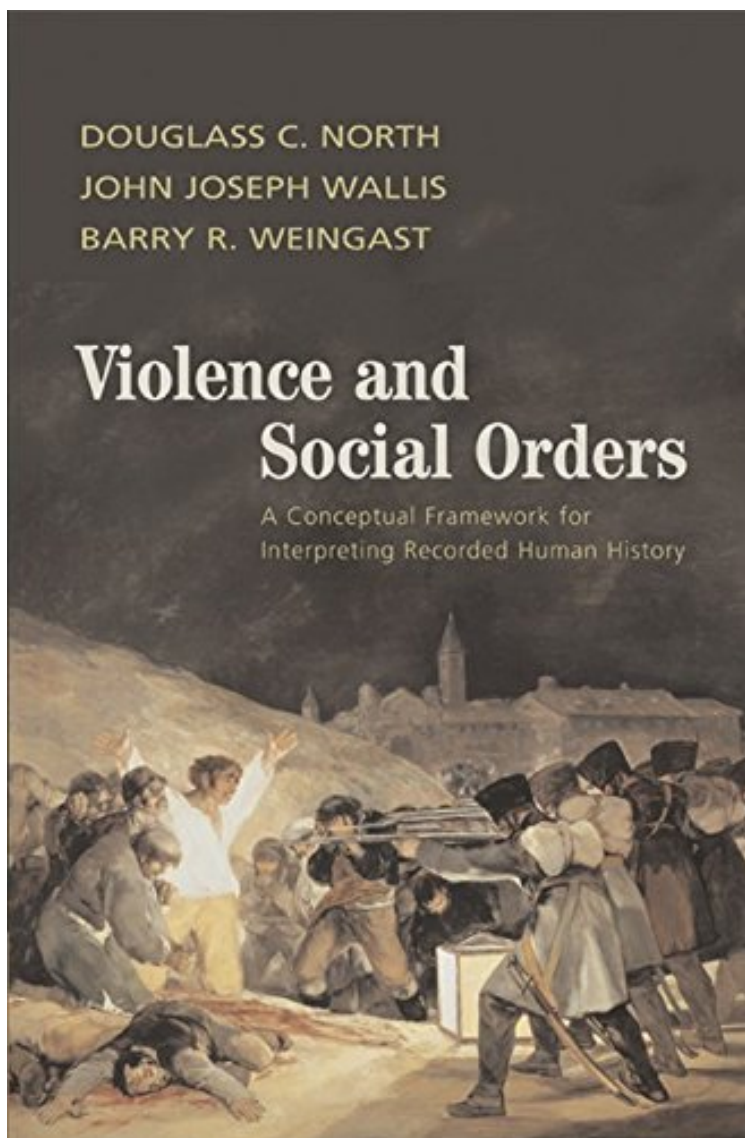


[Mobile book] Violence and Social Orders: A Conceptual Framework for Interpreting Recorded Human History

Violence and Social Orders: A Conceptual Framework for Interpreting Recorded Human History

