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What Does Frederick Serve? Conceptualizing the State as Power

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Abstract

This paper seeks to explore the interrelationship of the state and power. The work focuses primarily on the attitudes toward power and government contained within a broad body of work, focusing primarily on historical institutional and liberal institutional models of the state compared to structuralist systems. It identifies differences between the three models and highlights their clashing notions of power and explains their meaning for "stateness," defined as the functions and systems typically associated with governing a society. It identifies the fundamental clash as being one between concentration of power and its continual expansion versus a diffusion of power that provides security to the center with more focus on efficiency than expansion. Further theoretical development is needed in future works regarding the ways in which liberal and nonliberal political systems validate their use of power. This is significant toward overcoming mental blocks that inhibit the ability of policymakers to effectively ascertain appropriate centers of gravity in organizations and focus too generally on "the government" as a constituted entity.

Tuong Vu begins "Studying the State through State Formation" with an oft-forgotten reality regarding the state: "the state is a central concept in the study of politics but has had an unstable career in American political science" (1, 2010). Terms like "state building" and "nation building" typically reflect the series of assumptions commonly made about government and help construct an understanding of how "the state" is conceived in a society. It is typically assumed that these two entities, state and nation, are concrete and can thus be formed and torn down simply by removing groups, actors, or practices from their daily repertoire. This assumption is significant with regards to the gaps found in observations made regarding state failure, in particular. The newness of the concept of a "failed state" highlights the fact that only recently has it been considered that a government could collapse yet a territory still be validated as being property of the fallen state. This connection between the state, borders, and power are the focus of this study. Frederick the Great famously declared himself to be "first servant" of the

state in one of the first instances where "the state" was recognized as being a constituted entity. However, as a member of the pinnacle of power in government, how did Frederick serve something beyond himself? Was it an interest? A narrative? A people? Power itself? These questions are hugely important in considering the state as an object of analysis in political science. Thus, this paper seeks to develop not a definition of the state, but rather to further the understanding of how conceptions of the state explain assumptions made in state literature regarding power and its role in society. As will be shown, power comes in many forms throughout history. Instead, the differing models to be presented are different ways through which order can be given and provide a series of possible explanations for our own understandings of the relationship between state and power. Often, in spite of "the state's" strange history in political science, its existence is often overassumed, which in part spurs the critiques of structuralists and liberal institutionalists, though these have not to this point sufficiently broken down the excessive reliance on state models for formulating an understanding of the international system.

It is important to understand the history of the idea of "the state" to comprehend the underpinnings of how states are conceptualized. Kenneth Dyson pays due attention to the areas in which the term itself first emerged. The general historical assumption is that "the state" as understood as a concept in political science emerged following the 1648 Peace of Westphalia that ended the Thirty Years' War. This argument relies on several assumptions: that after the Peace of Westphalia religious wars ended and the Peace of Westphalia created a normative

basis for territorial absolutism.[1] In part because the "Westphalian system" of interstate relations emerged in Germany, Prussia is often viewed as the first true instance of a "modern territorial state." Bluntschli is quoted in Dyson as having stated that the state first came into being when Frederick the Great referred to himself as the "first servant of the state."[2] Frederick highlights the implicit understanding of the state that constitutes "the modern territorial state." This object to which Frederick is obliged service is vague in definition. The state is something that seems to exist above governing structure and society as a whole. The notion of acting in favor of "the state," however vague that entity may be, has a history of its own. Richelieu's propagandists created the term *raison d'etat* with this logic in mind. There is a certain being, the state, for which "the monarch, as the embodiment of justice, was the arbiter of a body politic."[3] These examples present a sort of "otherness" to the state that makes it different from other entities in society that may exert power over society and its members, such as businesses, schools, or local notables. Even the apparent pinnacle of power, government, serves this larger undefined entity. Thus Dyson refers to the state as a "peculiar society."[4] This peculiarity of the state is the subject of this paper: how have scholars sought to understand "the state" within the context of how it differs from other parts of society? Does it truly differ in any meaningful fashion, and if so, how?

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[1] Daniel H. Nexon, *The Struggle for Power in Early Modern Europe: Religious Conflict, Dynastic Empires, and International Change* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 276.

[2] Kenneth H.F. Dyson, *The State Tradition in Western Europe: A Study of an Idea and Institution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 28.

[3] Dyson, 30.

[4] Dyson, 35.

