The Problem of Violence

Where we've been…

- Unit 1: Governance
- Unit 2: Wealth, poverty and inequality
  - The causes of redistribution
  - The role of ethnicity in public goods provision
  - Colonialism, geography and institutions in creating wealth
  - Where "good" institutions came from in England
  - The causes and consequences of foreign aid

Where we've been in skill sessions…

- Skills 1: Measuring and describing
- Skills 2: Generating theories
- Skills 3: Causal relationships

Where we're going…

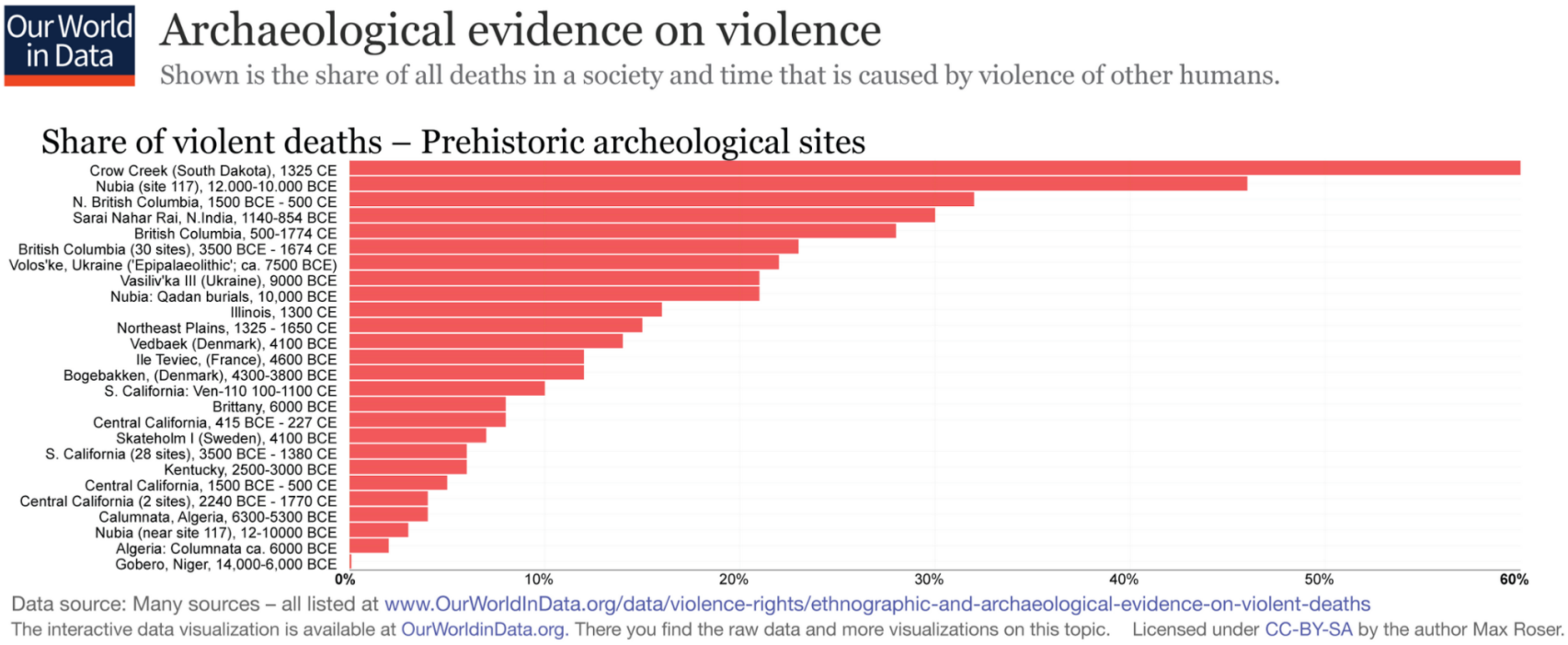
- Unit 3: Conflict and Peace
- Skill 4: Testing hypotheses with experiments
- Skill 5: Using evidence in making policy recommendations

