

Wettbewerb zwischen Staaten:
Eine Theoriegeschichte
von David Hume bis heute

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Zwei Arten des Wettbewerbs zwischen Staaten:

1. Wettbewerb durch Mobilität zwischen den Staaten
(Albert O. Hirschman: „exit“)
2. Wettbewerb durch Vergleiche zwischen den Staaten
(Pierre Salmon: „yardstick competition“)

Johannes Althusius

Politica Methodice Digesta (1603)

„So bringen mächtige, ausgedehnte und an Bevölkerungszahl große Reiche viele Laster hervor, durch die sie allmählich zerstört werden ... (Eine große Zahl von Menschen) lässt sich ... nicht so leicht und gut regieren und auch die Eintracht kann unter so vielen ebenso wenig aufrechterhalten werden wie die gute Ordnung und Gesetzlichkeit ... Daraus lässt sich schließen, dass ein mittelgroßes Gemeinwesen das Beste und Beständigste ist ... So das Römische Gemeinwesen, das, als es mittelgroß war, viele Laster nicht kannte. Umgekehrt nahmen die Laster überhand, als es größer und bevölkerungsreicher wurde“.

David Hume

Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences
(1742)

„Nothing is more favourable to the rise of politeness and learning than a number of neighbouring and independent states connected together by commerce and policy... Where a number of neighbouring states have a great intercourse of arts and commerce, their mutual jealousy keeps them from receiving too lightly the law from each other in matters of taste and reasoning and makes them examine every work of art with the greatest care and accuracy”.

David Hume (op.cit.)

„Greece was a cluster of little principalities which soon became republics; and being united by their near neighbourhood and by the ties of the same language and interest, they entered into the closest intercourse of commerce and learning. There concurred a happy climate, a soil not unfertile and a most harmonious and comprehensive language so that every circumstance among that people seemed to favour the rise of the arts and sciences. Each city produced its several artists and philosophers who refused to yield the preference to those of the neighbouring republics. Their contention and debates sharpened the wits of men. A variety of objects was presented to the judgement, while each challenged the preference to the rest, and the sciences, not being dwarfed by the restraint of authority, were enabled to make such considerable shoots as are even at this time the objects of our admiration”.

David Hume (op. cit.)

„If we consider the face of the globe, Europe, of all four parts of the world, is the most broken by seas, rivers and mountains and Greece of all countries of Europe. Hence, these regions were naturally divided into several distinct governments. And hence the sciences arose in Greece; and Europe has been hitherto the most constant habitation of them... Europe is at present a copy at large of what Greece was formerly a pattern in miniature...

But China is one vast empire... This seems to be one natural reason why the sciences have made so slow progress in that mighty empire“.

Montesquieu, L'Esprit des Loix (1748)

„En Asie, on a toujours vu de grands empires: en Europe, ils n'ont jamais pu subsister. C'est que l'Asie que nous connoissons a de plus grandes plaines ... La puissance doit donc être toujours despotique en Asie. Car, si la servitude n'y étoit pas extrême, il se seroit d'abord un partage que la nature du pays ne peut pas souffrir. En Europe, le partage naturel forme plusieurs états d'une étendue médiocre, dans lesquels le gouvernement des loix n'est pas incompatible avec le maintien de l'état: au contraire, il est si favorable, que, sans elles, cet état tombe dans la décadence et devient inférieur à tous les autres. C'est qui a formé un génie de liberté, qui rend chaque partie très-difficile à être subjuguée et soumise à une force étrangère, autrement que par les loix et l'utilité de son commerce“ (Livre XVII, Ch. VI).

Montesquieu (op. cit.)

(Les Juifs) „inventèrent les lettres de change, et par ce moyen, le commerce put éluder la violence et se maintenir par-tout; le négociant le plus riche n'ayant que des bien invisibles, qui pouvoient être envoyés par-tout et ne laissoient de trace nulle part ... Il a fallut, depuis ce temps, que les princes se gouvernassent avec plus de sagesse qu'ils n'auroient eux-même pensé, car, par l'événement, les grands coups d'autorité se sont trouvés si mal-adroits, que c'est une expérience reconnue, qu'il n'y a plus que la bonté du gouvernement qui donne la prospérité“ (Livre XXI, Ch. XX).