Approaches to understanding "the state" have varied over time. Historically, it was assumed that government and society served something larger than immediate ends. A notion of a "neutral public power" emerged following the religious wars in which government prioritizes secular concerns identified as "the public interest" over partisan religious politics.[5] This notion of something existing outside of government to which power is employed in service of is the source of Frederick's understanding of his role in society. This narrative of a state and large public interest, however, was not universally held. Dyson highlights that "reason of state" was seconded to "rule of law" in what he identifies as "liberal" England.[6] This attitude, shared in American political science, produced the liberal state tradition that emphasizes limited government and elite politics at the expense of considering institutions and their roles in society. Dyson carries this critique into practice and argues that:

> The vulnerability of democratic societies without a state tradition… lies in a poverty of government that fudges issues of purpose in favor of registering political pressures and maintains an unending faith in the virtues of 'muddling through'.[7]

Dyson's critique of societies lacking a state tradition is significant because it emphasizes the importance of this value of "stateness" to the exercise of power. The British address social ills via their narrative regarding where power is located. If power is found in elite relations, then "fundamental reappraisal of institutions" is rarely undertaken because it is not viewed as necessary to address chronic policy

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[5] Dyson, 31.
[6] Dyson, 44.
[7] Dyson, 280.

failure.[8] Structuralist thinkers that veered away from the Marxist focus on pure class relations emphasized the role of the state as a narrative rather than a constitutive being. Government and "stateness" became less significant in their formulation than the avenues outside of government through which power was exercised. These three models, state-centric, liberal institutionalist, and structuralist, differ in two fundamental regards: how power is exercised in each model and how power is legitimated. In developing an understanding of these two facets of each tradition, it will become clear that these approaches differ with regards to how they understand the state, but more significantly within the context of power and how it is operationalized across society.

It is not particularly useful to pinpoint the exact date in which modern government came into being. Rather, some argue that a series of processes occurred over time to create varying levels of "stateness" in which government was effectively operationalized across a bounded territorial space. One of the most influential theories regarding state development comes from Charles Tilly, who argues that the process of war-making created a need for administrative and coercive control over territories, and thus bureaucratized governance. In Tilly's formulation, states participate in four activities: war-making, state-making, protection, and extraction.[9] State-making, defined as the elimination of rivals within a territory, occurred during building up of war-making capacity, as it required the circumvention of local authorities to extract wealth to fund such efforts. This

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[8] Dyson, 280.

[9] Charles Tilly, "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime," in *Bringing the State Back In*, ed. Peter Evans et al. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 181.

simultaneously increased the ability of the nascent state to extract wealth from a given population. The act of extraction, "if successful, entailed the elimination, neutralization, or cooptation of the great lord's local rivals."[10] This in turn led to the formalization of institutions of coercion, namely tax collection agencies and police forces, and thus state-building happened. This series of processes in which territories were expanded and capital was extracted to further the process of military expansion depends on what Tilly typifies as a state's inevitable desire to centralize. This desire to centralize and to become autonomous typified state formation literature. In this model, physical might is concentrated in "the state" as a concentrated, centralized institution maintaining autonomy above other actors. Hendrik Spruyt provides a comparably important model of how states came into being, though one focused more on finances than military might.

Spruyt's argument summarizes the development of the Italian city-states, the Hanseatic League, and the sovereign state of France and compares them to help develop an understanding of why the sovereign state prevailed over other competitive models. Each had similar abilities to partake in Tilly's four activities of state-making, war-making, protection, and extraction, thus making them comparably effective models. For Spruyt, territoriality and centralization were the state's strengths. City-leagues such as the Hansa lacked a firm locus of power when compared to the French Capetian kings and were fundamentally non-territorial.[11] City-leagues lacked territorial definition, which made troop movements difficult. In

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[10] Tilly, 183.

[11] Hendrik Spruyt, *The Sovereign State and its Competitors: An Analysis of Systems Change* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 153.

spite of their comparable functional capability to defend themselves, geography proved to be the downfall of disparate territorial entities such as the Hansa. City-states, while modeled similarly to states but on a smaller scale, faced unique challenges that states did not. The extraction process's tendency to concentrate resources in the capital city led to stiff resistance from nearby towns, which continually contested the center as a result.[12] The state survived due to several factors. First, the authority of the king was final. This put him in a better position to remove feudal structural remnants. Second, the state's territorial nature made one state compatible with another. Clearly defined borders made it easier to determine who subjects were, and this in turn made extraction easier. What unites these theories is telling about the assumptions Tilly and Spruyt make about the state.

