CHAPTER 7

STATE THEORY
Four Analytical Traditions

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1 Introduction

States have been undergoing major transformations in the last few decades. No matter what the substantive research focus is and no matter what the findings are, the overall scholarly consensus is that states are experiencing dramatic changes. Yet, there is considerably less agreement on how and why these transformations unfold. Debates around these questions often reflect distinct positions in state theory.

In this chapter I contend that analyses of state transformations would benefit from close attention to the conceptualization of states and the dynamics of state formation. Different theoretical answers to what the state is and how it came about lead by definition to different answers about how states change. The chapter identifies four major theoretical traditions—*class-analytic, liberal, neo-Weberian*, and *culturalist*—which provide different perspectives on the major puzzles explored by state theory such as the nature of the state, the connections between state, economy, and society, and the processes and causes involved in the rise of states. By extension, these approaches set distinct agendas for the analysis of recent transformations of statehood.

The chapter does not contain an exhaustive review of the recent literature on state theory. It also avoids an exhaustive intellectual genealogy of the different schools of thought. Rather, I develop an analytical grid that establishes major overlaps and differences between class-analytic, liberal, neo-Weberian, and culturalist perspectives. Highlighting the root concept employed in each perspective—that is, economic relations, strategic action, formal organization, and cultural practices and models—the chapter presents an overview of how each analytic approach conceptualizes (1) state-society relations, or the boundary between state and non-state actors and processes, (2) state capacity, or the ability to implement policy choices, and (3) consent to state power, or how states obtain compliance from citizens.

The chapter also illustrates that, despite notable conceptual differences, the four approaches are unified in their explicit focus on the state as an object of study. This distinguishes them from other research traditions in political science and sociology, which exclusively focus on the "political system" as their main unit of analysis (e.g. Parsons 1951; Easton 1953, 1965; Almond and Verba 1963).

The remainder of the chapter is organized as follows. In Section 2 I introduce the four analytical traditions and discuss their respective conceptualizations of the state. In Section 3 I deal with how these frameworks explain the rise of modern states as distinct political units, and how the four approaches account for state development in one key policy area, welfare policy. In Section 4 I link the discussion to the broader intellectual agenda of the Handbook and explore the implications of different approaches to the conceptualization and rise of states for recent efforts to explain state transformations. Section 5 concludes.

2 Conceptualizing the State: Four Analytical Traditions

Most of the existing literature reviews of state theory rely on implicitly held assumptions about what the state is. While these discussions offer valuable insights into a particular theoretical subfield, they bracket broader conceptual comparisons.[1]

As illustrated by Table 7.1, I pursue a different and more encompassing strategy. I identify four major approaches by focusing on how each conceptualizes the state, and draws the boundary between the state and non-state fields.[2]

The Class-Analytic Approach

This perspective has many national variations[3] and is rooted in the Marxist discussions of state theory during the 1960s and 1970s, but it is not limited to the Marxist tradition.[4] The common denominator of the class-analytic approach is the assumption of the state's

[1] For recent discussions of class-analytic approaches, see Stanley Aronowitz and Peter Bratsis (2002) and Colin Hay (2006); for liberal approaches, see Margaret Levi (2002) and Martin Smith (2006); for neo-Weberian approaches, see Richard Lachmann (2010) and Tuong Vu (2010); and for culture-analytic approaches, see George Steinmetz (1999) and Aradhana Sharma and Akhil Gupta (2006).

[2] In doing so the chapter builds on and complements an earlier generation of reviews concerned with providing a "full picture" of the field (e.g. Stepan 1978; Krasner 1984; Hall and Ikenberry 1989; Migdal 1997; C. Pierson 2011; but see also Hay et al. 2006 and Anter and Bleek 2013).

[3] In this chapter I focus primarily on the Anglo-American debates, but there have been important class-analytical discussions of the state in France (Poulantzas 1968; Shapiro 2002; Wickham 2006; Wissel 2007), Germany (Blanke et al. 1975; Wissel and Wöhl 2008), Italy (Vacca 1970; Hardt and Negri 2000), Japan, and elsewhere, which have only fed back partially—and usually belatedly—into the English language discussion.

[4] Many scholars operating within this analytical approach are not necessarily Marxist in their ideological inclinations, nor do they embrace orthodox Marxism to theorize the state.

