Age*. New York: Springer.
- Hanneman, R., Inoue, H., and Chase-Dunn, Ch. Forthcoming. Network Boundaries and System-ness. In Chase-Dunn, Ch., and Inoue, H. (eds.), *Systemic Boundaries: Time Mapping Globalization since the Bronze Age*. New York: Springer.

- Hansen, S. 2014. Piracy, Security and State Formation in the Early 21<sup>st</sup> Century. In Aeirell, S., and Muller, L. (eds.), *Persistent Piracy: Maritime Violence and State-Formation in Global Historical Perspective* (pp. 175–188). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Heebøll-Holm, Th. 2013. *Ports, Piracy, and Maritime War: Piracy in the English Channel and the Atlantic, c. 1280 – c. 1330*. Leiden: Brill.
- Holm, P. 1986. The Slave Trade of Dublin, Ninth to Twelfth Centuries. *Peritia* 5: 317–145.
- Hooper, J. 2011. Pirates and Kings: Power on the Soles of Early Modern Madagascar and the Indian Ocean. *Journal of World History* 22 (2): 215–242.
- Kaiser, W., and Calafat, G. 2014. Violence, Protection and Commerce: Corsairing and ars piratica in the Early Modern Mediterranean. In Aeirell, S., and Muller, L. (eds.), *Persistent Piracy: Maritime Violence and State-Formation in Global Historical Perspective* (pp. 69–92). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Keynes, J. M. 1930. *Treatise on Money*. 2 vols. New York: Harcourt Brace.
- Kristiansen, K. 1998. *Europe before History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Krag, C. 2003. The Early Unification of Norway. In Helle, K. (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Scandinavia*. Vol. 1 (pp. 184–201). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kuhn, J. 1982. Trade and Settlement. *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* 112: 18–50.
- Lindkvist, Th. 2003. Kings and Provinces in Sweden. In Helle, K. (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Scandinavia*. Vol. 1 (pp. 221–234). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- List, F. 1885. *The National System of Political Economy*. London: Longmans, Green.
- Margariti, R. 2008. Mercantile Networks, Port Cities, and ‘Pirate’ States: Conflict and Cooperation in the Indian Ocean World of Trade before the 16<sup>th</sup> Century. *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 51 (4): 543–577.
- McCormick, M. 2001. *Origins of the European Economy: Communications and Commerce, AD 300–900*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mitchiner, M. 1987. Evidence for Viking-Islamic Trade provided by Samanid Silver Coinage. *East and West* 37 (1/4): 139–150.
- Noonan, Th. 1997. Scandinavians in European Russia. In Sawyer, P. (ed.), *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Vikings* (pp. 134–155). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Price, N. 2014. Ship-Men and Slaughter-Wolves: Pirate Polities in the Viking Age. In Aeirell, S., and Muller, L. (eds.), *Persistent Piracy: Maritime Violence and State-Formation in Global Historical Perspective* (pp. 51–68). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Samson, R. 1991. Fighting with Silver: Rethinking Trading, Raiding, and Hoarding. In Samson, R. (ed.), *Social Approaches to Viking Studies* (pp. 123–133). Glasgow: Cruithne Press.
- Scammel, G. 1992. European Exiles, Renegades, and Outlaws and the Maritime Economy of Asia c. 1500–1750. *Modern Asian Studies* 26: 641–662.
- Skovgaard-Peterson, I. 2003. The Making of the Danish Kingdom. In Helle, K. (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Scandinavia*. Vol. 1 (pp. 168–183). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Thomson, J. 1994. *Mercenaries, Pirates & Sovereigns*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.



- Tilly, Ch. 1985. War Making and State Making as Organized Crime. In Evans, P., Rueschemeyer, D., and Skocpol, T. (eds.), *Bringing the State Back In* (pp. 169–191). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Valante, M. 1998. Reassessing the Irish ‘Monastic Town’. *Irish Historical Studies* 31: 1–18.
- Valante, M. 2008. *The Vikings in Ireland: Settlement, Trade and Urbanization*. Dublin: Four Courts Press.
- Wallace, P. 2005. The Archaeology of Ireland's Viking-age Towns. In Croinin, D. (ed.), *A New History of Ireland*. Vol. 1 (pp. 814–841). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Wilkinson, D. 1991. Cores, Peripheries, and Civilizations. In Chase-Dunn, Ch., and Hall, Th. (eds.), *Core/Periphery Relations in Precapitalist Worlds* (pp. 113–166). Boulder CO: Westview Press.
- Wilkinson, D. 1993. Cities, Civilizations, and Oikumenes II. *Comparative Civilizations Review* 27 (Fall): 51–87.