Jean Jacques Rousseau, Du Contrat Social (1762)

„Il y a des raisons de s'étendre et des raisons de se resserrer; et ce n'est pas le moindre talent du politique de trouver entre les unes et les autres la proportion la plus avantageuse à la conservation de l'État. On peut dire en général que les premières ... doivent être subordonnées aux autres ... En général un petit État est proportionnellement plus fort qu'un grand. Mille raisons démontrent cette maxime:

1. L'administration devient plus pénible dans les grandes distances...“
2. „Le peuple a moins d'affection pour ses chefs, qu'il ne voit jamais...”“
3. „Les mêmes lois ne peuvent convenir à tant de provinces diverses qui ont des moeurs différentes, qui vivent sous des climats opposés...”“
4. „Les talents sont enfouis ... dans cette multitude d'hommes ... que le siège de l'administration suprême rassemble dans un même lieu“.
5. „Les mesures qu'il faut prendre pour maintenir l'autorité générale ... absorbent tous les soins publics; il n'en reste plus pour le bonheur du peuple...”“
6. „Supposons que l'État soit composé de dix mille citoyens ... Chaque membre de l'État n'a pour sa part que la dix-millième partie de l'autorité souveraine ... Que le peuple soit composé de cent mille hommes ..., son suffrage, réduit à un cent-millième, a dix fois moins d'influence ... D'où il suit que, plus l'État s'agrandit, plus la liberté diminue“.

Adam Ferguson

Essay on the History of Civil Society (1767)

„Among the advantages which enable nations to run the career of policy as well as of arts, ... we should reckon every circumstance which enables them to divide and to maintain themselves in distinct and independent communities. The society and concourse of other men are not more necessary to form the individual than the rivalship and competition of nations are to invigorate the principles of political life in a state. Their wars, and their treaties, their mutual jealousies, and the establishments which they devise with a view to each other, constitute more than half the occupations of mankind, and furnish materials for their greatest and most improving exertions. For this reason, clusters of islands, a continent divided by many natural barriers, great rivers, ridges of mountains, and arms of the sea, are best fitted for becoming the nursery of independent and respectable nations“.

Adam Smith

An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations (1776)

„The ... proprietor of stock is properly a citizen of the world and is not necessarily attached to any particular country. He would be apt to abandon the country in which he is exposed to a vexatious inquisition in order to be assessed a burdensome tax and would remove his stock to some country where he could either carry on his business or enjoy his fortune at ease. A tax that tended to drive away stock from a particular country would so far tend to dry up every source of revenue both to the sovereign and society ... The nations, accordingly, who have attempted to tax the revenue arising from stock, instead of any severe inquisition ... have been obliged to content themselves with some very loose and, therefore, more or less arbitrary estimation“.

Adam Smith (op. cit)

„The abuses which sometimes creep into the local and provincial administration of a local or provincial revenue, however enormous so ever they may appear, are in reality, however, almost always very trifling in comparison with those which commonly take place in the administration and expenditure of the revenue of a great empire. They are, besides, much more easily corrected“.

Anne Robert Jacques Turgot

Letter to Richard Price (1778)

„The asylum which (the American people) opens to the oppressed of all nations must console the earth. The ease with which it will now be possible to take advantage of this situation, and thus to escape from the consequences of a bad government, will oblige the European governments to be just and enlightened“.

Immanuel Kant

Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht (1784)

„Jetzt sind die Staaten schon in einem so künstlichen Verhältnisse gegeneinander, daß keiner in der inneren Kultur nachlassen kann, ohne gegen die andern an Macht und Einfluß zu verlieren... Bürgerliche Freiheit kann jetzt auch nicht sehr wohl angetastet werden, ohne den Nachteil davon in allen Gewerben, vornehmlich dem Handel, dadurch aber auch die Abnahme der Kräfte des Staates im äußeren Verhältnisse zu fühlen. Diese Freiheit geht aber allmählich weiter. Wenn man den Bürger hindert seine Wohlfahrt auf alle ihm selbst beliebige Art, die nur mit der Freiheit anderer zusammen bestehen kann, zu suchen, so hemmt man die Lebhaftigkeit des durchgängigen Betriebes, und hiermit wiederum die Kräfte des Ganzen. Daher wird die persönliche Einschränkung in seinem Tun und Lassen immer mehr aufgehoben, die allgemeine Freiheit der Religion nachgegeben“.