Table 7.1 Four analytical traditions in state theory

	Class-analytic approach	Liberal approach	Neo-Weberian approach	Culturalist approach
Root concept(s)	Class conflict	Social contract	Formal organization	Cultural representations and practices
State-society relations	State as institutionalized class relations	State as arena of strategic action	State as (potentially) autonomous actor	Cultural constitution of state-society boundary
State capacity	Derived from class relations	Derived from solving freerider problem	Derived from bureaucratic competence and territorial reach	Derived from disciplinary and identity effects of culture
Consent to state power	Derived from false consciousness, hegemony	Derived from "quasi-voluntary" compliance among citizens	Derived from output legitimacy and state ideological work	Derived from rituals, everyday practices, and world cultural models

economic embeddedness and that class conflict is the driver of both economic and political change. Understanding how states act the way they do requires paying close attention to how social classes and capitalism form (Moore 1966; Wright 1979; Jessop 1990). This does not mean that states are solely instruments in the hands of the ruling class or functional prerequisites for capitalist reproduction. More recent studies in this tradition seek to move beyond the distinction between instrumentalism and structuralism that had characterized much of the earlier debates (Poulantzas 1968; Miliband 1969; see also Barrow 1993). From there flows a decidedly relational conceptualization. States are institutionally condensed class relations; the organizational structures of states embody class dynamics and the imperatives of economic accumulation (Therborn 1978; Jessop 2001).

In this relational approach state capacity is a "two-way street." States derive their capacity to control borders, enact law and order, enforce contracts, collect taxes, and supply public goods from their relations to distinct social classes and from the legacies of past class struggles (Rueschemeyer et al. 1992).[5] At the same time, states constitute uneven playing fields that tend to reinforce existing power relations among classes (Hay 2006). In fact, the ability of states to formulate and implement policy affects the balance of class power, most prominently through "strategic selectivity" or bias in favor of certain class forces (Jessop 1990; Hirsch 2005; Offe 2006 [1972]).[6] This conceptual approach should, thus, not be equated with economic determinism. The class-analytic perspective suggests some congruence between

[5] Dietrich Rueschemeyer et al. (1992) also emphasize two other power clusters, yet the balance of class power provides the main analytical thrust to their argument.

[6] To provide an example: the institutional form of states might systematically privilege the security concerns of certain social forces, while excluding other options from state action.

states and the broader economic context, but it also recognizes contradictory practices of state organizations with respect to capitalist reproduction (Offe 1984).

One offshoot of the class-analytic approach is power resources theory. Representatives of this analytical framework do not presume bourgeois hegemony but they allow for the possibility that organized labor may achieve meaningful gains under capitalism. Accordingly, power resources theory links state development, and in particular the emergence of the modern welfare state, to the balance of class power and suggests that the political strength of labor is the driving force behind more redistributive welfare policies (Korpi 1983; Esping-Andersen 1985; Huber and Stephens 2001). Bob Jessop's (1990, 2007) "strategic-relational" approach is equally critical of structuralist Marxism. It seeks to bring structure and agency into a dialectical relationship and treats state institutions as a compromise outcome of a series of political and economic crises and the resulting class struggles.

States cannot rule through coercion alone. Accordingly, class-analytic approaches draw on a variety of concepts to understand how consent to state power is generated. One line of work focuses on false consciousness, that is, a distorted understanding and experience of power relations, to explain why subordinate sectors adhere to forms of political rule that propel their oppression (Elster 1985; Cunningham 1987; Jost 1995). Other analysts approach this question by drawing on the concept of hegemony introduced by Antonio Gramsci (2011; see also Moran 2002; Buckel and Fischer-Lescano 2007). While ambiguous and contested, the concept most fundamentally refers to the voluntary support of a system of rule among citizens, and highlights the influence of formal political dynamics on everyday activities (Burawoy 1979; Przeworski 1985). Thus, by putting the analytical spotlight on the beliefs and practices of citizens, both false consciousness and hegemony are linked to a relational conceptualization of the state.

