



THE DYNAMICS OF STATES

KLAUS SCHLICHTE

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The Dynamics of States

The Formation and Crises of State Domination

Edited by

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 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2005 by Ashgate Publishing

Published 2016 by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017, USA

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

The dynamics of states : the formation and crises of state domination

1. Authoritarianism 2. State, The 3. Developing countries - Politics and government

I. Schlichte, Klaus
321.9

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

The dynamics of states : the formation and crises of state domination / edited by Klaus Schlichte.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-7546-4504-5

1. State, The--Case studies. 2. Comparative government. I. Schlichte, Klaus.

JC11.D93 2005

320.9172'4--dc22

2005007436

ISBN 9780754645047 (hbk)

ISBN 9781138266858 (pbk)

Transferred to Digital Printing in 2014

Contents

<i>List of Contributors</i>	<i>vi</i>
<i>Foreword</i>	<i>viii</i>
1 Rethinking the State <i>Joel S. Migdal and Klaus Schlichte</i>	1
2 Whose State is it? Hindu-nationalist Violence and Populism in India <i>Julia Eckert</i>	41
3 The ‘Privatization’ of the State: North Africa in Comparative Perspective <i>Béatrice Hibou</i>	71
4 The State Against Itself: Market Reforms and the Judicialization of Politics in Mexico <i>Tom Lewis</i>	97
5 The Phoenix State: War Economy and State Formation in Liberia <i>François Prkic</i>	115
6 The Rise of the Social and the Banalization of the State in China <i>Jean-Louis Rocca</i>	137
7 Uganda – A State in Suspense <i>Klaus Schlichte</i>	161
8 Boundaries of State and Military in Pakistan <i>Boris Wilke</i>	183
<i>Index</i>	<i>211</i>

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Foreword

Debates about the state abound. However, the discussion about the reality and future of statehood in the age of globalization revolves almost exclusively around a minority of states, namely those in the OECD. It is hard to find any systematic analysis or discussion of the rest, the majority of states, under whose control four fifths of the world population live. In the late 1970s, the dispute between dependency theory and the vulgar modernization theory faded out, and since then little work has been devoted to an empirically enriched theoretical and comparative discussion of state domination outside the West. This book aims to relaunch this debate. It tries to combine recent developments in social theory with empirical research of different aspects of state domination outside the OECD.

In the beginning, the discussion between the authors assembled in this volume was about the theoretical necessity of terms for the current dynamics of political domination. The decision to collect the various contributions in a book was taken after it became apparent that expressions like ‘failed states’ and ‘rogue states’ were gaining more and more ground in a strange blend of political and academic discourse. Think tanks and organic intellectuals – in the Gramscian sense of the word – have produced a new discourse that simultaneously dominates the academic thinking on politics within the OECD and accompanies new forms of intervention.

There are reasons for scepticism that these discourses and their respective practices might not lead to the desired results. These doubts are based in on insights in local dynamics of politics. However, up until today, the conceptual vocabulary has been dominated by terms and expressions that were generated in the European experience, at a different historical time. Terms like ‘civil society’, ‘democratisation’ or ‘development’ designate the moving horizons of expectations of a predominantly Western public. However, their analytical value for the understanding and explanation of different contexts has become more dubious.

As this volume shows, the tendencies of state domination are ambiguous. States can extend their reach in one functional area, and at the same time, shrink in others. Phenomena like the delegation of state functions are typical in this regard. What looks like a weakening of the state’s grip might, in reality, reach into the societal world. We find that this and other ambiguities are a major challenge for the study of the political sociology of the emerging world society. Therefore, we consider this book as an offer to others to re-enter the debate concerning the question of who rules – where and how – in contemporary world society, and how statehood is to be interpreted in this context.

We do not intend to deliver another contribution to ‘improve’ statehood in the spirit of developmentalism or the ‘governance’ discussion with its social-engineering approach. Rather, we think, recent developments in social theory help us to understand the dynamics of domination from new perspectives by employing a new language that is not already subverted by its object: the state.

