Review Article

State-in-Society 2.0:

Toward Fourth-Generation Theories of the State

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James C. Scott, *Against the Grain: A Deep History of the Earliest States* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017).

David Stasavage, *The Decline and Rise of Democracy: A Global History from Antiquity to Today* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020).

Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson, *The Narrow Corridor: States, Societies, and the Fate of Liberty* (New York: Penguin Press, 2019).

The state is the most powerful organization in human history. Since the first signs of an early state in Mesopotamia around 4000 to 2000 BCE, the state as an institutional structure has undergone numerous transformations in size, function, form, and strength. It has become an organization we cannot live without.

How were states formed? Why did they take different paths of development? Why are some states strong and others weak? Why are some states ruled by a democratically elected leader, while others are ruled by an autocrat? These are among the most time-honored questions that have produced generations of remarkable scholarship in the social sciences.

I characterize modern social scientific studies of the state as comprising three generations. The first generation, represented in pluralist, structural-functionalist, and neo-Marxist traditions dating back to the 1950s–70s, takes a society-centered perspective: it views the state as an arena in which different social groups and classes vie for power. The second generation, best reflected in the movement to "bring the state back in" in the 1980s, takes a state-centered perspective: it treats the state as an independent actor that is

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autonomous from society. Branches of this tradition that focus on interstate competition and ruler-elite bargaining produce some of the most influential arguments about state building. The third generation, reflecting on the state-centered view, acknowledges that the state is not autonomous from society and must often compete with it for predominance. Using a state-in-society perspective, this generation of scholars applied its insights to the state-building process in newly independent states in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East and produced an impressive collection of studies in the 1980s and 1990s.

Much of the existing scholarship, however, has focused on relatively short historical periods and particular world regions. This narrow temporal and geographical focus has raised questions about the "scope conditions" of state theorists' past arguments. It is possible that their debates may simply reflect the different stages of state development they are examining.

Three recently published books by Scott, Stasavage, and Acemoglu and Robinson advance the literature by taking the entire history of human political development into account. By recognizing that the main drivers of state development take many centuries to unfold, the three books return to the grand theoretical approaches of the founders of social science theory: Karl Marx, Émile Durkheim, and Max Weber.

These recent books theorize about states' relationships with societies over the course of millennia (not just decades or centuries, as in most seminal post–World War II works on the subject).[1] While most previous studies start with the premise that the object of analysis, the modern state, is a relatively fixed and consolidated entity, these three books reach far back into history to explore how different types of states came into being. They also challenge the popular assumption that the state is autonomous from society; they consider both actors to be mutually transforming and assess the dynamics of state-society interactions. Combining the insights from the state-centered and state-in-society perspectives (from the second and third generations discussed above), the books are also more explicit in their arguments about the conditions under which society can influence the state. They provide an innovative synthesis of previous works and represent progress toward creating a fourth generation of state theories.

These books also point to two potential new directions in which state theories could evolve. First, their tendency to reach far back into history inevitably prioritizes an origin story of political development. In all three works, initial conditions—the relative power between the state and society during state formation—largely determine a country's later political development. This tendency may underestimate the importance of changes that take place during a country's political development once it embarks on a particular trajectory. Characterizing China's political history, for example, as uninterrupted state domination over society from the Qin Dynasty forward is surely too stylized for comparativists interested in key turning points in Chinese history.

Second, while these three books evaluate state development within a broader social context, their frameworks treat the state and society as two separate and competing entities. Their accounts treat the state as a unitary actor that situates itself within society in an attempt to transform it; society, represented by various social groups, in turn hinders or facilitates the development of an effective state. However, as the experiences of many premodern

societies and developing countries show, the boundary between the state and society is often blurred.[2] State elites often have disparate interests depending on their social ties, yet social elites are often tasked with state functions and act as state agents. In this sense, Weber's definition of the state in terms of its monopoly over violence is only an ideal type;[3] in reality, the state partners with society to provide protection and justice. Similarly, society should not be considered to compete with the state; a more useful conceptualization, following the sociological tradition, is to view society as "a web of patterned interactions" that highlights its relational features, including its linkages to the state.[4]

In a preliminary effort to advance state theories along these two directions, I build on recent contributions in the field to propose what I call a "State-in-Society 2.0" framework, in which state-society linkages through elite social networks shape the strength and form of the state. The framework provides a potentially promising analytical perspective that sheds new light on the "meso-temporal" dynamics that link broad historical trends in state-society relations with local outcomes that affect daily life in particular times and places.

Three Generations of State Theories

To better understand the contributions of these three books, I first survey the modern social science literature on the state, which can be broken down into three perspectives: society-centered, state-centered, and the state-in-society approach. Each perspective is discussed in turn.

Society-Centered Perspective　　After World War II, modern social sciences turned away from legal formalist studies of constitutional principles and toward more empirically focused investigations of human behavior. Amid this behavioral revolution, society-centered ways of explaining politics and governmental activities became dominant in political science and sociology in the United States in the 1950s and 1960s. Government is an arena in which social and economic groups compete for power and influence. Scholars of this generation treated government decisions and public policies as the major outcomes of interest. Accordingly, they examined who participates in decision-making processes, how their "inputs" are translated into government "outputs," and evaluated whose interests the government represents.

A pluralist tradition offers a group interpretation of politics. In a seminal contribution, Robert Dahl investigated how different groups participated in and influenced decision making and showed that power was dispersed among a number of groups that competed with each other.[5] In a theoretical synthesis, David Truman provides a framework on how interest groups make certain claims upon other groups and upon government institutions. He explicitly dismisses the idea that the state has a united interest and treats individuals who belong to the same groups as the fundamental actors in politics.[6]

A structural-functionalist tradition employs a more macro-level analysis. Deeply rooted in sociology, the structural-functionalists view society as a complex system that

resembles a "body" with different parts, or "organs." According to this perspective, institutions exist to perform certain functions, and government institutions are parts of the system in which each unit has its own role. Social and economic groups provide their inputs for the government, which then produces outputs.[7]

Lastly, neo-Marxists view the state as an instrument of class domination. As the mode of production changes, the composition and power relations of different classes in a society evolve, and the dominant class uses the state apparatus to dominate other classes and preserve its favored mode of production. Perry Anderson, in a grand tour of European historical development, argued that landed elites created and used the "absolutist state" to exploit the peasantry.[8] Applying a class-centered perspective to the international arena, Immanuel Wallerstein developed World Systems Theory in which "core" countries are dominant capitalist countries that exploit "peripheral" countries for their labor and raw materials. This theory maintains that peripheral countries have underdeveloped industries because they are dependent on the core countries for capital.[9]

In all three theoretical perspectives, the state is not an independent actor: it is an arena in which social groups compete (according to the pluralists), an organ that translates inputs into outputs (according to the structural-functionalists), or an instrument of class struggle that reflects the interests of the dominant class (according to the neo-Marxists).

