

reading of these colonial documents is evident throughout, and much can be learned from his assessment of how these precedents shaped the US Congress and the nation's 50 state legislatures.

I was most impressed by the comprehensive roll-call analysis from the Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania colonies, indicating that the hybrid "politico" role of legislators so clearly identified and labeled by John Wahlke and his

associates in *The Legislative System* (1961) was in existence long before the Founders of the nation gathered in 1787 in Philadelphia to write the Constitution of the United States.

It may be too soon to dub these two volumes of Professor Squire's as "classics" but that they are invaluable to our understanding of how American legislatures functioned then and now is demonstrably clear.

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## COMPARATIVE POLITICS

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### **Against the Grain: A Deep History of the Earliest States.**

By James C. Scott. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017. 336p.

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Over the years, James Scott's voluminous scholarship has taught us to see states in a different way. *Seeing Like a State* (1998) pointed to the pathologies of state power: how, for example, the state's need to register and tax leads to the need for "legibility," forcing nomadic peoples to settle and creating regular grids of streets. Forced collectivization in Tanzania and the former USSR could only come about as a result of unchecked state power and led to untold human misery. Books like *Domination and the Arts of Resistance* (1990), *Weapons of the Weak* (1985), and *The Art of Not Being Governed* (2009) have told a different story of state power from the perspective of the state's victims, showing how they have been endlessly creative in self-organized resistance. Following in the tradition of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Scott has forcefully contested the underlying moral premise of modernization; namely, that the slow accumulation of institutions, of which the modern state was one of the most important, has led to increased human happiness and well-being.

*Against the Grain* picks up a different thread of this story: the prehistoric resistance of non-state peoples to the first emergence of so-called pristine states. Scott contests what he regards as the received wisdom of state formation; namely, that it coincided with the development of agriculture and the supposedly huge increases in productivity that innovations like the plow represented. Drawing on a large new body of research by anthropologists and archaeologists, he shows that the domestication of plants and animals predated the first states by thousands of years, that "sedentism" (i.e., dense human settlement in fixed locations) existed before states appeared, and that sedentism coexisted with a flexible system in which settled peoples periodically returned to nomadism, pastoralism, and other "ungoverned" forms of life. The critical shift that allowed states to appear was thus not agriculture as such,

but rather the move to cereal grains like wheat and barley that forced regimented cultivation and made tax collection far easier.

The appearance of the first states was, in Scott's account, a largely unmitigated disaster: diets and health worsened as a result of monocropping, work became far more burdensome, and slavery, which was necessary to sustain all state-level social systems, proliferated. This bad bargain was so onerous, according to Scott, that the first states crumbled easily as their residents sought to flee; only the state's coercive capacity kept inhabitants in line. The result was a period lasting thousands of years in which these fragile early states crumbled and their peoples returned to earlier types of livelihoods, only to re-form and crumble again.

There is a lot to Scott's overall argument, much of which has already been generally accepted by students of human prehistory. The superiority of "civilized" peoples as compared to "barbarians" or "savages" has long been rejected. Reality, we know now, was different. The tribal societies that preceded state-level ones were much more egalitarian: if the Big Man heading a tribal segment did not perform, his kinsmen could replace him. Today's Paleolithic diet craze reflects recent research into the deleterious effects of grains and carbohydrates. And there is, of course, no end of knowledge about the sheer awfulness of unconstrained state power.

There are, however, major weaknesses in Scott's argument. The first has to do with his ignoring politics. By his account, state formation is driven entirely by economic considerations, in particular the human choice of staple crops. He spends no time talking about politics as an autonomous realm in which power—that is, the ability to use violence—is both generated and put under control by institutions. For him, violence is simply a tool for extracting rents and not a means of controlling violence itself (e.g., the policeman on your street corner).

Yet the different ways of organizing violence were just as important as economic factors in driving the major transitions in social organization. The first such transition was from band- to tribal-level societies, which occurred across the globe about 10,000 years ago. A true tribal society is based on belief in descent from a common ancestor and is undergirded by specific religious beliefs

about the power of dead ancestors and unborn descendants over one's life in the present. Tribal societies spread because they could generate far more coercive power than band-level ones: they could scale up very rapidly and mobilize, if necessary, thousands of fighters.