The use of 'we' in the foregoing paragraphs is justified by the fact that this book is the result of a rather rare collaboration between scholars from different national contexts. The 'Centre d'Etudes et des Recherches Internationales' (CERI) in Paris, the University of Washington in Seattle, and the University of Hamburg were the kernels of this discussion that began in 1996. These institutions contributed to the travel costs of our meetings that were also partly covered by grants supplied by the Thyssen-Foundation, Cologne, and the Hanseatic University-Foundation, Hamburg. A three-year research grant from the 'Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft' not only allowed Boris Wilke and the editor to conduct extended field research in South Asia and East Africa, but also to organize this process of discussion.

On several occasions, the results of our research and discussions have been collectively presented to the academic public; First, in October 1999 in a joint conference with the 'Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik' (SWP) – German Institute for International and Security Affairs – near Munich. And second, on a panel of the International Political Science Association (IPSA) which met in Quebec in summer 2000. Furthermore, single contributions and works that are related to the discussions of the group were debated in numerous different settings. We wish to thank William I. Zartman, Dietrich Jung, Jean-François Médard, Caty Clement and the community of scholars with particular regional expertise from SWP for their comments on earlier versions of the contributions in this volume. Amir Nahum and Paula Hudson proofread and edited the manuscripts and also gave numerous helpful comments, particularly for the French and German speaking authors so in love with fancy phrasing and ambiguous expressions. Barbara Lemberger's help in the production was as valuable as always.

Finally, the adventure of bringing such a group together and managing this process despite the normal bureaucratic hindrances was only possible due to the pragmatic attitude and liberal support of Klaus Jürgen Gantzel at the University of Hamburg and of Udo Steinbach of the German Orient-Institute in Hamburg.

Klaus Schlichte
Berlin, February 2004



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Chapter 1

Rethinking the State

Joel S. Migdal and Klaus Schlichte

Powerful forces during the tumultuous last quarter of the twentieth century buffeted states, leading to widespread, transformative crises in them. From members of the European Union facing daily challenges to their local officials' accepted prerogatives, to victims of rapid withdrawal of foreign investments in East and Southeast Asia, Latin America, and Russia, to the targets of brutal civil wars in Africa, states faced covert and overt challenges to their power. Rapidly increasing capital flows; unprecedented levels of debt; new information technologies; growing trade and the formation of trade blocs; heightened activity by international organizations, such as the International Monetary Fund, in the domestic affairs of states; wildly fluctuating commodity prices, especially for the most important of all commodities, oil; and the new power alignments spawned by the end of the Cold War were among the potent forces that strained existing governing institutions. By the beginning of the 1990s, the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Ethiopia, and several other states were territorially disintegrating; entire regimes in other East European countries were collapsing; and formal political institutions in much of Africa seemed to be more the booty of bloody wars than actual governing organizations.

Even as these momentous events brought continuous surprises, scholars continued to stick with their existing understanding of what the state is and how it interacts with its own society and outside forces. Dissatisfaction with those old ways of thinking about states in the circumstances of the transformative crisis in the last two decades led to the collaborative project that gave birth to this book.

To be sure, academic divisions abounded in the older models about the future of the state. Some scholars went on championing it, despite all the problems besetting it, as the key institution in people's lives, providing the rules and norms for daily life. Others shifted to predicting its imminent demise, with alternative institutions, both local and transnational, moving in to establish the parameters of everyday life as well as the source for collective identity. Indeed, this divergence over the centrality of the future state became the focus of serious debates in the fields of comparative politics and international relations (see, for example, Krasner 1999: 3).

These debates have spawned a bewildering number of models, theories, and definitions. According to the tradition of German *Staatslehre*, popular in studies of international law, the state is the enigmatic composite of ‘state territory, state people and state power’ (*Staatsgebiet, Staatsvolk und Staatsgewalt*, Jellinek 1920: 394). Others have seen it as the preeminent organization among many other organizations in society. Some political scientists have conceived of the state as part of ‘a system of negotiations’ (Scharpf 1991: 623). For many economists, the state is the ‘multitude of public economic actors’ (Stobbe 1983: 2). In the theory of social systems, the state is seen as ‘the self-description of the political system’, as ‘a semantic artifact’ (Luhmann 1984: 627). According to neoclassical theory, the state is an ‘organization which has a comparative advantage in violence’ and is therefore ‘in the position to specify and enforce property rights’ (North 1981: 21).