Douglass C. North, John Joseph Wallis, Barry R. Weingast
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Douglass C. North, John Joseph Wallis, Barry R. Weingast : Violence and Social Orders: A Conceptual Framework for Interpreting Recorded Human History before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Violence and Social Orders: A Conceptual Framework for Interpreting Recorded Human History:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Must Read for Students of History By Bruce Saunders This book addresses similar subject matter to *Why Nations Fail* and *The Origins of Political Order*. All three address the historical development of societies and what factors affect their prosperity. All three books provide tremendous insight into historical reasons for economic disparity across societies. What sets *Violence and Social Orders* apart are somewhat different assumptions; for example, the authors conceptualize societal elites as made up of coalitions, rather than being single actors. They also provide detailed descriptions of stages of societal development and a thorough articulation of the conditions involved in transitioning societies from one stage to the next. For example, they describe three "doorstep" conditions required to move a society from what they call a mature natural state to an open access social order. The second assumption - the creation of perpetually lived organizations - was particularly eye opening. This is a demanding read. Three authors has resulted in a sometimes challenging prose style. And the level of detail can be daunting, for example the in-depth analysis of 500 years of English Land Law. But it is well worth it. *Violence and Social Orders* offers fascinating insight to any student of history; it will help the reader understand why seemingly dysfunctional societies continue to persist today.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Very well written, though not as unique as proposed By A. Menon *Violence and Social Orders* discusses the stages of political economy and the process of evolution of the stages. The authors outline 3 stages, foraging stage, the natural stage and the open access stage. Foraging orders (not discussed in any detail) pertain to human society in the hunter gatherer stage in which relationships were kin based and constrained to small groups. Natural orders, which have many stages, are defined by the balance of power of elites. And open access orders are societies whose social contracts are defined by impersonal rights. *Violence and Social Orders* discusses human history by analyzing the transition and periodicity of these social orders. It discusses many case examples and examines what the stresses and strains are that each face. Perhaps not as original as the authors describe, the account is nonetheless well argued and very readable. Written history has mainly been recorded in a period that the authors describe as a natural state. The natural state they argue formed through the cooperation of elites to reduce violence in exchange for power sharing. One can easily imagine the example of powerful small group leaders agreeing to allow each other to focus on productivity in exchange for cease fires. In such situations, the authors contend that the absence of violence does not imply its lack of presence in the indirect but just as important manifestation - the threat of violence. The authors generally use specific case examples to highlight their points. Within natural states the authors spend much time discussing the difference between the elites as individuals vs elites as being within a social group of entitled power. This difference, though subtle is very substantive and the transition from the individual being the focus to the status of the person being of focus is the required transition for natural orders to make before they have the preconditions to move to open access orders. The case examples of England is extensively studied and continually offered as a guide to how these processes unfolded in England in particular. Many examples are used both for the disintegration of natural states as well as the transition to open access orders. For the disintegration of the Carolingian period as well as Aztec civilization are used. The momentum of progress of the English social contract is analyzed with details provided from the bureaucratizing of the navy to the growth of the industrial sector and the wealth arising from it reducing the power of landed gentry. The authors continually make the point that progress is not inevitable and the rights of the individual can move both forward and backwards and have done in history numerous times. *Violence and the Social Order* is a discussion of how institutions are at the heart of what makes societies different. One needs institutional arrangements that support enforcement of the social contract for it to be realized. If courts don't enforce the rights of the impersonal individual then law by decree is ineffective. As a result, democracy is no guarantee of open access for its citizens. The authors write well and make important points - though I think the emphasis on violence is a bit forced in the title and generally the authors focus on political economy. Rights to the means of production cannot be taken merely by force and the more appropriate focus should be on power. One can say it's the violence and the threat of violence and it is not wrong, but it seems misapplied phrasing. The lessons of the book are similar to other literature, society is more able to adapt when rent seeking is minimal and entrepreneurship is maximal which is necessitated by an open access system. The analysis of how we can move between regimes is very interesting and the case examples are illuminating, but I don't think the arguments are as groundbreaking as the authors consider them.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Some powerful ideas but no recommendations By Dmitry Baranov This book brings up several powerful ideas, and the most important one is that open access order cannot be exported. Instead, each country's elites may (or may not) figure out that open access order is more beneficial to them. Next, there is no natural "progress" towards open access orders, and, in fact, most countries in the world still have limited-access orders. Finally, those lucky and smart countries which shifted into open access order and got tremendous benefits from this transition, should not take it for granted. However, the book fails to provide practical recommendations and could probably have less pages.

All societies must deal with the possibility of violence, and they do so in different ways. This book integrates the problem of violence into a larger social science and historical framework, showing how economic and political behavior are closely linked. Most societies, which we call natural states, limit violence by political manipulation of the economy to create privileged interests. These privileges limit the use of violence by powerful individuals, but doing so

hinders both economic and political development. In contrast, modern societies create open access to economic and political organizations, fostering political and economic competition. The book provides a framework for understanding the two types of social orders, why open access societies are both politically and economically more developed, and how some 25 countries have made the transition between the two types.