The Liberal Approach

A second major approach is liberal state theory. This perspective has many variants and underpins research on the state in areas as diverse as political modernization theory (Huntington 1968), pluralism (Dahl 1971), and public choice theory (Niskanen 1971; Riker 1980). Normatively, works within this theoretical tradition often distrust the state and advocate the containment and dispersion of its power, whether in the name of individual liberties, group diversity, or utility maximization. Analytically, the most important common denominator—which also justifies the label "liberal"—is a contractual conceptualization of the state. States are sites of strategic interaction among (powerful) individuals and groups. Even when operating under severe structural constraints, these actors are assumed to have agency. It is ultimately their decisions that shape the institutional make-up of states. Thus, similar to class-analytic approaches, the liberal tradition does not conceptualize the state as an independent source of political power, but treats it as a reflection of broader societal developments and changes.

Treating the state as an arena for strategic action also has major implications for the analysis of state capacity and consent. In a liberal perspective, the ability of states to reach society and implement their projects is closely entwined with the policy choices of rulers. The structure and efficiency of state organizations depend to a large extent on the objectives of

state authorities and their power vis-à-vis other relevant actors. For example, the relations between rulers and economic elites and rulers and their appointed staff shape the choice of particular taxation systems (e.g. the use of state administration for "tax farming"), and this, in turn, has major implications for the development of administrative competence (Levi 1988; Kiser 1994).

State capacity also depends on how state authorities manage to ensure consent. Why do economic elites or appointed staff honor a particular policy choice? Liberal state theorists often frame the issue of compliance as a collective action problem.[7] In this perspective, constituents are frequently tempted into freeriding, and state leaders, therefore, need to be able to make credible threats in case of non-compliance.[8] To return to the taxation example, state authorities require enforcement mechanisms to counteract potential freeriding among taxpayers as well as tax collectors.

Yet, violence or force is not the most effective means by which to achieve compliance. This is where legitimacy comes into play. The liberal approach conceptualizes state legitimacy as based on the constituents' honoring of state policies even when sanctions for non-compliance are absent. Specifically, the liberal tradition makes two distinct arguments for explaining legitimacy (Hechter 2009). The first one focuses on output legitimacy. States that provide desired public goods and services enjoy significant acceptance in the eyes of constituents simply because they deliver these services. A second perspective emphasizes the procedural determinants of legitimacy (Tyler 2006). Constituents perceive those states as legitimate that maintain a minimum of fairness in decision-making processes. These states may not deliver all the desired goods, but service provision cuts across political cleavages and includes both winners and losers of particular policy choices. Thus, similar to the class-analytic perspective, liberal state theory maintains that naked coercion or material rewards cannot sustain political rule, at least not in the long run. Yet—in contrast to false-consciousness accounts and their focus on distorted interests or the hegemony-based approach and its emphasis on habitual compliance and everyday consent—liberal conceptions of legitimacy put the spotlight on strategic calculation and "quasi-voluntary compliance" (Levi 1988), with citizens' preferences remaining exogenous to the explanatory framework.

The Neo-Weberian Approach

A third major theoretical tradition is the neo-Weberian perspective.[9] Prominent examples for this approach to state theory are historical institutionalism (Skocpol 1979), the "state in society" approach (Migdal 1988), and organizational materialism (Mann 1986).[10]

[7] See Mancur Olson (1965) for a general statement of the collective action problem.

[8] Yet states also need to be prevented from single-handedly imposing their interests. See Yoram Barzel (2002) for a game-theoretical approach to this issue.

[9] Max Weber's actual writings on the state are multi-faceted and link up to a variety of state-theoretical traditions (Gorski 2003; Migdal and Schlichte 2005). The label "neo-Weberian" seeks to identify the different literatures that came to prominence from the late 1970s onwards and mainly draw inspiration from Weber's organization-analytic approach to the state.

[10] Yet see also the overviews by Stefan Breuer (1998) and Andreas Anter and Stefan Breuer (2007) on recent neo-Weberian discussions of state theory in Germany.

The neo-Weberian approach treats the state as a set of administrative and coercive organizations that claim the monopoly of legitimate force over territories and are involved in making decisions that are collectively binding (Weber 1978; Evans et al. 1985; Tilly 1990; Anter 2014). Conceptualized this way, states are endowed with specific powers and forms of autonomy, and they are treated as political forces *sui generis*. Thus, in contrast to class-analytic and liberal approaches, the emphasis is on the organizational logic of state action.