State-Centered Perspective   As the post-war era unfolded, society-centered perspectives increasingly failed to explain the social and political changes emerging in both the developed and developing world. Many developed countries continued to pursue wartime Keynesian economic policies in the post-war period. Public expenditures continued to increase in these countries as the state became a main provider of welfare and services. Waves of independence produced scores of new states in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East, which strived to shed their colonial pasts and build their own nation-states. The developed countries in Europe and North America started to face stiff competition from the newly industrialized countries in East Asia, which relied on a "developmental state" to steer their economies.[10]

In 1983, the Social Science Research Council established the Research Planning Committee on States and Social Structures. The committee aimed to "foster sustained collaborations among scholars from several disciplines who share in the growing interest in states as actors and as institutional structures."[11] Its first publication was a field-changing book: *Bringing the State Back In*.

In the book's preface, Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol state that "Until recently, dominant theoretical paradigms in the comparative social sciences did not highlight states as organizational structures or as potentially autonomous actors."[12] In the introductory chapter, Theda Skocpol contends that states formulate and pursue goals that do not simply reflect the demands of social groups, classes, or society. States achieve autonomy when "organizationally coherent collectives of state officials" that are "insulated from ties to currently dominant socioeconomic interests" launch distinctive state strategies.[13]

Once the state can be modeled as a coherent collective of officials, researchers can analyze it as a unitary actor. The rewards of such an approach are enormous. One of the most influential arguments in this camp is the notion that interstate competition drives state building. Originated by Otto Hintze, and popularized by Charles Tilly, it has become a widely held belief that external war incentivizes state elites to develop a centralized fiscal system, a modern bureaucracy, and a standing army.[14] As Tilly succinctly summarized, "war made the state."[15]

This bellicist argument has set the agenda; much of the follow-up work has centered on how war (or its absence) has affected state building beyond Europe. For instance, scholars have applied the bellicist theory in ancient China and indirectly proved Tilly's argument with negative cases in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America, where there were no (large-scale) wars and no state building.[16] Over time, much of the scholarship in this camp evolved from a state-centered structuralist to a historical institutionalist approach, which emphasizes the importance of critical junctures and path dependence.[17]

Another branch of this state-centered camp is an institutional approach to state building. This approach takes a rational choice perspective and focuses on state elites and their bargaining power with the ruler. Margaret Levi labeled the impulse behind this approach "bringing people back into the state."[18] For rationalist state theorists, the agents who comprise the state, rather than the state itself, are the actor. This agency focus differentiates the rationalists from the structuralists, who focus on macro-level factors such as population, geography, and geopolitics.

In an influential study, Douglass North and Barry Weingast argue that England's Glorious Revolution established parliamentary sovereignty, which cemented the Crown's commitment to the elites whose financial support was urgently needed to finance war.[19] Robert Bates and Donald Lien examine how asset specificity conditions elites' bargaining power and show that while taxing commerce produced early democracy in England, taxing land produced absolutism in France.[20] For Margaret Levi, the ruler is a revenue maximizer, but is constrained by bargaining power, transaction costs, and time horizons.[21] According to Barbara Geddes, building state capacity by institutionalizing a meritocratic recruitment and promotion system would deprive rulers of the opportunity to use these positions as rewards, creating "the politician's dilemma."[22]

Bellicist and institutional accounts have both analyzed state building independently of society. Since state elites are autonomous from society, inter-state relations and within-state bargaining ultimately determine how the state is organized and how strong it is.[23]

State-in-Society Approach   During the heyday of the state-centered approach, another group of scholars who studied the newly independent states in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East observed that these states often struggled to establish authority in competition with strong social forces. These social forces (e.g., tribes, clans, or chiefdoms) were either a legacy of the past or recently empowered by colonial

powers. Although these countries had established a central government with a well-staffed bureaucracy in the capital, the center often found it difficult to project its power to the country's remote corners, where traditional authorities still dominated people's lives.

In the prologue of his 1989 book *Strong Societies and Weak States*, Joel Migdal points out that "for the Third World, at least, a state-centered approach is a bit like looking at a mousetrap without at all understanding the mouse." He maintains that the literature at that time "seemed to take as given" what he found open to question: autonomy and state strength.[24] Migdal then argues that many Third World states have grave difficulties becoming the organization in society that effectively establishes the rules of behavior. In his model of state-society relations, a state does not exist in isolation: it coexists with other social organizations that all strive to exercise social control by using a variety of sanctions, rewards, and symbols to induce people to follow certain rules or norms. These social organizations range from small families and neighborhood groups to mammoth foreign-owned companies. Whether the state can triumph over such organizations to achieve predominance depends on whether it can best serve people's "strategies of survival."[25]

Migdal's state-in-society approach provides a new way of studying the state. The key insight is that we should study the state in relation to the society. Using quantitative social science terminology, Migdal points out an omitted variable bias in the state-centered literature. For example, his case studies show that state capacity, namely the ability to implement policies and mobilize the public, depends on the structure of a society. When the society is strong, the state will often have trouble establishing predominance. And a strong society can only be weakened by "cataclysmic events" such as a natural disaster or war.[26]

The state-in-society approach has generated a fruitful literature. One strand of this literature examines how social forces constrain state power. In Vivienne Shue's study of the Chinese state, she argues that the imperial state's "reach" was limited by the rural "honeycomb" structure that consisted of gentry families.[27] Another strand of the literature investigates how incorporating social forces into the state shapes state goals and capacities. Elizabeth Perry, for example, shows that the Chinese state incorporated the working class into its leadership during the communist revolution, which influenced state goals after the founding of the People's Republic.[28]

The 1994 volume, State Power and Social Forces, edited by Joel Migdal, Atul Kohli, and Vivienne Shue, which names the state-in-society approach, showcases the approach's ability to explain a wide variety of phenomena in the developing world.[29]

A New Generation of State Scholarship

The three books reviewed here represent a new generation of scholarship on the state. Departing from the post–World War II literature on the state, which examines relatively short time periods and particular world regions, these three books analyze what Tilly

calls "big structures, large processes, huge comparisons."[30] Using game-theoretical terminology, all three books describe multiple steady-state equilibria and specify the conditions under which states embark on specific trajectories that lead them to different equilibria. This dynamic view helps reconcile earlier debates between society- and state-centered approaches. These earlier approaches may simply be describing different equilibria of state development. Society-oriented scholars might see a strong society and a passive state and decide to focus on the society, while state-oriented scholars may see a world with more active states and consider the state to be an independent actor.

Equilibria shift slowly. As all three books show, structural changes that drive political development took centuries to unfold. This temporal distance requires researchers to delve deep into history. All three books cover a time span of at least two millennia, but the authors go beyond chronicling events: they add an analytic arch. It is only when politics is examined using this slow-moving and temporally distant telescope that we can clearly see how things change. As Hegel's maxim goes, "The owl of Minerva begins its flight only with the onset of dusk."[31]

Against the Grain   The standard story about the emergence of early states goes something like this: Homo sapiens existed for millions of years as scattered, nomadic bands of hunter-gatherers. Gradually they invented sedentary agriculture, started to enjoy a surplus, and developed a social hierarchy. A leader—a priest, warrior, manager, or charismatic person—came to the fore and started to use their power. Gradually the organization of such a polity developed into an incipient early state.[32] The narrative is one of progress: agriculture made sedentism possible and increased productivity, which helped create a lifestyle that was far superior to the "primitive" modes of subsistence.