For all the divergences in views, most scholars across the social science disciplines have shared key assumptions about how to think about politics and the relations of states and societies. Drawing on Max Weber’s ideal-type of the modern rational state, scholars have generally assumed the coherence, integrity, and autonomy of the modern state, and some have made the study of autonomy a cottage industry. They have all started with the state having a fixed set of boundaries and a unified set of rules that circumscribe its realm. These assumptions of the state as the overarching institution have been the bedrock of the study of comparative politics since at least the beginning of the twentieth century. And it is those assumptions that this project aims to question.

The premise of the authors here is that a pervasive, transformative crisis of the state has occurred in recent decades, forcing a reevaluation of existing conceptual models. The following articles suggest an alternative way of thinking about, even of defining, states. Their premise is that actual states’ practices have often been fragmented, even contradictory; the institutionalization of the state has been a far cry from that of a centrally controlled organization using a monopoly over the legitimate use of violence in order to get its way. If scholars are to understand cases, for example, where military ‘units are fighting their own small wars and pursuing their own economic interests’,¹ rather than acting as parts of an integrated chain of command, they are going to need new starting assumptions.

Casting Aside Old Assumptions about the State

Existing state theories stumble on cases where the lines between state and society, public and private, formal and informal, and legal and illegal are blurred. Existing theories have been built on these binary opposites and have had difficulty even finding appropriate terms when these binaries have failed to capture the situation on the ground. Australian political scientist, Harold Crouch, reflected the

¹ ‘Indonesian Commanders Losing Control of Troops’, *New York Times*, 22 August 2000, p. 2.

frustration with existing terms in talking about soldiers in Indonesia who hire themselves out for all sorts of jobs, which are ‘illegal, semi-legal, a-legal and occasionally some legal like bodyguards’.² Older theories lack the vocabulary to deal with institutionalization of actual states along different lines, without these clear dualities.

Weber was careful to pose his concept of the state as coming out of the modern European experience and did not intend its application for politics outside Europe. But those who have drawn on Weber have often transposed this concept elsewhere for states that have emerged in very different circumstances. Meanwhile, the teleology of the early theories of modernization³ in which it was assumed that non-Western states would follow the route of European states has proven inadequate in the face of ongoing dynamics in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The same has happened with the structural determinism of the dependency school.⁴ Functional analyses that interpreted the state simply as the necessary fulfillment of certain ends – again pointing to the underlying unity of different states – similarly failed to anticipate the new and diverse forms of state institutionalization. Theory needs more than negatives – illegal, informal – to capture the variety of new forms.

Partly, the ideal-typical method used by Weber is at the root of these limits. An ideal-type, in the sense Weber conceived this heuristical tool, is an exaggeration, the over-statement of a particular characteristic in order to allow comparisons (Weber 1988: 190). An ideal-type is not itself a hypothesis, but it allows one to build hypotheses on deviations, variations, and totally different forms. Once these differences are noticed, the need for a vocabulary of description and explanation becomes obvious.

The central events of this project, a series of workshops by French, German, and United States scholars examining the decay of centralized governing institutions in non-Western countries, revealed those theoretical and conceptual anomalies and lacunae. Participants found themselves, early in the project, forced to shoe-horn their fascinating findings on Africa, Asia, and Latin America into analytic categories that simply did not fit their cases. In particular, using the standard understanding of the modern state inspired by Weber demanded intellectual contortions and gyrations that constrained imaginative thinking on the subject of decaying or changing-beyond-recognition central organizations and their relationships to their population. In particular, new sorts of alliances between state officials and individuals or groups in society – networks that did not fit well into existing analytical categories – demanded new attention. The institutionalization of these networks, their existence outside the formal laws on the books, and their tendency to ensconce different sets of state officials in conflicting normative and

² Quoted in *Ibid.*

³ Cf. for example the works of David Lerner (1958), David E. Apter (1965) and W.W. Rostow (1960).

⁴ Cf. for example the works of Amin (1976), Frank (1969) or the contributions in Senghaas (1972).

behavioural universes, all made it increasingly difficult to simply dismiss what was happening as illegal – as graft or corruption – or as private and informal. It became harder for those looking at their cases to describe what they were finding as simple deviations from the proper norm of what a state is (and should be). This introductory chapter attempts to pinpoint the difficulties with the old assumptions and to suggest an alternative way of imagining the state. It aims, in short, to capture the different view of the bases of statehood underlying the empirical studies presented in the workshops.