Treating the state as a formal organization introduces two major theoretical issues. To what extent do states independently formulate their goals and take decisions (Krasner 1984; Evans et al. 1985)? And to what extent are state authorities able to implement their decisions across the territories they claim to govern, even at the expense of the interests of powerful non-state actors (Mann 1993; Geddes 1994)? In answering these questions, the neo-Weberian approach is less concerned with the congruence between the state, class, and capitalism. It is primarily preoccupied with state-society relations and state capacity. States are distinguished by the type of autonomy they enjoy from non-state actors. The paradigmatic example for this is Peter Evans' (1995) argument of "embedded autonomy," which suggests that specific configurations of social ties with non-state actors allow state authorities to make autonomous yet well-informed policy choices.

The neo-Weberian approach treats state capacity as a multi-dimensional concept that captures both relational and organizational properties of state institutions: states derive their ability to exercise control and put policy choices into practice from (a) the resources at their disposal (e.g. a competent bureaucracy, fiscal revenues, physical infrastructure), and (b) the mobilizing of civil society and partnering with non-state groups.[11] In that sense, states, or particular state agencies, may employ their social links, coordination facilities and geographical coverage to deliver inclusive development (e.g. through economic transformation or redistribution), but they may equally use their capacities for repression, exploitation, or even genocide. Much of the current debates in the neo-Weberian camp therefore revolve around, first, the relations between the goals of state authorities and their capacity to implement them, and, second, the interactions and precise causal relationships between the different dimensions of state capacity (Soifer 2008).

Similar to liberal state theory, the neo-Weberian approach understands legitimacy as a product of state performance. States that marshal the organizational competence and territorial reach for providing a wide array of services are legitimate in the eyes of their constituents. However, the neo-Weberian perspective complements the focus on state performance and procedural fairness with an attention to the ideological and cultural work of state organizations. States also gain legitimacy through their nationalist claims and nationalizing activities, as well as through their involvement in the socialization of citizens (e.g. Gellner 1983; Wimmer 2002). Thus, echoing the selective affinity between a relational conceptualization of the state and hegemony, the emphasis on state action and legitimacy is in sync with the view of the state as a special type of formal organization.

[11] I am grateful to Jonah Levy (personal communication) for this felicitous formulation of state capacity.

The Culturalist Approach

Influenced by the cultural and linguistic turns during the 1970s and 1980s, some scholars put culture and discourse at the forefront of state theory.[12] In one variant, which often draws inspiration from Michel Foucault's pioneering work on governmentality (for starters: Foucault et al. 1991; Macey 1995), culturalism rejects the distinction between cultural and non-cultural objects and treats "the state" as an ideological construct that projects coherence onto a diffuse set of institutional arrangements and political practices (Corrigan and Sayer 1985; Mitchell 1991; Lemke 2007). Other works in this tradition emphasize culture as the context that provides the scripts, rules, and meanings underpinning strategic action and organizational practices (Elias 1982; Abrams 1988; Meyer et al. 1997). What cuts across these different perspectives is a concern with the constitutive and often causal role of culture in state formation. The culturalist approach rejects the view of culture as purely ephemeral and a product of state formation. At the same time, it moves beyond essentialized conceptualizations of national cultures that characterized earlier explanations of state performance (e.g. Almond and Verba 1963).

One subgroup among the culturalist approaches is concerned with the cultural and discursive constitution of states and the implications of these processes for the ability to implement policy. Clifford Geertz' (1980) notion of the "theatre state" suggests that public rituals—whether school inaugurations, press conferences, or national holidays—establish the connecting tissue that holds state agencies with radically different interests and tasks together. This integrative function of rituals helps to explain why state agencies pursue common goals and why ordinary citizens accept state authority. A related perspective emphasizes the "state effect" (Mitchell 1991) of everyday bureaucratic practices, which generate collectively held images of "the state" and its boundary with society. James Scott (1998), for instance, argues that practices such as mapping, surveying, and census-taking not only make populations "legible," but are equally involved in shaping how "the state" is perceived in the eyes of ordinary citizens. At the macro level, this focus is mirrored by World Polity theory. This analytical perspective shows how the rise of a rational world culture established pervasive global models of statehood, which engendered "institutional isomorphism" among local state institutions, yet with often contrasting implications for their differing abilities to implement policy (Meyer et al. 1997).