This narrative remains the essential premise for modern social science's justification of the state. Thomas Hobbes famously characterized the human condition under "the state of nature" as one in which "the life of man, solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short."[33] A Leviathan, Hobbes argued, would bring order and protect people from each other and this terrible fate.

James Scott's *Against the Grain* offers a powerful alternative narrative against this state-as-civilization theme. He synthesizes recent anthropological evidence from Mesopotamia, the heartland of the first "pristine" states, from 6500 to 1600 BCE and poses a provocative question: Are we really better off under a state?

Continuing a theme from his earlier work, Scott shows that throughout millions of years of human evolution, the state has been anything but natural or inevitable.[34] If we locate the era of definitive state hegemony as beginning around 1600 CE, and consider that Homo sapiens appeared as a subspecies about 200,000 years ago, the state has dominated only the last one-fifth of 1 percent of our species' political life. For the bulk of the human experience, we lived in small, mobile, dispersed, and relatively egalitarian hunting-and-gathering bands.

The process of state formation is also far from what we know from conventional wisdom. The first states emerged in the Tigris and Euphrates Valley around 3100 BCE, more than four millennia after the first crops were domesticated and people began to

create permanent settlements. This massive lag, Scott suggests, indicates that agriculture and a settled population were "a necessary but not a sufficient basis for state formation."[35]

How exactly were these early states formed? One possible explanation is that a change in the climate limited humans' options for existence. Citing the work of the archeologist Hans Nissen, Scott shows that the period from 3500 to 2500 BCE was marked by a steep decline in sea level and a decrease in the water volume in the Euphrates River. The rivers shrank back to their main channels, and the population became much more concentrated as it increasingly huddled around the remaining watercourses. "Climate change," Scott asserts, "intensified the grain-and-manpower modules that were ideal for state formation."[36]

One of the most important theses in *Against the Grain* is the association between grain and early state formation. Scott notes that all states of antiquity, including Mesopotamia, Egypt, the Indus Valley, and the Yellow River, are grain states: wheat, barley, and millet. There were no cassava states, no sago, yam, taro, plantain, breadfruit, or sweet potato states, and certainly no banana republics. The reason is their legibility: grains are best suited to concentrated production, tax assessment, appropriation, cadastral surveys, storage, and rationing. By contrast, the tuber cassava (aka manioc, yucca) grows below ground, requires little care, is easy to conceal, ripens in a year, and, most important, can be safely left in the ground and remain edible for up to two years. If the state wants your cassava, it will have to come and dig up the tubers individually, and then it has a cartload of little value and great weight if transported. Evaluating crops from the perspective of the premodern "tax man," the major grains would be among the most preferred, and roots and tubers among the least preferred. Scott hence concludes, "grains make states."[37]

According to the traditional narrative, civilization started after the state was formed. Political order replaced the savage, wild, primitive, lawless, and violent world of hunter-gatherers and nomads. Scott's most interesting insight is that people all over the world usually resisted being governed by a state and that those who could not escape the state suffered.[38]

Once a state is formed, it strives to create a legible, measured, and uniform landscape of taxable crops and to control its population through coercion and confinement. Citing Owen Lattimore, Scott argues that the great walls of China were built as much to keep Chinese taxpayers in as to keep the barbarians out.[39] Rather than going to the trouble to grow its own crops, the state can simply confiscate them from its residents. The state also creates "institutions of bondage"—coerced labor, debt bondage, serfdom, communal bondage and tribute, and various forms of slavery—to control the means of production and create a surplus. Infectious diseases are also more likely to spread among settled populations, which often leads to state collapse. In contrast to the Hobbesian world of a nasty life without the state, Scott's world under state control is full of drudgery and illness.

Life outside the state, however, is free and healthy, according to Scott. After the formation of agrarian states came "the golden age of barbarians," who enjoyed a

profitable trade with the early states, augmented with tributes and raiding when necessary, avoided the inconveniences of taxes and agricultural labor, and enjoyed a more nutritious and varied diet as well as greater physical mobility.[40] This "state of nature" sounds much more pleasant than what the conventional narrative depicts.

James Scott's *Against the Grain* is a thought-provoking book that weaves various strands of evidence together to develop a powerful narrative. This narrative might be familiar to anthropologists who study the Middle East, but it is new to social scientists. His accessible and beautiful prose, combined with his often-polemical tone, entertains and eases the reader into the academic debates regarding the history of the earliest states. Most importantly, by focusing on states that are "too" strong, this book makes a very important and original contribution to the growing literature on the political economy of the state.

The Decline and Rise of Democracy   States have pursued different paths of development, particularly in how they organize. Some states developed into democracies with competitive elections and universal suffrage, while others became autocratic with unconstrained political power concentrated in the hands of one person, a group of elites, or a political party. Several studies have explored why this is the case. From modernization theory in the 1960s–70s, to Barrington Moore's social explanations, to the recent focus on inequality and redistribution, scholars have examined the roles of economic development, social classes, and elite incentives in the process of democratization.[41]

David Stasavage's *Decline and Rise of Democracy* is an ambitious and thorough work that analyzes the evolution of democracies, in both their early and modern forms, from antiquity to today. He introduces a new and unique framework that emphasizes the scale of the polity and whether society has something the state urgently needs, such as information, revenue, or people. Stasavage then uses this framework to illustrate the paths of state development in Europe, China, the Middle East, and the United States.

The conventional wisdom appears to be that Europe is the birthplace of democracies. Signs of democratic politics can be dated back to Athens, and parliaments that emerged in Western Europe in the thirteenth century paved the way for modern democracies. Stasavage, however, shows that early democracies were more widespread than we previously thought.

If we define early democracy as a form of government in which the ruler must obtain consent from a council or assembly, we can find examples of it in regions as diverse as Mesopotamia, ancient India, the Northeastern Woodlands of America, Mesoamerica, and Central Africa. The practice of rule by consent comes naturally to humans; it was not unique to Europe.[42]

Stasavage maintains that three underlying factors helped foster early democracy. First, this type of government was more likely to emerge in small-scale settings, in which members of society could regularly attend councils and assemblies. The second factor was that rulers lacked information about what people were producing, for example when cropping patterns created uncertainties and large variations in

agricultural yields. Rulers who lacked a state bureaucracy capable of measuring and assessing production would also be without this information. This information asymmetry between state and society gave rulers an incentive to share power with social elites through councils in order to determine what sort of taxes they could levy. The third factor involved the balance between how much the state needed the society and how much the society could do without the state. When the state had a greater need for revenue and people, for example to fight wars, rulers offered the people political rights. The society's bargaining power could be further enhanced if the populace had the "exit option" of moving to a new location.