Today's agenda

1. Violence in the state of nature
2. Solving violence with the state
3. Violence in the *international* state of nature

   → Develop bargaining and war more on 4/3

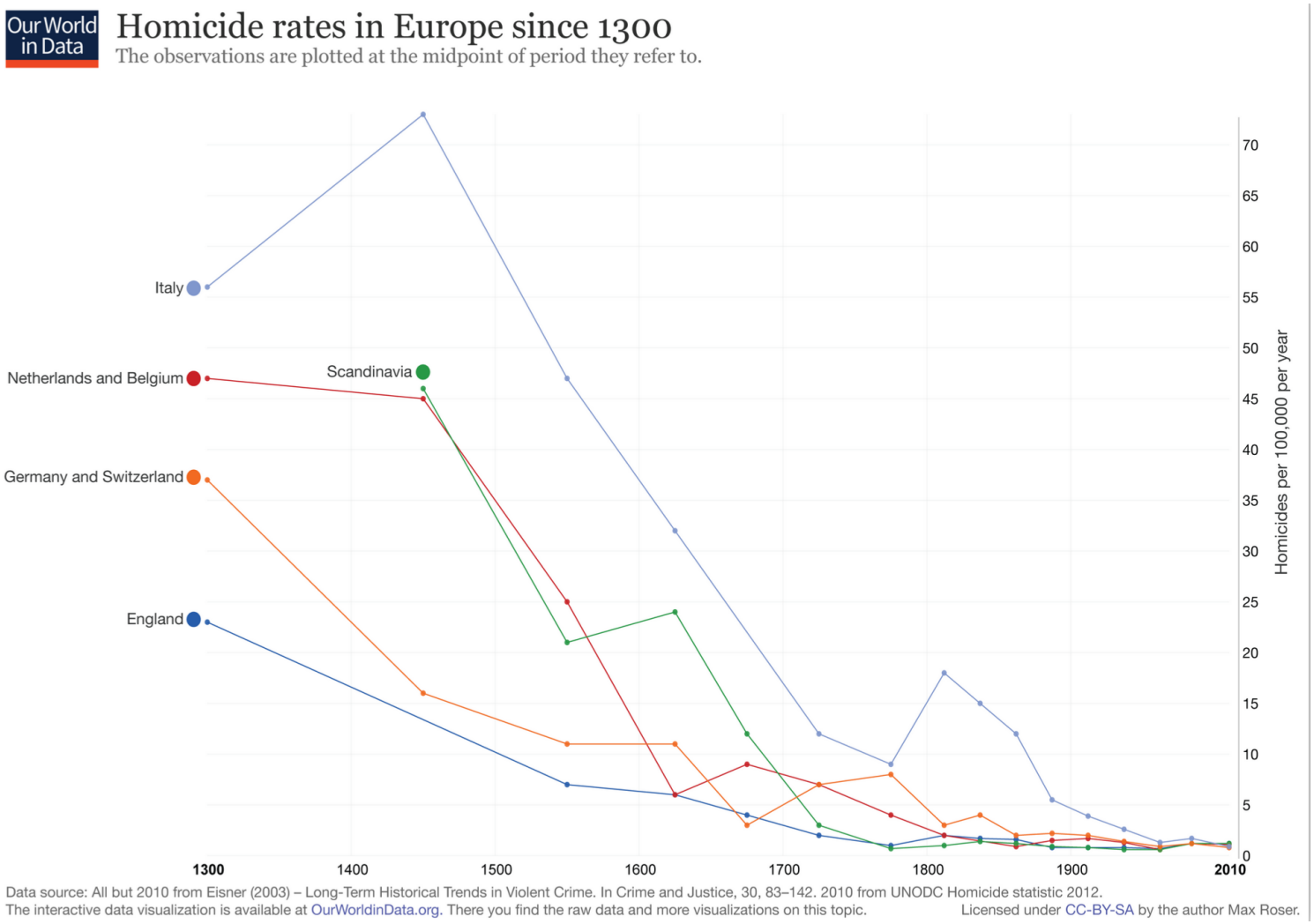
Violence was prevalent in human history



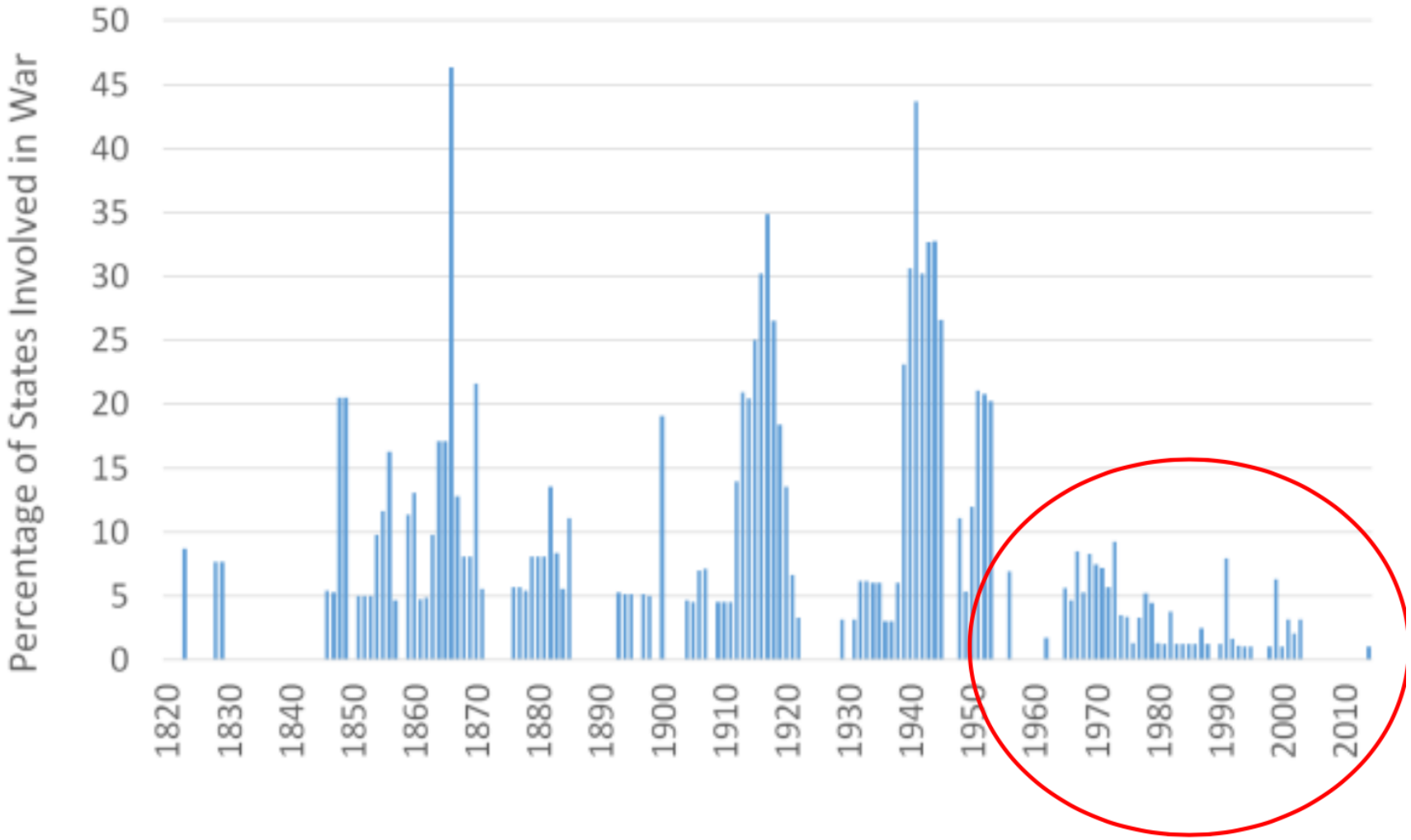
Evidence: bioarchaeological studies



Homicide rates in Europe since 1300



Interstate war is declining 1816-2000



Source: Meredith Reid Sarkees and Frank Wayman, *Resort to War: 1816 – 2007* (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2010). Updated to 2014 by author.

"Today we may be living in the most peaceable era in our species' existence."

– Steven Pinker*

Better Angels of our Nature

* Note: Pinker is not without personal controversy.
And: rich scholarly debate on his evidence and claims.

Our question:

Why?

And:

Why does war still exist despite this decline?

Early human life '*nasty, brutish and short*'



"Look, life is nasty, brutish, and short, but you knew that when you became a caveman."