Immanuel Kant, Zum Ewigen Frieden (1795)

„Für Staaten, im Verhältnisse untereinander, kann es nach der Vernunft keine andere Art geben, aus dem gesetzlosen Zustande, der lauter Krieg enthält, herauszukommen, als daß sie, ebenso wie einzelne Menschen, ihre wilde (gesetzlose) Freiheit aufgeben, sich zu öffentlichen Zwangsgesetzen bequemen und so einen freiheitlich immer wachsenden Völkerstaat (civitas gentium), der zuletzt alle Völker der Erde befassen würde, bilden. Da sie dies aber ... nicht wollen, so kann an die Stelle der positiven Idee einer Weltrepublik ... nur das negative Surrogat eines den Krieg abwehrenden, bestehenden, und sich immer ausbreitenden Bundes ... den Strom der rechtsscheuenden, feindseligen Neigung aufhalten ... Nun haben wir oben gesehen, daß ein föderativer Zustand der Staaten, welcher bloß die Entfernung des Krieges zur Absicht hat, der einzige, mit der Freiheit derselben vereinbare, rechtliche Zustand sei“.

Federal Farmer

The American Anti-Federalists (12.10.1787)

„One government and general legislation alone never can extend equal benefits to all parts of the United States: Different laws, customs and opinions exist in the different states which by a uniform system of laws would be unreasonably invaded ... The people in a small state can unite and act in concert and with vigour; but in large territories, the men who govern find it more easy to unite, while people cannot“.

Edward Gibbon

History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire (1787)

„Europe is now divided into twelve powerful, though unequal, kingdoms, three respectable commonwealths, and a variety of smaller, though independent states ... The abuses of tyranny are restrained by the mutual influence or fear and shame; ... monarchies have imbibed the principles of freedom, or at least of moderation; and some sense of honour and justice is introduced into the most defective constitutions by the general manners of the times. In peace, the progress of knowledge and industry is accelerated by the emulation of so many active rivals ... The division of Europe into a number of independent states, connected, however, with each other by the general resemblance of religion, language and manners, is productive of the most beneficial consequences to liberty and mankind ... but the empire of the Romans filled the world“.

Wilhelm von Humboldt

Über das Studium des Altertums und des griechischen insbesondere (1793)

„In Griechenland aber machte die gegenseitige Gemeinschaft der Nationen, die fast alle auf verschiedenen Graden der Kultur standen und eine sehr verschiedene Art der Ausbildung besaßen, dass sich von einer Nation auf die andre manches übertrug... Ja, wenn auch diese (Übergänge der Sitten) nicht stattfanden, machte dennoch das bloße nebeneinander Existieren und die gegenseitige Eifersucht, dass die eine Vorzüge nicht vernachlässigen durfte, durch welche die andre überlegen werden konnte, und aufs mindeste setzte diese Eifersucht die Kräfte einer jeden in thätigere Bewegung“.

Alexis de Tocqueville

De la Démocratie en Amérique (1835)

„Plus le peuple est grand, plus le prince est fort ... Les petites nations ont donc été de tout temps le berceau de la liberté politique ... La liberté forme, à vrai dire, la condition naturelle des petites sociétés ... S'il n'y avait que de petites nations et point de grandes, l'humanité serait à coup plus libre et plus heureuse ... Rien n'est si contraire au bien-être et à la liberté des hommes que les grands empires“.

Les avantages des petites nations:

1. „Chez les petites nations, l'oeil de la société pénètre partout“.
2. Les ressources du peuple „se tournent presque entièrement vers son bien-être intérieur et ne sont point sujets à se dissiper en vaine fumée de gloire“.
3. „Le gouvernement y offre trop peu d'appât à l'ambition, les ressources des particuliers y sont trop bornées, pour que le souverain pouvoir s'y concentre aisément dans les mains d'un seul“.
4. „Chez les grandes nations centralisées, le législateur est obligé de donner aux lois un caractère uniforme que ne comporte pas la diversité des lieux et des moeurs“.

Lord Acton

The History of Freedom in Antiquity (1877)

„If the distribution of power among the several parts of the state is the most efficient restraint of monarchy, the distribution of power among several states is the best check on democracy. By multiplying centres of government and discussion it promotes the diffusion of political knowledge and the maintenance of healthy and independent opinion. It is the protectorate of minorities and the consecration of self-government ... It is bad to be oppressed by a minority but it is worse to be oppressed by a majority“.