The institutionalist models locate power in the upper reaches of a centralized bureaucracy. Tilly and Spruyt equally emphasize the importance of centralization and bounded authority as being the defining characteristics of statehood. These two notions are significant insofar as they remain the lens through which authority is typically viewed when one thinks of "the state" in subsequent literature. Institutionalist models rely upon the assumption that power in a pre-state era was dispersed across different entities, though when the state came into existence it concentrated in one entity. The territorial nature of the state remained fairly undisputed in its history as being a distinguishing characteristic, but the logical extension of concentrated power, autonomy, was the source of significant disagreement in subsequent literature.

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[12] 154.

Tilly and Spruyt differ with regards to their logic as to how the state came into being, though agree in terms of what the state does once it constitutes itself. Both controversially assert "the centrality of the state" to power's exertion over populations. The state in both models becomes the domestic manager and primary international actor, as power to perform both actions is located in a concentrated location. Frederick Mundell Watkins presciently provided a counter to these arguments in *The State As a Concept of Political Science* in which he argues that the state is not a unique actor. At the time of writing in 1934, Watkins feared that the state was overly preponderant in political science as a source of observation.[13] In his observation, the state was conceived as being unique due to its status as a sovereign that maintained supremacy of "will and power." Similarly, thinkers asserted the primacy of the state with regards to coercion. Watkins entirely rejects the uniqueness of the state as a point of analysis. The state does not seem to purely exist to extract resources and conquer enemies and expand territory, as Tilly alleges. In countering this Watkins points to the lack of taxes levied on Muslims of the early Umayyad Empire. The purpose of the state is thus not one of pure resource exploitation.[14] Most significantly, Watkins challenges both Tilly's and Spruyt's primary assertions that the state is distinct because it is sovereign. He argues that all group associations gravitate toward autonomy. Because private actors within organizations exercise coercive control over their membership, states are not

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[13] Frederick Mundell Watkins, *The State As a Concept of Political Science* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers), 1934, 2.
[14] Watkins, 43.

unique in their maintenance of coercive power.[15] David Truman argues that humans inevitably organize into groups that "like all such interpersonal relationships, involve power." Groups tend to exert power over individuals. By identifying with a certain group, an individual likely adopts "attitudes, values, and the frames of reference in terms of which he interprets his experiences."[16] Interest groups, in Truman's formulation, are even more significant, because if it succeeds in imposing its claims on society, it gains power over other groups. It is for this reason that Watkins argues states are non-unique, and not worthy of being studied as the major point of analysis in political science.[17] All units in society gravitate toward what he describes as the upper bound of power, sovereignty and autonomy to act. The state is not the only unit that does this. Because of this, the state is merely one of many actors that ought to be observed as the center of analysis.

Watkins and Truman are a part of a broader trend that accounts for why Vu referred to the history of the study of the state in American political science as having "an unstable career." Because the state was viewed as functionally similar to other entities, its component parts were studied more intensely than the state itself. Skocpol argues that this portrayal leads to false conclusions about the nature of the state. The notion that government was merely an arena in which different interest groups compete to shape decisions ignored the fact that government has more to do

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[15] Watkins, 68.
[16] David B. Truman, *The Governmental Process: Political Interests and Public Opinion*. 2nd ed., (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971), 505.
[17] Watkins, 68.

with "concrete international and domestic struggles over state building."[18] Skocpol makes concessions to the notion that interest groups also struggle for autonomy and seek to make use of state organs as a means of asserting power, but that state interventions in society, differing kinds of state capacity, and state "knowledge" are clearly worthy of study.[19] This constitutes an initial formulation of knowledge as being a form of power. This discussion of the state and its relationship with knowledge has to some extent been outlined in segments of Foucault's attempt to determine how knowledge and its control operate in society.