The Prisoner's Dilemma (PD)

Many human interactions are characterized by a particular structure of choices and payoffs to making those choices.

The PD is a decision-making situation in which two actors, acting in their own best interest, fail to produce the optimal outcome.

The Classic Prisoner's Dilemma (PD)



The Classic Prisoner's Dilemma (PD)

- Two actors ("players")
- Each can make one of two choices ("play one of two strategies")
  - (1) Stay silent ("cooperate")
  - (2) Rat on your friend ("defect")

Happens just this once, never see each other again, no additional considerations.

The Classic Prisoner's Dilemma (PD)

Four possible outcomes and their "payoffs":

(1) You stay silent; your friend stays silent

→ Police give you both a minimal sentence

(2) You rat your friend; your friend stays silent

→ Police set you free, friend gets a long sentence

(3) You stay silent; your friend rats you out

→ Police set your friend free, you get a long sentence

(4) You rat your friend; your friend rats you out

→ You both get a medium sentence

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What do you do? Stay silent (cooperate) OR rat (defect)?

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Ratting is always better *no matter what your friend does*.

The PD as a game matrix

Standard prisoner's dilemma payoff matrix

A \ B	B stays silent	B betrays
A stays silent	–2 / –2	0 / –10
A betrays	–10 / 0	–5 / –5

Equilibrium outcome is rat-rat (defect-defect, betray-betray).

Many situations resemble a PD

- Sharing/Favors
- Exchange of goods/services
- Investment
- Environmental protection
- Cartel pricing

How can cooperation occur in a PD?

(1) Reputation/Repeated Interactions

Reputation and repeated interactions



Solving the PD with repeated interactions

- Axelrod: Cooperation can be sustained when the PD is played repeatedly.
- Actors can condition their current strategy choice in a given PD game, by how the other actor played in past iterations of the game.
- Example: Tit-for-Tat Strategy
  - Do what your opponent did in the past.
- Intuition: Reputation developed over past play matters for the possibility of current/future cooperation

How can cooperation occur in a PD?

(1) Reputation/Repeated Interactions
(2) Genetic preference

Genetic preference



How can cooperation occur in a PD?

(1) Reputation/Repeated Interactions
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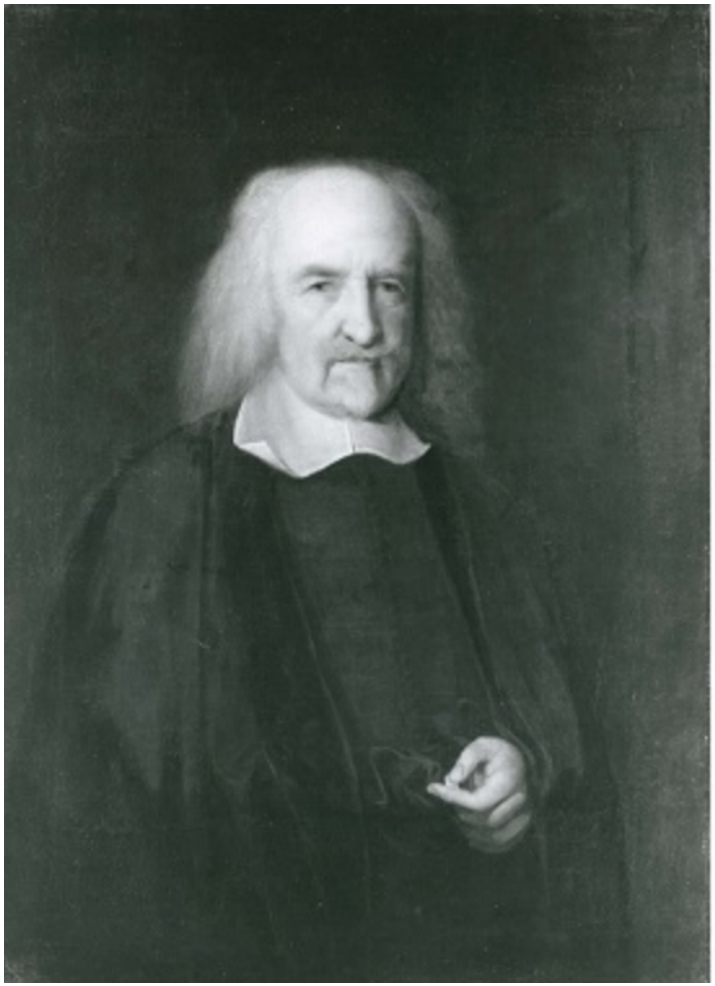
→ Cooperation is only sustainable in small-medium groups.