The chapter begins with a brief examination of some of these old assumptions found in writings on the state, both of those touting the state's resilience and those pointing to the state's fall from its exalted perch. It then turns to the task of re-imagining the state, starting with a definition in place of Weber's conception. That definition suggests studying the state by looking at a set of dynamics within the state and between state and society. We set out these dynamics in the following section. Finally, we offer some conclusions and ask about the future of the state – the entity that, along with the market, has been the cornerstone in the building of the modern world.

The State as an Autonomous Sphere

This section begins by drawing a composite picture of the state by distilling some common assumptions from diverse writings of social scientists. While the language used in this composite, particularly the emphasis on space and boundaries, is different from that used by many political scientists and others, it does afford a window into some of the underlying assumptions in existing state theories. Scholars looking at state autonomy, drawing on realist and other theories in international relations, have imagined the world as divided into well-insulated political spaces. In existing models of the state, the political boundaries drawn on maps mark not only the endpoints of state jurisdiction; they also set off social systems, rules and norms of daily behaviour, and the bounds of primary collective identity. Boundaries are social, not just physical; phenomena (cf. Ruggie 1993). In these insulated spaces, one complex actor, the state, has been able to differentiate itself from the tangle of other social organizations and their specific interests.

These other organizations, from family and clans to business corporations and churches, have often been grounded in very different imagined configurations of space, whether these have been local, regional, or transnational. The centrality of the concept of autonomy comes in the ability of the state to transcend the power of these other organizations and their interests and re-frame them in terms of the state's territory, which insulated space. It has not so much obliterated other conceptions of the configuration of space as subordinated them to the primary ordering of space, that defined by the state's borders.

Autonomy means that the state is a coherent, fairly unified actor, set apart from, or above, other social organizations. The state's coterie of officials, according to these theories, *en masse* mesh the organizational interests of the state with their

own, particularly its requirement that its boundaries be regarded as the most meaningful shapers of space. Through its officials, the state exhibits its own preferences and has the strength to act on those preferences and to change the behaviour of others. Its sheer power to make others bend to its rules is transformed by its many officials in their bureaus and agencies into an ordered sort of power, what Weber called bureaucratic domination (*bürokratische Herrschaft*) (Weber 1985: 551).

The state generates domination in its designated space through a uniform set of rules on how to behave (formal law, bureaucratic regulations, judicial precedents, customary procedures, and more), backed by the threat and practice of violence, trumping any other rules that might exist. Totalitarian states have set and executed those rules themselves or, frequently through the strong arm of single political parties; in them, the internal space of the state can be thought of as fairly undifferentiated. The tentacles of the party and state apparatus reach uniformly from central literal and figurative sites through the territory, applying a single code in a one-size-fits-all manner.

Liberal and federal states, in contrast, have further differentiated their bounded space. For example, liberal states have allowed for areas where numerous other institutions, such as families and markets, create and execute some rules for daily behaviour and where individuals possess rights, creating seemingly inviolable spaces for certain forms of behaviour (for example, speech, worship, and assembly with others). In federal states, the rules of daily behaviour take on different guises in different sites; a 16-year old in the United States can be licensed to drive in Oregon but not New Jersey. Even in the case of liberal states, however, it is the central state that establishes the parameters for the domain of other organizations, both in terms of area and function, and the permissible types and limits of behaviour for organizations and individuals. Thus, various families may have rules quite different from one another – one in which parents set their children's curfews at 10:00 p.m.; another, at midnight; and a third, in which they set no curfew at all – but no parents can make rules to regularly beat their children. When other organizations violate the state's parameters, as when a family's parents abuse their children or a corporation operates monopolistically, state officials may discipline or even disband the family or the corporation. Whether totalitarian or liberal or something in between, states, from this perspective, exercise supremacy in both establishing the bounds of meaningful space and the kinds of permitted behaviour within their borders.