Evans, Rueschemeyer, and Skocpol were a part of a movement that emerged in the 1980s in order to refocus the study of the state away from liberal institutionalist models like those presented by Truman and Watkins. Instead, they present a model of the state that is in part defined by its relationship to knowledge. This relationship has two facets. The first relates to the interaction of the state with knowledge that exists outside of it. The rise of "the public sphere" simultaneously contributed to claim making against the state, which was a result of the search for information regarding the claims being made. Once this knowledge spreads, it creates demands for new state interventions, "which require still more social knowledge."[20] Rueschemeyer and Evans add to this notion in their discussion of state-led economic interventions. They note that even if a state is autonomous, this

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[18] Theda Skocpol, "Bringing the State Back In: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research," in *Bringing the State Back In*, ed. Peter Evans et al. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 5.

[19] Skocpol, "Bringing the State Back In," 358.

[20] Peter B. Evans et al., "Toward a More Adequate Understanding of the State," in *Bringing the State Back In*, ed. Peter Evans et al. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 357.

in no way implies "superior knowledge and capability; state interventions may be unsuccessful or even disastrous because of wrong assumptions and insufficient information."[21] This implies that the state's power is derived from the trust, as related to knowledge, invested in it by a territorial bounded populace. In this sense, states are on similar ground with other social actors with regard to knowledge. It would seem that because their knowledge is imperfect, it does not necessarily lead to an increased measure of autonomy relative to other social actors. This imperfection of knowledge contradicts the arguments of Michel Foucault, who argues that imperfection of knowledge isn't as significant as how such knowledge operates within society and serves to create identities.

Foucault rejects traditional definitions of knowledge. His general definition rejects the notion that there is a set of things "known," but rather a series of discursive relations that make it possible for something known as "knowledge" to exist. This provides knowledge with an instability that can be manipulated by power. This clashes with the understanding Evans and Rueschemeyer use in which knowledge is fixed and waiting to be obtained by actors. To Foucault, entities make use of knowledge as a means of classifying and demarcating individuals from one another. Within the context of his argument regarding penitentiary systems, the prison creates an environment in which by the very nature of its existence, an idea of "normal" and "delinquent" behavior and people is created.[22] This produces his

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[21] Peter B. Evans et al., "The State and Economic Transformation," in *Bringing the State Back In*, ed. Peter Evans et al. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 62.

[22] Michel Foucault, *Discipline & Punish: the Birth of the Prison*. New York: Vintage Books, 1975, 253.

notion of discipline, which is a framework used to organize activity so as to ensure individuals fall in line with "normal" behavior. This notion of "discipline" derived from the construction of knowledge has contributed to two ideas of the state: governmentality and oppositional social ordering.

A model of the state built around what Foucault refers to as "governmentality" reflects a radically different understanding of the state and its *raison d'etre* than any of the previously mentioned theories of state formation. Tilly argues that state formation was intimately connected to extraction of wealth and capital to perform increasingly complicated modes of oppression and coercion, such as the formation of tax collectors and police officers. He indicates that with a smaller pool of resources and a less commercialized economy, the "work of extracting resources to sustain war and other governmental activities" was made more difficult.[23] This process of centralization clashes with Foucault's theory of how power functions. Foucault adopts Bentham's panopticon as his model for state organization. The stated goal is to "induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power."[24] When viewed thusly, the state becomes not a physical series of institutions, liberal or not, but a narrative that serves to validate certain forms of knowledge at the expense of others. This emphasis on an automatic functioning of power seems to be embodied in Tilly's understanding of a rationalized bureaucracy, though Foucault and Tilly differ heavily with regard to the object of analysis in understanding power's diffusion throughout society. Foucault rejects the notion that the state has an

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[23] Tilly, *Bringing the State Back In*, 182.
[24] Foucault, *Discipline & Punish*, 201.

"otherness" as a point of analysis. He points to the tendency of previous thinkers to "[locate] power in the State apparatus" which in turn makes the state into "the major, privileged capital and almost unique instrument of the power of one class over another."[25] This tendency, perhaps, is what is typically In this sense Foucault is a response to what he views as the propensity to "[overlook] all the mechanisms and effects of power which don't pass directly via the State apparatus, yet often sustain the State more effectively than its own institutions, enlarging and maximizing its effectiveness."[26] This directly contradicts Tilly's argument that states, whenever possible, seek to "organize and… monopolize violence."[27] Governance is made automatic in Foucault's formulation via the formation of panoptic institutions that seek to make citizens' compliance with policies voluntary. The state itself does not need to monopolize legitimate violence because society often partakes in behaviors that allow it to function efficiently.