One of the most intriguing ideas in *Decline and Rise of Democracy* is that early democracies thrived when the state was weak. This is precisely how they emerged in Europe. For more than a millennium after the fall of Rome, European rulers lacked the ability to assess what their people were producing, which prevented them from levying substantial taxes based on this data. Unlike China, which had a single Loess Plateau, and the Middle East with its fertile river valleys, the soil deposits in Europe were much smaller and geographically separated from each other. Europe's soil distribution therefore favored extensive rather than intensive agriculture, which created a dispersed pattern of society and made it difficult to construct a bureaucracy. The backwardness of its state bureaucracies gave European rulers no alternative but to govern by negotiating and seeking consent from the region's growing towns. Although Europeans did not invent this type of governance, they did innovate in this area by developing an explicit theory of political representation that fundamentally redefined terms based in Roman law. They also modernized the notion of governance through negotiation and consent by scaling up representative systems to large polities.

Traditional explanations of why Europe took a democratic path while China and the Middle East pursued a different route take either a cultural view, focusing on Confucianism and Islam, or a functionalist view, such as Karl Wittfogel's theory of "hydraulic despotism."[43] Stasavage, however, argues that democracy did not develop in China and the Middle East because both created strong states from the beginning.

China established a lasting bureaucratic order from a very early date. Unlike those of Western Europe, the geographic conditions of the Loess Plateau favored the early development of intensive high-yield agriculture. China's advances in technologies for production and measurement also fostered the development of its bureaucratic state. Once it was equipped with a centralized bureaucracy, the Chinese state could extract revenue without having to rely on councils. Stasavage does not view China as an aberration; he instead contends that it has pursued a completely distinct, and very stable, path of political development.

In the Middle East, early democracy was the norm in pre-Islamic Arabia. Democratic practices died out under the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphates, but for reasons that had little to do with religious doctrine. The rulers of these caliphates inherited a state bureaucracy in its prime from the Sasanian Empire, which allowed them to pursue the autocratic alternative. The Muslim rulers similarly inherited a strong bureaucracy from Egypt through conquest. Geographic factors helped push the trend in

this direction: the rich river valleys of Egypt and Mesopotamia facilitated the development of a strong, centralized state.

One of Stasavage's crucial insights is that sequencing matters: bureaucracy can either substitute for or complement democracy. It all depends on the sequence of events. If bureaucracy emerges first, as happened in China, then rulers will have little need for democracy. If democracy emerges first, the people are likely to develop the habit of collective action through regularly attending a council or assembly. Such action may be able to constrain a ruler even after a bureaucracy is developed, as occurred in Europe. A council and a bureaucracy could then complement each other because bureaucrats would have greater skills in some tasks.

Although early democracy arose in many corners of the world, it died out in many societies over time. It did so as societies grew in scale, as rulers acquired new technologies (such as writing) with which to monitor production, and when people found it hard to move to new areas. In some societies where early democracy persisted, a new form of government evolved into what is now known as modern democracy.

Great Britain was the pioneer in the transition from early to modern democracy. A key step in this transition was to centralize decision making. In medieval European assemblies, representatives did not have the liberty to support or oppose policies as they saw fit; instead, their constituencies gave them strict instructions regarding what they could and could not do. This mandate system was motivated by the fear that representatives would otherwise be captured, co-opted, or corrupted by the center. During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, English monarchs established the norm that representatives to Parliament should not be bound by such mandates. After 1688, with the establishment of parliamentary supremacy, the end of the mandate system resulted in a high degree of cohesion and capacity within the national legislative body. This allowed Parliament to play an active role in the economy. England did not complete the transition to modern democracy at this time; it did not establish universal suffrage for approximately two and a half centuries.[44]

The United States further developed modern democracy. Two impulses conditioned this development. The first was an initial context of land abundance and labor scarcity that necessitated consensual government with a broad suffrage, to free white males. The second was an effort by the framers of the U.S. Constitution to dispense with certain features of early democracy and to expand the distance between representatives and society. Due to the labor scarcity, however, the alternative strategy was to rely on forced laborers who could be easily distinguished from the European population and who had no good exit option. The result was chattel slavery for Africans.

This short review certainly cannot do justice to the book's remarkably wide-ranging discussions of the history of democracy over 2,000 years. *The Decline and Rise of Democracy* is a paradigm-shifting book that will shape debates on state building, democratization, and comparative political development for decades to come.

The Narrow Corridor   How can human liberty—the ability to make free choices without being forced by the state or society—be achieved? The Hobbesian solution is to

have a Leviathan. But the Leviathan is Janus-faced: it prevents violence and provides political order, but it also dominates citizens by silencing them, imprisoning them, maiming them, and sometimes murdering them.

Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson provide a new answer. They argue that a balance of power must be achieved between the state and society in order for liberty to emerge and flourish. A strong state controls violence, enforces laws, and provides public services that are critical for a life in which people are empowered to make and pursue their choices. But a strong, mobilized society is needed to control and shackle the strong state. In a mobilized society, people participate in politics, protest when it is necessary, and vote the government out of power when it does not serve their interests.

Variations in the strength of state and society, therefore, produce three scenarios. In the first scenario, the state is stronger than the society: the state gives society no say in how its power and capacity are used. Acemoglu and Robinson term this scenario the Despotic Leviathan. In the second scenario, the society is much stronger than the state: traditional social organizations, such as tribes, chiefdoms, or kinship groups, use traditions and customs to create a "cage of norms" to regulate many aspects of people's lives. In such societies, the Leviathan is too weak to break this cage of norms, and people are trapped in a rigid set of expectations and a panoply of unequal social relations, what Acemoglu and Robinson call the Absent Leviathan.

Squeezed between the Despotic State and the Absent State is a narrow corridor to liberty, in which the state and society balance each other out: neither has the upper hand. Acemoglu and Robinson call this the "Red Queen effect." The state and society do not just compete; they also cooperate. This cooperation increases the state's capacity to meet the society's needs and foments greater societal mobilization to monitor this capacity. This state-society competition and cooperation create the Shackled Leviathan.

What determined which path a country pursued? Initial conditions seem to matter. In Europe, the conditions in the centuries after the fall of the Roman Empire laid the foundation for the Red Queen. From the sixth to the tenth centuries, the Merovingian and Carolingian states inherited two blades of the scissors: a blueprint for bureaucratic organization from Rome and the participatory social norms of the Germanic tribes. This combination placed European states at the entryway to the corridor.

By contrast, the early establishment of a centralized state during the Qin dynasty (221–206 BCE) in China precluded popular participation in government, and societal organizations remained weak. Merchant groups, for example, all had their roots in "native-place associations" that were attached to different parts of China. These associations consisted of groups of families from specific regions or towns, which did not cooperate with each other and had little interest in investing in public services and organizations. The strong state and weak society put China on the despotic path.