Most political theories posit the autonomous state as the *sine qua non* for people (its society in that political space) to survive and, if possible, to achieve a modicum of prosperity (cf. Evans and Rauch 1999). Through the sheer physical force at its disposal and, ultimately, through the moral power that it generates as the pre-eminent organization, the state tames or mediates the unruly differences that bring members of society into conflict and threaten their individual and collective survival and well-being. It simultaneously protects them from outside predators and imposes upon them an order, both social and moral, that allows them

to live peaceably with one another. Effective property rights necessary for economies to function are mainstays of that sort of order; so, too, are the codes of other laws and the mediation and stability that an autonomous state can provide. These laws are both firm guidelines for behaviour in various realms – rules in the strictest sense – and symbolic representations (as in reverence for the Law) of the overall collective order.

In U.S. academic literature, the watershed in highlighting the importance of the autonomous state came with the publication of the book, *Bringing the State Back In*, edited by three important figures in American sociology and political science, Evans, Skocpol, and Rueschemeyer (1985).⁵ The hoopla surrounding the book as a turning point in academic studies was certainly overdone. Perhaps the word ‘state’ itself was not analytically present in key works published in the United States in those earlier years before *Bringing the State Back In*; still, conceptions of a powerful, centralized political organization imposing rules on what had been diverse populations and shaping the way people thought of themselves and the larger meaning of their lives certainly could be found in the earlier social science and policy literature. Many social scientists, implicitly or explicitly, understood political institutions as moulding people to think of themselves first in terms of the political space claimed by the state (for example, as *French* within the territory claimed by France) and only secondarily in terms of their other interests and social organizations (for example, as farmers, Catholics, or Bretons, or even Algerians, at one point).

State autonomy, then, indicated a power separate from, even above, the fractious groups interacting in a given space – a power that could relegate these other organizations to a subservient role. Even in cases where it could not blend people into some harmonious whole, that is, shape them into a single social entity, such as a nation with an overriding unitary identity, the autonomous state could at

⁵ While much was made by them of the innovation of their approach in placing the autonomous state at the centre of analysis, in fact, long before the appearance of their book, some other researchers had employed a similar conception of the state as an actor powerful enough to change existing currents in society. As far back as the late 1950s, for example, the Committee for the Comparative Study of New Nations, based at the University of Chicago, incorporated the idea of a strong state imposing itself upon, even shaping, society. Note the words of David Apter, a key member of the Committee, in a book, *Old Societies and New States*, that was probably the Committee's most important publication: ‘The state as a legal expression is not merely that of society in legal terms. It is also the basis for requiring obligation to the community...The society gives purpose to the individual. The state bases itself on the right to express that purpose and exact from its citizens those obligations necessary to ensure success. It may do so in a variety of ways, some of which appear to obliterate the individual. Identity, then, through citizenship, locates the individual in relation to his obligations’ (Apter 1965: 90).

In one of the most influential scholarly books of the 1960s, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, published nearly two decades before *Bringing the State Back In*, Huntington’s insistence on the centrality of autonomy for political institutions heralded the emphasis of many later researchers on the autonomous state.

least mediate among them, establish rules of contestation, and serve as a court of last resort, all within a moral and legal frame based on its own political boundaries. As the rule-giver and the rule-enforcer, the state stood out as the ultimate force in people's lives, shaping their daily behaviour and even how they thought of themselves and the meaning they attached to their actions and lives (the state was something for which one would even give up his or her life). Even when state identity was not primary (as it was in the nation-state), the state's political boundaries constituted a social boundary by encompassing the people – society – who related to each other through the state-generated moral and legal universe within set and recognized boundaries.

Perhaps the biggest irony involving *Bringing the State Back In* was that it heralded the imagined autonomous state precisely at the outset of the storm that precipitated transformative crises in actual states – the rush of petrodollars followed by the precipitous drop in oil prices, through-the-ceiling debt, the emergence of the IMF as a force demanding internal structural changes in national economies, the consolidation of Gorbachev's power and his determination to end the Cold War, the collapse of the South as an effective bloc in world politics, and more. These forces led to the crippling of what had seemed to be the promising new central state organizations of Africa and sent others in Asia, Latin America, and Europe into prolonged crises regarding their powers and prerogatives. Autonomous-state theory came to be canonized at the very moment that real states began a nosedive, with a host of forces nibbling away at their supposed insularity and supreme position within their borders.