Others have further developed Foucault's governmentality and placed it in new contexts. The one most useful in the course of this discussion is neoliberal governmentality. At its core, neoliberal governmentality is a way of revealing how power still manifests itself in those societies that opt for limited government. The essence of neoliberal governmentality is that limited government in no way supplants earlier, tyrannical forms of government. Rather, liberal government does not seek to "impede in the course of things but to ensure the play of 'natural' and

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[25] Michel Foucault, "Questions on Geography," in *Power/Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 72.
[26] Foucault, "Questions on Geography," 73.
[27] Tilly, *Bringing the State Back In*, 171.

'necessary' modes of regulations."[28] In fact, liberal government seems to exemplify the panopticon, as it seeks more aggressively than other forms of government to ensure order at minimal cost with maximum cooperation. This logical extension of governmentality is explicitly different from liberal notions of government espoused by Truman and Watkins, because Foucault does not view power to be tied to any particular institution. Truman in particular underplays the significance of the state as an autonomous actor, though still acknowledges its centrality as a means of organizing societies and as a vehicle through which claims are made.[29] Rather than emphasizing institutions, Foucault famously emphasizes space and the ways in which it is organized and used to deploy power. Foucault's theoretical insights are useful when discussion power as a concept, but provide little to our direct understanding of how it pertains to "the state." Joel Migdal's model uses Foucault's logic of power and applies it within a discussion of borders that will elucidate how power functions in a modern "state system."

Migdal methodologically seeks to echo Foucault and avoid "locating and clearly identifying what the state is" and instead hopes to make "empirical observations of the exercise of power."[30] He proceeds similarly in acknowledging that there is a distinct impossibility to the idea of defining power outside of examining its effects, and does so within the context of what is often construed as

[28] Michel Foucault, quoted in Colin Gordon, "Governmental Rationality: An Introduction," in Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller (eds), *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 17.

[29] Truman, *The Governmental Process*, 507.

[30] Beatrice Hibou, "Conclusion," in *Boundaries and Belonging: States and Societies in the Struggle To Shape Identities and Local Practices*, ed. Joel S. Migdal (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 341.

"the state." Instead of thinking of the state as a definite apparatus, Migdal thinks about it as a spatially-defined body. There exist fluid "mental maps" that serve to create boundaries that delineate between the self and other. By defining a "home and alien territory," mental maps clarify for residents "the loyalties they hold, the emotions and passions that groupings evoke, and their cognitive ideas about how the world is constructed."[31] These maps exist in order to help users "navigate daily life, and in accepting those signposts to guide them [and] lend an additional feeling of hardness to the boundaries of existing social groupings.[32] Routine practice becomes a means by which individuals derive a sense of security. In essence, mental maps become a way in which power can be most easily exercised. Mitchell echoes this argument in his discussion of the construction of the colonial order in Egypt. He argues that identity within political groupings is "not fixed as a rigid boundary containing those inside. Rather, the inside is only significant insofar as it differentiates what is inside from what lies outside. In this regard, colonial restructuring in Egypt did not divide people into selves and others. Rather, it "[seemed] to exclude the other absolutely from the self, in a world divided absolutely into two."[33] He applies this model not only to colonial Egypt but also to modern political ordering. Modern order is in Mitchell's model a "method of replacing a power concentrated in personal command, and always liable to

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[31] Joel S. Migdal, "Mental Maps and Virtual Checkpoints," in *Boundaries and Belonging: States and Societies and the Struggle to Shape Identities and Local Practices,* ed. Joel S. Migdal (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 7.
[32] Migdal, "Mental Maps," *Boundaries and Belonging,* 9.
[33] Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 167.

diminish, with powers that were systematically and uniformly diffused."[34] It requires the constancy of Foucault's automatic panoptic ordering in order to function. The state and genuine power are posited as a "material/conceptual duality." Earlier institutionalist models such as Tilly's concentrate power in the hands of a select body that then distributes power as it chooses to further its own existence. Political authority was made visible and permanent with the institution of regularized police forces, public education, and state-run hospitals that were guaranteed to provide standardized services. However, the material/conceptual duality was manifested in the fact that power was not directly exercised via these institutions and rather via the "otherization" of unnatural occurrences, behaviors, and individuals.[35]