A second line of work emphasizes possible cultural causes of state capacity. Some scholars point to the disciplining effects of culture. Cultural projects establish mechanisms of moral control and popular mobilization, which subsequently might be appropriated by states. For example, Calvinism greatly contributed to the expansion of state territorial reach in early modern Prussia and the Netherlands (Gorski 2003). Other works are more concerned with the role of discourse and ideology in shaping the mobilizing capacities of states. Scholars have identified family honor (Adams 2005) during the early modern period, and later nationalism (Gerschenkron 1962; Greenfeld 1992) as crucial in facilitating state-led economic transformations. More recently, similar arguments about the political power of discourse and ideology have been made for the effects of neoliberalism on state capacity (Lemke 2001; Harvey 2005).

[12] This paragraph draws on George Steinmetz (1999).

The theoretical emphasis on the cultural constitution of state capacity implies a distinct understanding of consent. Works in this line of thought put the analytical spotlight on citizen practices. Most prominently, distinct public images of what the state is and what it ought to do are likely to engender varying responses towards particular state practices, ranging from compliance to open opposition. As a matter of fact, the state can have very different meanings for citizens, even in the context of similar institutional arrangements (Steinmetz 1999). Ultimately, the capacity of states is crucially shaped by how consent to state power is created and maintained. In that sense, culturalists' concern with ceremonial rituals, everyday practices, or global cultural models echoes the class-analytic emphasis on hegemony.

3 Explaining State Development

The distinct conceptualizations of the state advanced by the four analytical traditions provide different starting points for explaining state formation. The respective view of states as condensed class relations, sites of strategic action, formal organizations, or cultural models and practices delimits the range of possible answers each theoretical perspective offers to account for state development. This section traces how works from these four analytical traditions explain state formation in two distinct research areas: (1) the origins of modern states; and (2) the rise of welfare states in Western Europe. All four theoretical traditions problematize the emergence of states as a recent and distinctively modern phenomenon. Moreover, these approaches pay great attention to social policy as the engine of twentieth century state expansion in advanced industrialized societies.

Early Modern State Formation

Class-analytic accounts of state formation emphasize changes in accumulation regimes and class relations. As nodal points in the reproduction of class structures, states are both constitutive of and delimited by the dominant mode of production. The emergence of modern states was thus initially associated with primitive accumulation (e.g. the formation of standing armies and more extensive taxation regimes) and later with capital accumulation (e.g. the implementation of formal property rights and contract laws). For example, Perry Anderson (1974) explains state formation in Western Europe through variations in surplus-value appropriation and resolution of conflicts among the nobility and an emerging capitalist class. According to another perspective within this line of research, the rise of modern states also needs to be analyzed as embedded within the global dynamics of capitalism. With his World-Systems theory, Immanuel Wallerstein (1974) argues that, since the 1640s, the form and functioning of states have been circumscribed by their respective roles within the core, semi-periphery, or periphery of the capitalist world-system—and by the interstate system (Wallerstein 2004).

Liberal accounts of modern state formation emphasize broader societal changes and the rise of new social actors not highlighted by class-analytic approaches. In an earlier (yet by now largely discredited) modernization theory approach, state formation was linked to

the transition from agrarian "traditional" to industrial "modern" societies. States became functionally necessary to provide the legal infrastructure and mass education (Gellner 1983) underpinning an increasingly differentiated division of labor. Other variants of this approach put the contractual bases of state formation in the foreground, ranging from the "social contract" metaphor of Locke and other classical theorists to game-theoretical perspectives today that associate the rise of modern states with the problem of establishing enforceable property rights (North 1990; Barzel 2002; Greif 2006) and durable forms of revenue extraction (Levi 1988).

Neo-Weberian theories of state formation have a slightly different take and treat wars as the engines of state–building. The preeminent analytical view in the field is the so-called "bellicist approach" (Centeno 2002), which treats modern states as by-products of international military conflicts (Tilly 1990; Downing 1992; Mann 1993; Ertman 1997). War—or the threat of war—induced economic elites to pay taxes and accept other controls on their behavior. Similarly, war pushed rulers to build an administrative and extractive machinery capable of mobilizing resources for the deployment of armies and the acquisition of military technology. Another causal mechanism emphasizes citizenship and cross-class solidarities. With the imposition of conscription, state leaders became more responsive to the demands of citizen-soldiers for the expansion of political rights and social provision, which in turn contributed to the extension of state infrastructural power (Kestnbaum 2009).