At the other extreme of the spectrum lies India, where the cage of norms has always been strong. The consolidation of the caste system and the state's subservience to its rigid hierarchy fragmented society and caused it to turn against itself. Indian society is not a monolithic entity, and its internal conflicts—and the inequalities that these engender—play a central role in the nation's politics. The fragmentations and divisions

fomented by the caste system prevented the society from organizing to monitor the state. There were no Red Queen dynamics to reshape society's identities. Because political participation was based on the caste system, which the state supported and relied on for support, caste-based identities were repeatedly reconfirmed, with abominable consequences for liberty. Although India has been a democracy since 1950, and "liberalized" its economy in the 1990s, the dominance of caste and the gamut of restrictive, divisive, and hierarchical norms have persisted and bred a state devoid of real capacity or much interest in helping its poorest citizens.

While the Despotic and Absent Leviathans undermine human liberty in different ways, the Paper Leviathan has the worst of both worlds. Paper Leviathans have the appearance of a state and are able to exercise some power in some limited domains and in some major cities. But that power is hollow; it is incoherent and disorganized in most domains, and it is almost completely absent in outlying areas. Paper Leviathans exist in Argentina, Colombia, and several other Latin American and African countries.

One of the most important insights of *The Narrow Corridor* is that the state-society balance is a corridor, not a door: achieving liberty is a process that involves constant, day-in, day-out struggles. A country can move outside the corridor and slide down a slippery slope. Weimar Germany is the best example of such sliding. Acemoglu and Robinson argue that rather than supporting state-society cooperation, state and society in Weimar Germany engaged in a "zero-sum" contest in which each side was intent on destroying the other in order to survive itself. The problem, the authors argue, was the Prussian landed aristocracy. Landed interests have often viewed the strengthening of society and the beginnings of democracy in zero-sum terms. Different from industrialists and professionals who can flourish in the corridor both economically and politically because of their expertise, knowledge, and skills, landowners fear losing their lands, which are much more easily taken away from them than the factories of industrialists and the skills of professionals. Landowners also feared becoming marginalized as the political center of gravity shifted away from them as a result of democratic politics. All of this made them skeptical of the burgeoning Shackled Leviathan. These attitudes not only supported repression rather than compromise at critical points, they also created an environment conducive to the rise of right-wing fringe organizations, such as the Nazi Party.

One attractive feature of Acemoglu and Robinson's conceptual framework is that it can be integrated with existing theories without much friction. For example, much of the social science literature on state building and the origins of state capacity emphasizes structural factors (e.g., population, geography, culture, threat of war, types of crops, and technology of war-making). Acemoglu and Robinson argue that whether these structural factors affect the state is conditional on prior state-society relations. For instance, when a state is engaged in interstate competition, it can strengthen its power vis-à-vis society and move the country closer to Despotic Leviathan.

The Narrow Corridor is a work of staggering ambition in which Acemoglu and Robinson take their readers on a fascinating journey from witchcraft among the Tiv to the invention of tortillas in Mexico. It refreshes our understanding of where democracy

comes from and how it can (and should) be sustained. It is a reminder that the corridor is narrow, and it takes vigilance to maintain a proper balance between the state and society.

Contributions   Taking an extremely long-term view, these three books make three notable contributions to our understanding of the state. First, although the state has been a venerable concept since at least Hobbes and Weber, scholars have often found it difficult to conceptualize it as a variable. Part of the reason is that the state is sometimes an explanatory variable, sometimes the mechanism, and often the outcome. Simultaneously transforming and being transformed makes studying the state a dynamic process. This has become increasingly challenging as the field has moved toward putting more emphasis on causal inference.

One innovation that these three books offer is to analyze state development as a dynamic process. For Scott, in the first phase, the state is an outcome variable: ecological and climatic factors determined its formation. Once the state is formed in the second phase, it starts to transform the society. By making the society more legible and restricting population movement, the state approached the role of the rationalists' revenue maximizer. As society became congregated, however, disease started to spread, leading to state collapse in the third phase.

For Stasavage, state strength in the first phase is an important determinant of whether early democracy could arise. When the state is in a weak position vis-à-vis the society, the state must develop councils to solicit information and support. A society that gives its consent to be governed can make the state stronger over time by feeding it information, revenue, and people. The state in this phase becomes the outcome. Then a critical step is for the state to centralize. This happened, for instance, when England abolished its requirement that representatives must be bound by mandates. This change facilitated a more centralized form of decision making, which is a fundamental characteristic of modern democracy.

For Acemoglu and Robinson, the power balance between the state and society in the initial condition is a driving force for political development. The two actors are mutually transforming. A strong state can break the cage of norms; a participatory and strong society can in turn strengthen the state by serving as a check on its discretionary power and entrusting state officials to extract resources. State and society are thus two variables that often swap sides in the equation.

Second, these three books are more explicit than previous studies about what constitutes social power. For Stasavage, knowledge is power: society is strong when it knows more than the state does. For Acemoglu and Robinson, society is powerful when people can take collective action against the state. Being clear about what social power means is critical to studying state-society interactions. While social science has made significant progress in measuring "state capacity," we have yet to develop any reliable measures of societal capacity. Pinpointing where social power lies, whether it is based on information or collective action, helps develop observable implications and testable hypotheses.

Lastly, this new scholarship also sheds light on where institutions come from. Rational choice theorists often explain institutional change from an efficiency perspective. According to this logic, rational actors create institutions in order to exploit potential efficiency gains. But while such gains exist almost everywhere, institutional innovations have occurred in only a few places. The particular type of constitutional bargain struck during the Glorious Revolution, for example, happened only in England.

A state-society perspective provides a more convincing answer. For both Stasavage and Acemoglu and Robinson, institutions emerge when the state urgently needs something (information, revenue, or people) from society. Early democracy (in Stasavage's term) or inclusive institutions (in Acemoglu and Robinson's term) arise when society enjoys bargaining power vis-à-vis the state. This endogenous view of institutionalism provides a great tool for comparative scholars to examine a variety of contexts in which state-society relations vary, and institutional changes are rare.

State-in-Society 2.0

Two important questions about state-society relations remain. First, all three books reviewed here place heavy theoretical significance on initial conditions, especially state strength vis-à-vis society during state formation, as explanations of a country's later political development. This origin focus, however, prevents their frameworks from adequately explaining changes once a country has embarked on a certain trajectory. For example, many states in Africa, China, the Middle East, and Mesoamerica started as centralized empires or kingdoms, but experienced ups and downs in their development, fell apart in the premodern era, and became different types of nation-states in the modern era. What accounts for their divergent paths despite sharing similar initial conditions? And what explains important turning points, such as state collapse, in these countries' political development?