Emerging from this discussion one can observe three trends in thinking about the state. On the one hand are historical institutionalists, such as Tilly, Spruyt, and members of the so-called "Bring the State Back In" movement that seek to restore a unique understanding of the state in political science via furthering an understanding of how states came into being and what this says about their character and role in society. In their calculation, the state is the body of concentrated power that exercises it over a territorially-defined entity. The reason such entities exist and survive is by virtue of this means of exercising power. Secondly, there are liberal institutionalists who emphasize the non-unique character of the state. Instead, they define the state as an arena in which interest groups seek to prioritize their interests via government institutions. As Dyson indicates, there is

[34] Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*, 175.
[35] Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*, 176.

not a state tradition to which one claims loyalty, but to "the rule of law." Finally, there are Foucaultian thinkers that seek to deemphasize "the state," which has no real power but seeks to provide an understanding of automatic disciplinary policy, and instead focus on the ways in which power is diffused across society. All three provide competing levels of analysis in which one can understand "the state." Furthermore, all three provide contradictory notions of the state that allow for further explanation of how power operationalizes order in society.

Institutionalist formulations posit the state as a reciprocal relationship between series of competing claims, often between violent ones. Liberal-focused models assume that interest groups negotiate at the state level, and this process of contention forms the state. However, this is refuted in historical institutionalist frameworks. These instead argue that the state itself denies access to certain groups, thus emphasizing the power of the center relative to the interest groups contained in society in general. The power instead lies with the state as a domestic manager of priorities as opposed to interest groups that hold power over individual segments of the population and use the state as a means of imposing their goals. Furthermore, the state has a constituted self-interest detached from that of interest groups. Both institutional models, liberal and historical, bypass the ways in which the state's very constituted existence are challenged in theory. Structuralism, in arguing that the state is overemphasized in discourse, reflects its own inner tendency to reject the constituted nature of the state. Instead, the state is a means through which elites perform two major tasks: control knowledge and automate discipline. The soldier, tax officer, or courts do not, in structuralist formulations,

have endogenous meaning. Whereas Tilly would view them as the precise loci of power, Foucault and Mitchell in particular view them as being structures that allow power to be exercised automatically. The state controls knowledge and awareness of the meaning of these beings with regards to their function and what is housed within them. Power thus exists outside the state, and in doing so makes it far easier for the state to exist.

Ultimately, our question becomes: "who was Frederick serving?" and what does this notion of service reveal about our own role in state-centric societies? Was it a defined series of interest groups in society? Was it expansion of central government capacity? Or was it rather a narrative he created with the interest of validating his position and constructing a governing structure and position that would outlast himself? This study ultimately concludes that there is no one sound answer as to what individuals or governments claim to "serve." Attempts to define the state largely focus around locating power or equate the state overly with government. Institutionalist models to this point cannot provide a satisfactory answer. They address the function of government, but rarely the larger issue of "the state" as being a constituted entity toward which a professional bureaucracy is oriented. It is then understood that power is concentrated in government, but it remains interconnected with a process of constant expansion of capacity. These institutional models provide wonderful bases from which understandings of how the modern territorially-bounded state came into being, but provide little answer as to what the state seeks to serve. Structuralist models often contradict this notion of centralization directly in arguing that it is more functional for power to be

diversified across society and to persuade people to follow power willingly rather than to force via centralization. However, they also provide an opening for explaining Frederick's focus. As Mitchell and Migdal argue, the construction of symbols, borders, and objects with meaning across society constitute what is often assumed to be "the state." The state resides less within the Supreme Court Justices themselves or the building they inhabit, but rather in the perceptions of the building's meaning and how that automates docility across a population by permeating hierarchies of power. However, structuralism does little to explain how these models come into existence. Mitchell provides a fantastic example of how this is done in his study of colonial Egypt, but the essence of his thesis is that order was instituted by a power outside Egypt itself. This has use in studying postcolonial societies, but in fact reveals little about Europe where such systems seem to emerge over a lengthy period of time following contestation. Future study must incorporate a focus on the diffusion of power with the institutionalist understanding of how the state itself came into being. By merging two, it should provide for a more nuanced historical understanding of how states formed, and more significantly today, why they fail and how they continue to evolve.

Current literature too often assumes stagnancy with regard to the state and its formation that discourages creative thinking about optimizing current structures, but more importantly, cause observers to preemptively discount state failure as being an issue because the state is considered to be a constitutive foundation of order. Until notions of why a state exists deconcretize and reattach themselves to an

understanding of the mix of power and legitimacy, this bias will continue to hinder

both academic and policy work in political science.

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