The weakness of tribal societies, however, was that they had no way of forcing their segments to cooperate; once an immediate danger passed, armies would often disintegrate. State-level societies, by contrast, could mobilize and provision large standing armies with much greater discipline, which is the real reason why states started to proliferate at the expense of tribes. (This story is complicated by the domestication of the horse, which allowed mobile nomads to periodically defeat state-level societies, a situation that persisted up until the invention of gunpowder.)

The second weakness in Scott's argument has to do with the moral valence he attaches to state and pre-state societies. His account of the awfulness of states, from prehistoric ones to the present, is fair enough. But *Against the Grain* tends to portray pre-state societies as peaceful, free, and egalitarian entities that resort to violence only when forced to confront state power. He points to the absence of evidence about the nature of pre-state societies and the "dark ages" following the collapse of a state as a void that has been filled by state-level propagandists with their prejudices about barbarism. But he himself has a problem with selection bias.

There is a large and growing literature documenting the extremely high levels of violence among pre-state peoples. This starts with work by biological anthropologists like Richard Wrangham who have documented levels of violence practiced by humankind's primate precursors. It continues through archaeological findings like those of Lawrence Keeley and Steven LeBlanc concerning violence on the part of band- and tribal-level societies and contemporary anthropological work on the few remaining hunter-gatherer or tribal groups like the !Kung San, Eskimos, or New Guinea highlanders who have murder rates far higher than in today's most violent cities. States, of course, were capable of using violence on a completely different scale, but they at least offered something in return for their extraction of taxes and rents: security. As contemporary Afghanistan and Syria show, life without a state can be, as Hobbes put it, "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short."

Toward the end of the book, Scott relates a scenario very reminiscent of Mancur Olson's famous account of the origins of democratic institutions. At one time, the world was dominated by "roving bandits," who were predators stealing from the weak and from each other in a zero-sum struggle. Over time, they settled down (forming states along the way) and became "stationary bandits" using state power to extract resources. As more time passed, however, these stationary bandits began to realize that if they extracted taxes on a more sustainable basis, their society would grow richer and they themselves would

ultimately be better off. But they had to provide stability, security, and ultimately rules in return. I am not sure that any of Scott's empirical evidence really contradicts this story, which implies that there has indeed been historical progress. This is true even as books like *Against the Grain* help build sympathy for some of the pre- or non-state ways of life that are typically ignored by historians.

**Forging the Franchise: The Political Origins of the Women's Vote.** By Dawn Langan Teele. Princeton: Princeton

University Press, 2018. 240p. \$29.95 cloth.

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Many of the most-cited pieces in the comparative politics literature on democratization ignore or footnote women's enfranchisement in democracies, using definitions of democracy focused instead on "universal" male suffrage. When they consider women's enfranchisement, they theorize that it occurs for simplistic reasons like economic development, women's rising employment, or a largesse that occurs at the conclusion of wars. *Forging the Franchise* is an important corrective to this narrowness and one that should be read by all comparative scholars interested in understanding the causes and historical processes that explain democratization.

Dawn Teele begins with a cross-national analysis of economic development, women's employment, and war in explaining the enfranchisement of women and shows that these explanations do not actually explain it well. Arguing that democratization is best understood when one looks holistically at the extension of democratic rights to all groups, she divides countries into those that extended suffrage to all populations at once and others that took the slow road to democratization, extending the franchise to additional groups at different times. In this latter group of countries, democratization may be even more difficult, because existing elites are only likely to extend the franchise in situations where they find it advantageous; that is, when they face high competition and extending the franchise helps them consolidate power. Women's movements can influence this calculus by mobilizing in ways that provide information to political elites that women will support them; however, such mobilizing strategies are difficult, because they often require organizing in ways that cross deep-seated cleavages such as class, race, or ethnic boundaries. These are difficult boundaries to cross, given that women's suffrage activists, like their male counterparts, identify with their own class, race, ethnic or religious groups, creating barriers to cross-cleavage mobilization.

To demonstrate the power of this theory, Teele provides three in-depth case studies—the United Kingdom, the United States, and France—to illustrate her argument. Each is analyzed using a combination of historical process tracing and original data analysis that