Second, these recent books, much like previous studies, tend to view the state and society as separate and competing entities. However, in most premodern societies, as well as developing countries today, state elites are embedded in complex social relations. Traditional social groups (such as tribes, clans, and ethnic groups) from which state elites are drawn often define these elites' identities and objectives. State-society linkages, through elite social relations, are therefore an important aspect of understanding state-society relations. How do elites embedded in different social structures vary in their preferences regarding the ideal level of state strength? What type of elite social structure helps the ruler divide and conquer, and what type constrains them? How do the different ways in which state elites connect with society shape state-society relations? Answering these questions requires examining the state and society not as separate, unitary actors, but as mutually transforming entities in which state elites are connected to social forces.

My "State-in-Society 2.0" framework represents a preliminary effort to address these questions. This framework is a middle-range theory that puts state-society

linkages front and center.[45] It combines insights from state-society scholars who emphasize interactions between the two actors, borrows the pluralists' notion that society consists of competing groups, and builds on the rational choice approach's agency-centered microfoundations.

Figure 1 depicts three ideal types of state-society linkages. In each graph, the central nodes are national-level elites; the peripheral nodes represent local-level social groups, such as tribes, clans, or ethnic groups. The edges denote connections, which can take multiple forms, such as membership, social ties, family ties, or electoral connections. National elites are agents of their connected social groups; their objective is to influence government policies to provide the best services to their groups at the lowest cost.

In a *star network* (panel (a)), two central nodes (national elites) directly connect every peripheral node (social group) located in different areas. In a *bowtie network* (panel (b)), each central node is connected to a different set of peripheral nodes, which are linked to their immediate neighbors, but not to any nodes in the other community. In a *ring network* (panel (c)), each peripheral node is connected to its immediate neighbors, but none is connected to the central nodes.

I term these different forms of networks elite social terrains. Elite social terrains exhibit a vertical dimension, which characterizes how national elites connect to local social groups, as well as a horizontal dimension, which describes how national elites connect to each other. The three ideal types of elite social terrains produce three steady equilibria of state-society relations. In each equilibrium, the elite social terrain determines elite preferences regarding the ideal level of state strength and how the state is organized.

State Strength   My "State-in-Society 2.0" framework provides micro-founded insights about elite preferences regarding the ideal level of state strength. National elites

Figure 1   Three Ideal Types of Elite Social Terrain

(a) Star Network   (b) Bowtie Network   (c) Ring Network
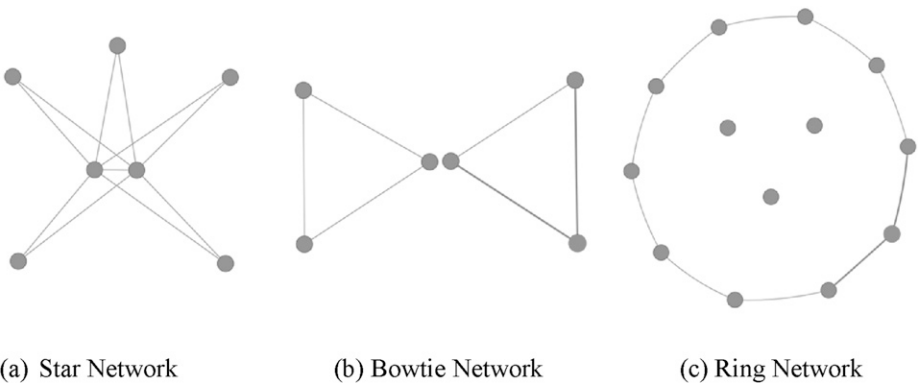
can use a variety of governance structures to provide services to their connected social groups. The most popular of such structures are public-order institutions, such as the state, and private-order institutions, such as clans, tribes, or ethnic groups. These structures provide services such as protection and justice, including defense against external and internal violence, insurance against weather shocks, justice in dispute resolution, and social policies that protect people from risks. National elites embedded in the star network have the strongest incentive to use the state to provide these types of services to their connected social groups.

Two considerations drive elites' choices. The first is economic. When elites are connected to multiple social groups that are geographically dispersed, it is more efficient to rely on the central state to provide services because it enjoys economies of scale and scope. In the bowtie network, where elites only need to service a few groups in a relatively small area, private service provision is more efficient. This is because the marginal costs of funding private institutions to service a small area are lower than the taxes that elites would be required to pay to support the central state.

The ring network represents an extreme case in which national elites are not connected to any social groups; they have lost control over society and cannot mobilize the necessary social resources to strengthen the state. Therefore, they choose to allow social groups to provide services through their own tribes, clans, or ethnic groups.

The second consideration is social. In the star network, social cleavages are cross-cutting.[46] Tribes, clans, and ethnic groups that are concentrated in a certain locality often care a lot about their local interests, but little about national matters. Nevertheless, if national elites can connect multiple social groups that are geographically dispersed, this social network can cross-cut regional cleavages. These cross-cutting cleavages incentivize the national elites to aggregate the interests of multiple localities and groups and scale them up to the national level. The star network, therefore, transcends local interests and fosters a broad state-building coalition.

In the bowtie network, however, each national elite represents only a small number of localities. Social networks in this case reinforce existing regional cleavages. The central government then becomes an arena in which these elites compete to attract national resources to serve local interests. The ring network is an extreme case in which national elites pay no attention to regional cleavages and have no way of bringing different groups together.

In sum, the vertical dimension of elite social terrain that characterizes how national elites connect social groups determines elite preferences regarding the ideal level of state strength. Their incentive to strengthen the central state weakens as one moves from a star network to a ring network.

State Form   The framework can also offer some insights into two relationships that characterize how the state is organized. These relationships are: (1) between the ruler and the ruling elite and (2) between the state and society.

In the relationship between the ruler and the ruling elite, the star network represents a centralized and coherent elite that can constrain the ruler in two ways. First, the elites

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are embedded in a centralized, pyramid-like structure in which they can use their cross-cutting ties to mobilize a wide range of social forces across regions. Second, the interconnectedness among elites in the star network makes them a coherent group, which helps overcome collective action and coordination problems if they decide to rebel against the ruler. In this scenario, the ruler is only first among equals and thus more likely to share power with the elites.

In the bowtie network, national elites can mobilize some (regionally-based) social groups. It is easier for the ruler to quell challenges that are concentrated in certain areas. In addition, the lack of a dense network among elites provides what the sociologist Ronald Burt calls "structural holes" that allow the ruler to divide and conquer.[47] In this scenario, the ruler is more likely to establish absolute rule to dominate the elites.

National elites' bargaining power is the weakest in the ring network since they cannot find allies within the society or coordinate among themselves against the ruler. The ruler's despotic power therefore reaches its zenith in this scenario.

In the relationship between the state and society, the star network represents the direct rule of the state. The ruler includes representatives from local groups in the national government in part to collect information about local societies and economies. With a pyramidal social network, the ruler can rely on national elites to collect revenue for the state and to mobilize the population. In this scenario, the state often takes a leading role in initiating and funding public goods provision, the most important of which include security, justice, and public works.

The bowtie network represents the state-society partnership. National elites, representing local interests, often compete for national resources to channel to their own localities. They prefer to allocate national resources and to outsource public goods provision to their own social groups. Connected social groups can seek rents from these projects and enhance their status in the local community. The result is often a partnership between the state and society in which the state delegates part of its functions, such as organizing defense and public works, to the society. The society in this case would still depend on the state for resources and legitimacy, but would enjoy considerable autonomy.