Lord Acton

The History of Freedom in Christianity (1877)

„The only influence capable of resisting the feudal hierarchy was the ecclesiastical hierarchy; and they came into collision ... To that conflict of four hundred years we owe the rise of civil liberty. If the Church had continued to buttress the thrones of the king whom it anointed, or if the struggle had terminated speedily in an undivided victory, all Europe would have sunk down under a Byzantine or Muscovite despotism ... But although liberty was not the end for which they strove, it was the means by which the temporal and the spiritual power called the nations to their aid“.

Lord James Bryce

The American Commonwealth (1888)

„Federalism enables a people to try experiments which could not safely be tried in a large centralised country“.

Max Weber

Wirtschaftsgeschichte (1923)

„In der Neuzeit ... gerieten (die Städte) in die Gewalt konkurrierender Nationalstaaten, die in ständigem friedlichen und kriegerischen Kampf um die Macht lagen. Dieser Konkurrenzkampf schuf dem neuzeitlich-abendländischen Kapitalismus die größten Chancen. Der einzelne Staat mußte um das freizügige Kapital konkurrieren, das ihm die Bedingungen vorschrieb, unter denen es ihm zur Macht verhelfen wollte. Aus dem notgedrungenen Bündnis des Staates mit dem Kapital ging der nationale Bürgerstand hervor...“.

TABLE 1

The classical case for political fragmentation and institutional competition: A synopsis

Institutional competition				
interjurisdictional			intra-jurisdictional	freedom
exit mechanism		yardstick competition (voice I)		
capital	labour			
Montesquieu (1748)		Hume (1742): arts and sciences		Montesquieu (1748) (Rousseau 1762) Ferguson (1767)
Adam Smith (1776)		Ferguson (1767): political life		Adam Smith (1776)
	Turgot (1778)			Turgot (1778)
	Gibbon (1787)	Gibbon (1787) : knowledge and industry		Kant (1784) Gibbon (1787)
		W.v. Humboldt (1793)		Anti-Federalists (1787)
		Acton (1877): political knowledge	Acton (1877)	(Tocqueville 1835) Acton (1877)
Max Weber (1923)				

Note: Parentheses indicate that political fragmentation is thought to strengthen freedom for reasons other than institutional competition

Henry C. Simons

Economic Policy for a Free Society (1948)

Apart from security and trade policy, the „other powers and functions (of the nation states) must be diminished in favor of states, provinces, and, in Europe, small nations ... The good political order is one in which small nations and governments on the scale of American states are protected in their autonomy against neighbours and protected against federalisms or unions which appropriate their powers“.

Charles Tiebout

A Pure Theory of Local Expenditures

Journal of Political Economy (1956)

„The consumer-voter may be viewed as picking that community which best satisfies his preference pattern for public goods ... (City managers) seek to attract new residents to lower average costs“.

George Stigler

Statement before the Joint Economic Committee of Congress
(1957)

„Competition of communities offers no obstacles but opportunities to various communities to choose the types and scales of governmental functions they wish“.

Geoffrey Brennan, James M. Buchanan

The Power to Tax (1980)

„The potential for fiscal exploitation varies inversely with the number of competing governmental units ... The potentiality for collusion among separate units varies inversely with the number of units. If there are only a small number of nominally competitive governments, collusion among them with respect to their mutual exercise of their assigned taxing powers may be easy to organize and to enforce. Total government intrusion into the economy should be smaller, ceteris paribus, the greater the extent to which taxes and expenditures are decentralized ... Tax competition among separate units rather than tax collusion is an objective to be sought in its own right“.

Friedrich A. Hayek

Choice in Currency (1976)

„There could be no more effective check against the abuse of money by the government than if people were free to refuse any money they distrusted and to prefer money in which they had confidence. Nor could there be a stronger inducement to governments to ensure the stability of their money than the knowledge that, so long as they kept the supply below the demand for it, that demand would tend to grow. Therefore, let us deprive governments (or their monetary authorities) of all power to protect their money against competition ... I prefer the freeing of all dealings in money to any sort of monetary union also because the latter would demand an international monetary authority which I believe is neither practicable nor even desirable“.