"This much-anticipated, pioneering, sweeping millennial history explains how the evolution of impersonal and standardized treatment, a rule of law for elites, perpetual forms of organization, and consolidated political control of the military combined to produce the 'open access' logic of rent erosion and economic growth often observed in the modern world. Emphatically multi-causal in approach, the book will persuade all those who want to analyze the complex interactions of beliefs, institutions, and organizations that they have to deal with its arguments." - James Alt, Harvard University

"Why do we obey laws, adhere to rules, and conform to norms? Doug North, John Wallis, and Barry Weingast offer a simple, powerful, and compelling answer - disorder and the violence it entails. This book is must-reading for anyone serious about the origins of social order and the reasons for its disintegration." - Stephen Ansolabehere, Harvard University

"A masterful and revealing interpretation of how 'nasty, brutish, and short' became healthy, wealthy, and peaceful and why the transformation occurred in some nations but not in others." - Claudia Goldin, Harvard University

"Violence and Social Orders is a thought-provoking, pioneering, and ambitious study. It should be read by anyone interested in the institutional underpinning of development." - Avner Greif, Stanford University

"This book presents a powerful new theory of the interaction between law, politics, and the structure of power. It is sure to be influential for decades to come." - Daniel Klerman, University of Southern California

"Why are poor countries poor and rich countries rich? North, Wallis, and Weingast explain why - it's the politics stupid! A compelling book for anyone who wants to understand the world." - James A. Robinson, Harvard University

"A major work of great ambition, this book will become a standard reference in any informed discussion on how societies make the transition from anarchy to democracy, and from poverty to wealth." - Dani Rodrik, Harvard University

"Violence and Social Orders expands institutional economics into new realms, presenting an innovative perspective on the organization of pre-modern societies. Anthropologists and other social scientists will find much to think about in this important book." - Michael E. Smith, Arizona State University

"If anyone is iconic in the economic history world Doug North certainly qualifies.... This time, North is joined by two prominent and strong-minded co-authors, John Wallis and Barry Weingast. Their collaboration has been fruitful.... Above all, the notion that one cannot simply 'get rid' of the superficial exterior of natural states and thereby uncover the beating heart of an open access order yearning to be free is the book's most important idea, and profound." - EH.Net

"...an immodestly titled and immoderately stimulating book..." - Jonathan Rauch, The National Journal

"While there is still much more work to be done in understanding how to get from here to there, the authors' insights regarding the control of violence in natural, limited access societies versus modern, open-access societies are nonetheless major contributions.... North, Wallis, and Weingast's analysis of violence and its suppression provides a simple, straightforward path to understanding both authoritarianism and transitional violence." - D. Roderick Kiewiet, California Institute of Technology, Journal of Economic History

"A demanding but rewarding work, with intriguing echoes of Marx.... Highly recommended." - Choice

"With bravado, abandon, and great learning, North, Wallis, and Weingast have produced an excellent read-a book that is intriguing, entertaining, irritating, and provocative. Violence and Social Orders is an important book that deserves a wide readership. Its concepts will shape academic discourse and its arguments in the fields of economic history and development studies." - Robert Bates, Harvard University, Journal of Economic Literature

"... strong, persuasive ... Anyone interested in development, economic history, the analysis of institutions or the idea of a generalized social science would do well to read this book. ... what is new in the book is the way its authors have connected, systematized and synthesized these previously disparate ideas to produce the limited-/open-access framework with which they propose to interpret human history. Their framework proves strikingly effective at this task. ... the new social science paradigm it presents is compelling and worthy of wide attention." - Mark Holden, International Affairs

About the Author Douglass C. North is co-recipient of the 1993 Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Science. He is Spencer T. Olin Professor in Arts and Sciences at Washington University, St Louis and Bartlett Burnap Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University. John Joseph Wallis is Professor of Economics at the University of Maryland and a research associate at the National Bureau of Economic Research. Barry R. Weingast is Ward C. Krebs Family Professor in the Department of Political Science and a Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University.