The ring network is an example of what the historian Prasenjit Duara terms "state involution,"[48] in which the formal state depends on society to carry out many of its functions, but loses control over it. As the state descends further into involution, social groups replace the state as the leader in public goods provision and threaten the state's monopoly over violence.

Three Steady-State Equilibria   I argue that each of the three ideal types of elite social networks creates its own corresponding steady-state equilibrium. For each network type, both sets of actors—the ruler and national elites—find it in their best interest, absent an exogenous shock, to maintain the current steady state.

The ruler faces a tradeoff between state power and personal power. The ruler seeks to maximize state power, which can best be achieved by facilitating the creation of a star network. However, the ruler also seeks to maximize their personal power and survival,

which is easier if elites are fragmented, as in a bowtie or ring network. The ruler therefore trades infrastructural power for despotic power. A coherent elite helps the ruler strengthen the state, but also threatens their power. A fragmented elite weakens the state, but must overcome insurmountable collective action and coordination problems to revolt against the ruler. Hence a fragmented elite structure undermines state infrastructural power and contributes to despotic power.

In each type of network, the elites' objective is to economize the provision of services for their social groups. The dominant strategy of elites in the star network is to mobilize society to strengthen the state by, for example, contributing monetary and human resources. A strong central state provides efficient national coverage to protect their social groups if elites are linked in this way. In the bowtie network, however, elites prefer to delegate state functions to their social groups so that these groups can provide their own private services at a much lower price than paying taxes to the national government. But the society in the bowtie network still has an interest in keeping the state "afloat." A state with a moderate level of capacity can help protect society from existential threats from, for example, external enemies or large-scale natural disasters. In the ring network, social groups are independent of the state. Rather than contributing resources to keep the state alive, social groups prefer to retain resources for themselves. The state in this equilibrium is minimal and on the verge of collapse. Table 1 summarizes the implications of the three equilibria for state strength and form.

The star network creates an equilibrium, which I label "State Strengthening under Oligarchy." In this equilibrium, the ruler and the national elites jointly control the state in an oligarchy in which the ruler is first among equals. The ruler is prevented from seizing absolute power because the elites can credibly threaten a revolt. The elites in this equilibrium prefer a strong state because they want to exploit its scale economies to offer services to their respective social groups.

This equilibrium approximates medieval China during the Tang era (618–907) and England after the Norman Conquest (1066). During the Tang times, an aristocracy ruled China. This aristocracy was a semi-hereditary caste that consisted of several hundred noble clans. These clans formed a close-knit marriage network, which connected different corners of the empire. The social terrain that formed among the Tang aristocratic families hence resembled a star network: a coherent center connected to the periphery. In England, during the Norman conquest, a team of Norman aristocrats connected by (imaginary) kinship links conquered England and formed a coherent elite. Although these elites had disagreements, they were all centrally oriented because they owned land throughout the country. Their support for the Crown was a key determinant of England's political and economic success. [49]

I call the bowtie network equilibrium "State Maintaining under Partnership." In this equilibrium, the ruler uses a divide-and-conquer strategy to dominate a fragmented national elite and establish absolute power over this group. The elites choose not to threaten the ruler's power because such collective action and coordination are too costly; they prefer a moderately strong state that can protect their social groups from existential threats. But they do not want the state to be strong enough to extract all

Table 1 Three Equilibria of State-Society Relations and Corresponding Examples

Network	Equilibrium	State Strength	State Form		Example
			Ruler vs. Elite	State vs. Society	
Star	State Strengthening under Oligarchy	High	First among Equals	Direct Rule	Medieval China; England after the Norman Conquest
Bowtie	State Maintaining under Partnership	Moderate	Dominant	Partnership	Late Imperial China before the Opium Wars; France in the Middle Ages; sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America under colonial rule; the Islamic World during the Classical Period; the Ottoman Empire
Ring	State Weakening under Warlordism	Low	Dominant	State Involution	Imperial China after the Opium Wars; sub-Saharan Africa in the pre-colonial era; part of the Middle East in the post-colonial era

resources from the society, since this would undermine their social groups' efforts to establish private-order institutions. The ruler accepts this moderate level of state authority because further strengthening the state would require a more coherent elite, which would threaten the ruler's personal power and survival. The state outsources some of its functions to social groups, which partner with the state to provide public goods.

This equilibrium best describes late imperial China before the Opium Wars (10th to mid-19th century), France in the Middle Ages (10th to mid-15th century), sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America under colonial rule (18th to early 20th century), the Islamic World during the Classical Period (7th to 12th century), and the Ottoman Empire (14th to early 20th century). In these cases, a central state assembled different social groups and relied on them to rule. These social groups included lineage organizations (in imperial China), feudal lords (in France), regional elites (in Latin America), and tribes or ethnic groups (in sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East). Robert Bates, for example, argues that the French aristocrats were tribal and locally oriented: each was attached to a certain locality.[50] Miguel Centeno characterizes state structure in colonial-era Latin America as a system in which: "Each part of the empire was connected to the center, but the separate regions were not linked with one another."[51] Similarly, Christopher Clapham notes that under colonial rule, African chiefs were confined to serving as "representatives of specified families within each chiefdom" and thus "created a group of local patrons with their own clienteles within the chiefdom."[52]

In the ring network's equilibrium, "State Weakening under Warlordism," the state, ruled by an autocratic leader, is too weak to control the society. Social groups therefore establish private-order institutions to provide security and justice. The state loses its monopoly over violence and is on the verge of collapse.

This equilibrium approximates imperial China after the Opium Wars (mid-19th to early 20th century), sub-Saharan Africa in the pre-colonial era (pre-19th century), and part of the Middle East in the post-colonial era (mid-20th century). In China, a weakened central state lost its monopoly over violence during the Taiping Rebellion (1850–1864). Private-order institutions organized along lineage lines became autonomous from the state and increasingly took over local administration, taxation, and defense. In pre-colonial Africa, as Jeffrey Herbst argues, "power was (quite realistically) conceived of as a series of concentric circles radiating out from the core."[53] While African leaders could control the core, "beyond the political core, power tended to diminish over distance."[54] In post-colonial Libya, Lisa Anderson points out, the destruction of the pre-colonial administration by the Italian colonizers eventually led to the revival of relying on kinship as the primary organizational principle in the hinterlands.[55]

Conclusion

More than fifty years ago, John Peter Nettl said, "The concept of state is not much in vogue in the social sciences right now."[56] Almost twenty years ago, Margaret Levi

remarked, "After a period of scholarly emphasis on theories of the state, social scientific interest in the state seems to have taken a back seat to institutions, on the one hand, and social capital, on the other."[57]

Today, these words still resonate. The books reviewed in this article, however, demonstrate that the state is a useful concept when examining long-term human political development. While in the short term institutions are exogenous and useful in analysis, they are endogenous in the long term. As Scott, Stasavage, and Acemoglu and Robinson show, the institutions we take for granted today—parliaments, elections, and universal suffrage—took centuries to evolve, and state-society interactions have been a major driving force behind this political development. Their works provide a comprehensive historical vantage point, which serves as a compelling foundation for the novel extension of state theories.