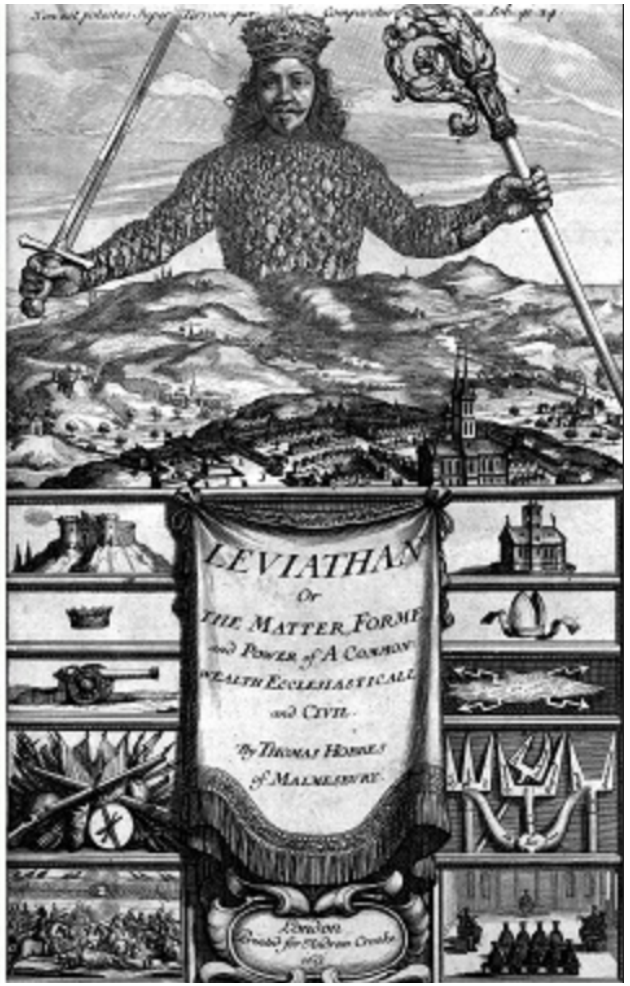
→ How can cooperation generalize?

The state as a solution to violence

- What is the state?
- Definition from Max Weber:
  - "The entity that monopolizes the legitimate use of violence in a given territory."
- The entity that uses the threat of violence to reduce violence.
- Facilitates investment and exchange.
- Produces prosperity while reducing violence.

The state is a protection racket





War made states (& the state made war)



War made states (& the state made war)



War made states (& the state made war)


Caledonian Ocean
Norwegians
Sweden
Sakala
Novgorod
Mann
German Ocean
Curonians
Vladimir-
Suzdal
Semigallians
Baltic Sea
Scotland
Denmark
Litua
Smolensk
Sudovians
Polotsk
Murom-
Ryazan
Pomerelia
Chernigov
Connaught
Greater
Poland
Masovia
Mordvins
Pinsk
England
Novgorod-
Seversk
Burtas
Lower
Silesia
Lesser
Poland
Britannic Ocean
Holy
Empire
Galicja-
Volhynia
Pereyaslav-
Rus
Holy Roman
Empire
Kiev
Oghuz
France
Cumans
Hungary
Cantabric Sea
Black Sea
Alania
León
Navarre
Aragón
Papal
States
Venice
Raška
Bulgaria
Georgia
Castile
Erzurum
Portugal
Pisa
Rûm
Roman
Empire
Kharput
Azerba
Amida
Ahlat
New
Armenia
Sinjar
Jazira
Mosul
Almohads
Mediterranean Sea
Banu
Ghaniya
Baghdad
Copyright Euratlas 2009
461.02Km
Scale: 3073.49 meters per pixel
Ayyubids

War made states (& the state made war)



War made states (& the state made war)