Globalization and the Attack on the Autonomous State

Another stream of social science literature in the late 1980s and the 1990s took a different path from that found on autonomy. This school grew out of the dependency and world-systems literature that had gained currency in the 1970s. Both of those had challenged existing historiography and social science approaches by rejecting the presumption of the insularity of states. The concept of insularity directed scholars to analyze events, processes, and qualities within territorial boundaries to explain social and political formations, as well as change (or the lack of it). This focus was a point of convergence for both the state autonomy scholars and those who looked to broader elite, normative, and systemic factors. Dependency theorists, such as Frank (1967), saw porous state territorial boundaries, not well insulated ones. Rejecting the historiographical presumptions of earlier thinkers, they explained highly stratified, economically deformed patterns of Latin American (and other non-Western) societies in terms of forces found in far-off metropolises, in the United States and Europe. The ability of Western states and corporations to transcend Latin American states' territorial boundaries with impunity, through the collaboration of key economic and political elites in these states, underlay the creation and perseverance of Latin American under-development. While Evans (1979) tried to straddle the divide between

dependency and state-centered approaches, for the most part dependency theorists roundly condemned the assumption of a world defined by impermeable state borders.

Similarly, a variety of world-system approaches put forth by Meyer/Hannan (1979), Modelski (1987), Dunn (1995), and others and, most notably, by Wallerstein (1974), followed dependency theories in attacking the old historiography. Going beyond the dependency theorists' point about the permeability of boundaries, they contended that the territorial state was not at all the appropriate unit of analysis to understand social formations and change – especially the skewed distributions of wealth and power locally and worldwide. The fitting boundaries to understand existing relations and change are those of sprawling interactive, transnational systems, of which in today's world there is only one, spanning the entire globe. In this conception, state boundaries could be understood as sieves, filtering out some things but letting many others through, within a larger, more meaningful unit of analysis, the world system.

Given the popularity of globalization theories only twenty or so years after the ascent of dependency and world-systems approaches, it is surprising how rapidly those earlier works faded in the scholarly imagination and how little credit the globalization writers have paid to their predecessors who had moved away from state-centered analysis. Perhaps the Marxist ideological project of numerous (but by no means all) world-system writers as opposed to the liberal designs of so many globalists accounts for the amnesia of those touting globalization. In any case, while the present-day works on globalization have rejected dependency's tendency to analyze social dynamics in dyadic or bilateral terms and world system's penchant to see interactions in such tight terms that they appeared almost conspiratorial, they have shared the earlier scholars' skepticism about the centrality of the state. They have turned dependency theory's morality tale – the evil exploitation of permeable, weak societies – on its head: the penetration of state boundaries by global forces has been, and will continue to be, a liberating process, leading to widespread prosperity and well-being.

Globalization theories gained momentum, particularly towards the end of the twentieth century, by arguing that the vaunted state that Evans *et al.* had trumpeted was, in fact, in the midst of its swan song. One scholar, Saskia Sassen, put the case in rather moderate terms: 'The growth of a global economy in conjunction with the new telecommunications and computer networks that span the world has profoundly reconfigured institutions fundamental to processes of governance and accountability in the modern state' (Sassen 1996: xi). The punch line comes in what old processes Sassen sees as collapsing – sovereignty and territorial exclusivity. 'Sovereignty', she goes on, 'remains a feature of the system, but it is now located in a multiplicity of institutional arenas: the new emergent transnational private legal regimes, new supranational organizations (such as the WTO and the institutions of the European Union), and the various international human rights codes. All these institutions constrain the autonomy of national states' (Sassen 1996: 29).

As is clear in Sassen, the globalization literature singled out the forces – economic mostly, but others as well – that cut across state boundaries, determining life opportunities and shaping individual behaviour and, by their very nature, subverting the state's attempt to insulate and privilege its defined space. The sovereign state and its correlate institutions, such as citizenship and civil society, then, become an artifact of 'cultural and historical specificity' (Sassen 1996: xiii), that is, an institution whose time has passed. It is not that Sassen denies the core assumptions of state theorists about what a state is. She declares readily that rule in the modern world has flowed 'from the absolute sovereignty of the state over its national territory' (Sassen 1996: 3). The bone she picks with these state theorists is whether the historical conditions that supported the old assumptions have now passed. 'Can we continue to take for granted', she asks, 'as much of the literature on the state does over and over again, that the [state's] exclusive authority [is] ... today the same as it was before the current phase of globalization...?' (Sassen 1996: xv).