State theorists, however, still face the challenge of understanding the social foundations of state development. Future theoretical innovations may take place through two potential avenues: linking specific social structures and state outcomes, or blurring the boundary between the state and society. The "State-in-Society 2.0" framework I propose is a preliminary attempt to do just that. It represents a first step towards exploring state-society interactions. As I show, the framework can shed light on a wide variety of cases in premodern societies. In the modern era, as social structures become more complex, and the ways in which elites connect society diversify (through political, economic, and social ties), more research is needed to map elite social terrains in democracies and autocracies alike. The payoffs of continuing this effort by studying various cases at multiple points in time will be substantial.

NOTES

1. Recent works that take a long-term view also include Francis Fukuyama, *The Origins of Political Order* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011); Francis Fukuyama, *Political Order and Political Decay* (New York: Macmillan, 2014).

2. For a theoretical discussion of the blurred boundary between the state and society, see Anna Grzymala-Busse and Pauline Jones Luong, "Reconceptualizing the State: Lessons from Post-Communism," *Politics & Society*, 30 (August 2002), 529–54.

3. Hans Heinrich Gerth and C. Wright Mills, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 78.

4. David Frisby, *Georg Simmel* (London: Psychology Press, 2002), ix.

5. Robert A. Dahl, *Who Governs?* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961).

6. David Bicknell Truman, *The Governmental Process* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf., 1971), 33–48.

7. For a synthesis of structural functionalism, see Gabriel Abraham Almond and G. Bingham Powell, *Comparative Politics* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1978).

8. Perry Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State* (New York: Verso Books, 1979).

9. Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System I* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974).

10. See Chalmers Johnson, *MITI and the Japanese Miracle* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1982).

11. Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol, *Bringing the State Back In* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), vii.

12. Ibid., vii.

13. Ibid., 9.

14. Otto Hintze, *The Historical Essays of Otto Hintze* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975); Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990–1992* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992). Also see Brian Downing, *The Military Revolution and Political Change* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); Hendrik Spruyt, *The Sovereign State and Its Competitors* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Timothy Besley and Torsten Persson, "Wars and State Capacity," *Journal of the European Economic Association*, 6 (May 2008), 522–30; Mark Dincecco, *Political Transformations and Public Finances* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Lisa Blaydes and Christopher Paik, "The Impact of Holy Land Crusades on State Formation: War Mobilization, Trade Integration, and Political Development in Medieval Europe," *International Organization*, 70 (Summer 2016), 551–86. For critiques, see Didac Queralt, "War, International Finance, and Fiscal Capacity in the Long Run," *International Organization*, 73 (September 2019), 713–53; Mark Dincecco and Yuhua Wang, "Violent Conflict and Political Development over the Long Run: China versus Europe," *Annual Review of Political Science*, 21 (May 2018), 341–58; Anna Grzymala-Busse, "Beyond War and Contracts: The Medieval and Religious Roots of the European State," *Annual Review of Political Science*, 23 (May 2020), 19–36.

15. Charles Tilly, *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), 42.

16. Victoria Tin-bor Hui, *War and State Formation in Ancient China and Early Modern Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Jeffrey Herbst, *States and Power in Africa* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014); Miguel Angel Centeno, *Blood and Debt* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002).

17. For example, see Thomas Ertman, *Birth of the Leviathan* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Daniel Ziblatt, *Structuring the State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

18. Margaret Levi, "The State of the Study of the State," in Ira Katznelson and Helen Milner, eds., *Political Science: The State of the Discipline* (Washington, DC: American Political Science Association, 2002), 37.

19. Douglass C. North and Barry R. Weingast, "Constitutions and Commitment: The Evolution of Institutions Governing Public Choice in Seventeenth-Century England," *The Journal of Economic History*, 49 (December 1989), 803–32.

20. Robert H. Bates and Da-Hsiang Donald Lien, "A Note on Taxation, Development, and Representative Government," *Politics & Society*, 14 (March 1985), 53–70.

21. Margaret Levi, *Of Rule and Revenue* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

22. Barbara Geddes, *Politician's Dilemma* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

23. It is important to note some recent works that focus on social or communal elites' role in state building, see Marcus J. Kurtz, *Latin American State Building in Comparative Perspective* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Dan Slater, *Ordering Power* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010). For an important discussion of how ideas affect elites' decisions to start state-building projects, see Hillel David Soifer, *State Building in Latin America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

24. Joel S. Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), xvi.

25. Ibid., 29.

26. Ibid., 34–35.

27. Vivienne Shue, *The Reach of the State* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1988).

28. Elizabeth J. Perry, *Shanghai on Strike* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1993).

29. Joel Migdal, Atul Kohli, and Vivienne Shue, eds., *State Power and Social Forces* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

30. Charles Tilly, *Big Structures, Large Processes, Huge Comparisons* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1984).

31. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 23.

32. See, e.g., V. Gordon Childe, *Man Makes Himself* (London: Watts, 1965).

33. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 96.

34. See James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).

35. Ibid., 117.

36. Ibid., 121–22.

37. Ibid., 128.

38. Also see James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

39. Scott, 2008, 30.

40. Ibid., 35.

41. Seymour Martin Lipset, "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy," *American Political Science Review*, 53 (March 1959), 69–105; Barrington Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993); Carles Boix, *Democracy and Redistribution* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson, *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Ben W. Ansell and David J. Samuels, *Inequality and Democratization* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Daniel Ziblatt, *Conservative Political Parties and the Birth of Modern Democracy in Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

42. David Stasavage, *The Decline and Rise of Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020), 44.

43. Karl August Wittfogel, *Oriental Despotism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959).

44. If one dates English (British) universal suffrage to 1918, when women gained the right to vote.

45. For pioneering works that examine state-society linkages, see Peter B. Evans, *Embedded Autonomy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012); Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, *Competitive Authoritarianism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

46. Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan, *Party Systems and Voter Alignments* (New York: Free Press, 1967).

47. Ronald S. Burt, *Structural Holes* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992).

48. Prasenjit Duara, *Culture, Power, and the State* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1988), 74.

49. Robert H. Bates, *The Development Dilemma* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017).

50. Ibid., 47.

51. Centeno, 2002, 143.

52. Christopher S. Clapham, *Private Patronage and Public Power* (London: Burns & Oates, 1982), 84–85.

53. Herbst, 2014, 45.

54. Ibid., 56.

55. Lisa Anderson, *The State and Social Transformation in Tunisia and Libya, 1830–1980* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 9–10.

56. John P. Nettl, "The State as a Conceptual Variable," *World Politics*, 20 (July 1968), 559–92.

57. Levi, 2002, 33.