Friedrich A. Hayek

The Road to Serfdom (1944)

„There must be a power which can restrain the different nations from action harmful to their neighbours, a set of rules what a state may do, and an authority capable of enforcing these rules. The powers which such an authority would need are mainly of a negative kind; it must, above all, be able to say “No” to all sorts of restrictive measures ... But this does not mean that a new super-state must be given powers which we have not learned to use intelligently even on a national scale, that an international authority ought to be given power to direct individual nations how to use their resources“.

Leopold Kohr

The Breakdown of Nations (1957)

„Democracy is inseparably connected with the smallness of the collective organism of which the individual is part – the state. (Without) “the little-state world from which our individualistic Western civilization has sprung ... it cannot continue ... Our statesmen seem to have nothing at all on their minds except our unification that will ... doom our civilisation“.

Jean Baechler

Essai sur les origines du système capitaliste (1968)

„L’expansion du capitalisme tire ses origines et sa raison d’être de l’anarchie politique ... L’anarchie intérieure, héritée de l’ordre féodal, fut donc le moteur de l’expansion capitaliste ... L’extension des activités économiques repose sur l’absence d’un ordre politique étendu à l’échelle de l’aire culturelle ...“

Les origines du capitalisme (1971)

„La limitation de la puissance vers l’extérieur et la menace constante d’un assaut étranger (les deux caractères d’un système pluripolaire) ont fait que le pouvoir était également limité vers l’intérieur ... Les ressorts profonds de l’expansion capitaliste sont, d’une part, la coexistence de plusieurs unités politiques dans un même ensemble culturel, et, d’autre part, le pluralisme politique, qui libère l’économie“.

Jean Baechler

Les origines du capitalisme (1971)

„Chaque fois que la Chine a été politiquement divisée, le capitalisme s’est déployé. Le fait est très net pour ... la fin des T’ang et surtout les Song ... On retrouve la même évolution dans ... la période dite des Royaumes Combattants (453-222 av. J.-C.), probablement la plus riche et la plus brillante de toute l’histoire de la Chine; celle des Trois Royaumes (220-280 apr. J.-C.), enfin celle dite des Six Dynasties (316-580 apr. J.-C.) ...

Le cas japonais administre une preuve supplémentaire et éclatante ... Le Japon, juxtaposition de principautés autonomes, formait une société internationale ... L’Etat resta loin de l’unité. Le Japon de Tokugawa n’avait jamais cessé d’être intérieurement un milieu international ... Cette structure politique entraîna, presque dès les débuts, une économie de marché florissante“.

Eric Jones

The European Miracle (1981)

„But how did Europeans escape crippling exploitation by their rulers? ... The rulers of the relatively small European states learned that by supplying the services of order and adjudication they could attract and retain the most and best-paying constituents ... European kings were never as absolute as they wished. The power dispersed among the great proprietors was a check on them, as was the rising power of the market ... Europe offered a series of refuges to the oppressed and its history might be written as a saga of the escape of refugees from its wars, invasions and religious persecutions“.

Douglass C. North

The Rise of the Western World (1998)

„It was the dynamic consequences of the competition amongst fragmented political bodies that resulted in an especially creative environment ... The key to the story is the variety of the options pursued and the increased likelihood (as compared to a single unified policy) that some would turn out to produce economic growth ... It was precisely the lack of large scale political and economic order that created the essential environment hospitable to economic growth and ultimately human freedoms“.

David S. Landes

The Wealth and Poverty of Nations (1998)

„Ironically, then, Europe’s great good fortune lay in the fall of Rome and the weakness and division that ensued ... The Roman dream of unity, authority, and order (the pax Romana) remained, indeed has persisted to the present. After all, one has usually seen fragmentation as a great misfortune, as a recipe for conflict ... And yet, ... fragmentation was the strongest brake on wilful, oppressive behaviour. Political rivalry and the right of exit made all the difference“.

Angehöriger regionaler oder religiöser Minderheiten:

- Schotten (nach 1707): David Hume, Adam Ferguson, Adam Smith
- deutsche Calvinisten: Johannes Althusius, Justus Möser
- der frankophone Schweizer J.J. Rousseau
- der britische Katholik Lord Acton
- der Ire Lord (James) Bryce
- der Südstaatler James Buchanan
- amerikanische Wirtschaftshistoriker jüdischen Ursprungs: Joel Mokyr, Nathan Rosenberg usw.
- der Elsässer Jean Baechler