In short, this mode of research contested the central claims of the autonomous-state literature. Writers on globalization mostly attacked the idea of autonomy, arguing that powerful outside forces (based on wholly different configurations of space from that of the state) have begun to shred states' pretensions of dominance in shaping their societies. Rules now, the claim goes, are generated as much, or more, by powerful forces whose centres are outside the state's territory as they are by the state apparatus.

More works than one could count have attested to the demise of the autonomous state. Much of this literature has overstated the case that global economic (and other) forces have crippled the state (Migdal 2001, [chap. 5](#)). Many international and transnational forces have propped it up more than they have sabotaged it. Frequently, the state has become the all-important mediator between global actors and the domestic population, putting state officials in a position to enhance their power over society through the control of key distributional mechanisms, directing such resources as foreign aid, loans, and investments and using them as levers to propagate state rules.

Still, globalization enthusiasts have rightly pointed to the contingent nature of state boundaries. Not only might physical boundaries of states change, as they have in recent years for several in Eastern Europe, but the social nature of boundaries might also be subject to change. States' varying abilities to maintain the insularity of their borders in controlling flows of labour, goods, and capital have meant that not all boundaries have produced the vaunted insularity associated with the state-centered literature. More than that, different configurations of space associated with these movements of people, products, and cash – from smuggling rings to multi-national corporations – have offered alternative social configurations, as well, including with whom people associate, where their supreme loyalties lie, and what their primary identities are. The parameters of society might not be explained best by state boundaries at all but by these alternative configurations of space, such as those encompassing transnational families, which might span several continents.

Numerous alternative configurations might now pose similar challenges to states around the world that Jews did to so many European states, whose officials and non-Jewish population so often suspected that the Jews' primary identity, loyalty, and practices were less defined by state boundaries than by the imagined boundaries of the Jewish world (Chivot 1997).

But, for all their telling criticisms of state-centered literature, globalists frequently have not abandoned some key elements of state theories. In fact, writers defending state autonomy and those championing the momentous impact of globalization have shared some key assumptions. To be sure, they have historicized those assumptions differently in that the state-autonomy researchers have continued to see the conditions that promoted the autonomous state as still largely extant (and, possibly, even enhanced), while the globalization scholars have pointed to new conditions undermining the state's ability to maintain its autonomy, especially since the exponential growth in the rates of capital movement starting around 1980. What do these two schools share about their understanding of the state in its heyday, even if they disagree on when that heyday was or is?

Sharing Assumptions about the State

For both researchers professing the continuing strength of the state and those touting the power of globalization, there is uniformity in *the idea* of the state, a standard understanding of what a state is. That is, both have pretty much the same view as to what a properly functioning state looks like and what it does. It tends to exhibit high levels of internal coherence, to use rational-legal methods to set the parameters of who gets what, to implement policies in a way that is faithful to stated policy and written law, to favour aggregate economic benefits through high overall growth rates over high benefits to some but with overall lower growth, to provide some minimal rewards and rights universally, to limit others from establishing competing ground-rules and systems for a biased distribution of rewards. And it achieves all this through a mix of violence (as in putting people in jail against their will), threats of violence, and means convincing people that what states do through their officials is the moral, right way for things to be done. In short, the common understanding of the state imagines a set of parameters for state-society relations, of the state's role in distributing rewards, and then canonizes that image. The two approaches put forth by statist and globalists both see state strength – its ability to transcend local and transnational forces – in its capacity to garner key resources from its own territory and from beyond. Recruitment of resources enables it to build powerful institutions, including armies, police, courts, regulatory agencies, schools, and more, that can enforce particular rules of behaviour among its population and socialize people as to the appropriateness of the state's role in making rules for daily behaviour and the intrinsic rightness of those rules.

In Weber's terms, as noted above, this image is an ideal-type. It is what a state firing on all cylinders is imagined to be. Of course, in real human society, no state

can do all that an ideal-type state is imagined to, as Weber makes perfectly clear (Weber 1988: 190). Tremendous variation has existed among states in the levers that they have controlled in order to garner resources and to accomplish this skewed distribution of economic (and other) opportunities; in the sheer quantity of resources they could mobilize through taxation, aid, plunder, conscription, and so on; in their effectiveness in making sure the resources ended up in the hands they wanted; in the inner coherence they exhibited in deciding and acting upon whom to favour; and in the means they used to achieve the selective distribution of rewards. Those differences among states are extremely important (for scholars of the state, these variations have been the stuff of comparative politics).

It is not only that differences exist from state to state but also that world-historical conditions may move real states as a group closer to, or farther from, the imagined ideal-type. Here is where state-autonomy and globalization theorists part ways, over how far from the ideal-type contemporary states can be expected to deviate. The state-autonomy theorists point to all sorts of conditions that have enhanced state power, from technological improvements in means of surveillance to fine-tuned fiscal instruments that allow them to manage economic cycles effectively. These theorists point to the tendency of important international actors to single out the state as their interlocutor. Globalists, on the other side, talk of other circumstances, which undercut state ability to approach the ideal-type, from spiraling increases in international capital flows to information flows that undercut the state's territorially-based message. These theorists highlight the augmented power of transnational institutions that limit state choices. Even with all the high-tech surveillance techniques at hand, they indicate, record numbers of people are crossing borders in direct opposition to state laws.

But both sorts of theories approach the question of variation among states, at any given time or in changing world-historical moments, similarly. Variation can be conceptualized and measured only as distance from the ideal-type. As long as the *idea* of the state is uniform and constant, the variation of states, even the failure of some states, can be expressed only in terms of deviation from the standard. If real states fell short of the standard, as they were bound to do, all sorts of words had to be invented to express the gap between actual practice and the ideal. Terms, such as quasi-states, soft states, shadow states, weak states, non-state states, decay, corruption, weakness, and relative capacity, all implied that the way things really work are somehow exogenous to the normative model of what the state and its relations to society are, or should be. Comparison comes in specifying and measuring deviation from the norm or the ideal-type. State capacity can be gauged against a measuring stick whose endpoint is a variant of Weber's ideal-type of the modern rational state. For non-European states, the danger is that the one measure, the ideal-type state drawn from European experience, creates a hierarchy in which those farthest from the ideal-type are lowest on the hierarchy. This methodological point is made quite well by Fernandes (1997: 13):

The point is to develop an analytical framework that can generate generalities without creating a hierarchy of cases, in which one context provides the basis for an ideal type and other contexts provide the field for the application and testing of this ideal type. The establishment of such a hierarchy in fact hinders the comparativist project by creating both methodological and theoretical biases. When categories of analysis are derived from particular contexts, general conclusions drawn from such analysis reflect the conclusions of these particular contexts and do not provide us with a comparative understanding of social and political phenomenon. This disjuncture is perhaps most evident when categories derived from a Western European context are transposed onto 'Third World' cases.

Fernandes (1997: 16) goes on to note that rejecting these ideal types has the added benefit of shedding new light on the Western experience, as well, through an examination of the struggles in the West where contested meanings have been lost in the narrow focus on the form of the ideal type.

Questioning Assumptions about the State

The understanding of Weber's ideal-type conception of the state that became dominant in the study of politics presents serious difficulties both normatively (something for which leaders strive and which is seen as the proper form of rule) and analytically (something that scholars want to study in all its rich variation). The standard understanding of the state as *the* rule-maker, either enacting the rules for human behaviour itself or authorizing other social organizations, such as families and businesses, to make and enforce some rules puts a tremendous burden on the state. The assumption that only it does, or should, create rules and that only it does, or should, maintain the violent means to bend people to obey those rules minimizes and trivializes the rich negotiation, interaction, and resistance that occur in every human society among multiple systems of rules. It posits a human society where one incredibly coherent and complex organization exercises an extraordinary hegemony of thought and action over all other social organizations intersecting that territory. It has no way to theorize about arenas of competing multiple sets of rules, other than to term these as negative, as failures or weak states or even non-states.

Social scientists, starting decades ago, felt a keen need to soften that assumption by creating additional categories to study states that took into account how overburdened any state would be that even tried to reach that ideal of pure autonomy. Neo-patrimonialism, for example, was a concept put forward attempting to capture the limited capabilities of actual states and their systems of rule that were decidedly not rational-legal in nature (for example, Eisenstadt 1973). Even the champion of bringing the state back in, Evans, wrote a book a decade later trying to come to terms with his observations that autonomy is far more attenuated than he had imagined earlier (Evans 1995).