Recently, the bellicist approach has come under scrutiny.[13] Scholars point to the devastating effects of civil wars on state capacity (Thies 2005; Kalyvas 2006) and document state-building occurring in the relative absence of major international wars (Centeno 2002; Hui 2005), even in the context of early modern Europe (Spruyt 1994; Adams 2005). Yet, even if international wars do not play the central role assigned to them previously, a focus on conflict and the threat of political violence—both international and domestic, and combinations thereof—remains a hallmark of neo-Weberian approaches to state formation. For example, Dan Slater (2010) points to encompassing "protection pacts" among various elite factions as a necessary condition for the emergence of strong states in Southeast Asia, while Fernando López-Alves (2000) emphasizes alliances among urban elites, rural landlords, and subaltern groups when explaining distinct patterns of state formation in Latin America.[14] In other words, recent neo-Weberian scholarship has moved beyond Charles Tilly's (1975: 42) famous quip that "[w]ar made the state, and the state made war" to treat conflict and the threat of violence more generally as drivers of state formation.

Culturalist approaches are more concerned with ideological and cultural change. One group of scholars highlights the spread of social discipline and argues that the rise of modern states is grounded in the creation of a pacified population that is willing to comply with the demands of state authorities. Inspired by Michel Foucault's governmentality approach, Timothy Mitchell (1991) suggests that the early modern era was marked by the constitution of a "new regime of power," in which "diffuse strategies" such as mutual surveillance created a more disciplined citizenry, while Norbert Elias

[13] This paragraph follows Tuong Vu's (2010) review of the neo-Weberian state formation literature.
[14] Similar arguments are made by David Waldner (1999) and Tuong Vu (2007).

(1982) identifies the spread of "civility," first among elites and later among the broader population, as a necessary condition for the rise of modern states. From a slightly different theoretical angle, Mara Loveman (2005) suggests that the administrative and infrastructural expansion of modern states presupposed the "primitive accumulation" of symbolic power, that is, the acknowledgement of state authority in the everyday life of ordinary citizens. Taken together, culturalist works often complement the lines of arguments found in the three other traditions. Specifically, the culturalist tradition emphasizes changes in cultural practices and models setting the stage for state authorities to accommodate class interests, protect property rights, or extract revenues from the broader population.

Welfare State Development

The four analytical traditions also provide very different, yet ultimately compatible explanations for the rise and expansion of welfare states in the Western world during the post-World War II period (see also Obinger and Starke, Chapter 24, this volume).[15] Initially developed as a critique of structuralist Marxism, power resources theory treats welfare states as a real opportunity for the "decommodification" of markets and the empowerment of workers, possibly opening a democratic road towards socialism (Stephens 1979; Korpi 1983; Myles 1984; Esping-Andersen 1990).[16] In this perspective, social rights constitute a crucial resource in conflicts between labor and capital. This means that differences in the extent and redistributive effects of transfer payments and social services reflect the power balance between workers and capitalists. Welfare states are thus institutionalized class relations.[17] Other class-analytic approaches provide slightly different accounts and treat the rise of the modern welfare state as an expression of "class compromise" between capital and labor (Przeworski and Wallerstein 1982), the "contradictions" inherent in advanced capitalist societies (Offe 1984), or as being linked to the economic and social reproduction of Fordism (Hollingsworth and Boyer 1997; Jessop 2002).

Liberal accounts of welfare state formation are equally focused on societal changes as the drivers of welfare state development. One liberal line of explanation points to the "logic of industrialism." Modern societies, with their emphasis on employment as the main source of economic subsistence, require insurance against the risks associated with unemployment, old age, or disability (Flora and Alber 1981; Wilensky 2002). A second liberal account portrays the welfare state as the culmination of political modernization, organized around the extension of civil, political, and finally social rights (Marshall 1992 [1950]). A third line of argument puts welfare state formation within the broader context of elite interests (North et al. 2009). In many advanced industrialized societies—or

[15] Ann Orloff (2005) and Stephan Leibfried and Steffen Mau (2008) are comprehensive recent overviews of welfare state research. The contrast between the four analytical traditions and their respective views on welfare state development is also exemplified by various chapters of Francis Castles et al.'s (2010) *The Oxford Handbook of the Welfare State*.

[16] But see Claus Offe (1984) for the commodifying effects of welfare states.

[17] Power resources theory treats the organizational strength of different classes, which is crucially mediated by labor unions, business associations, and political parties, as the main determinant of the size and form of the welfare state.

"open access orders"—elites gradually extended rights, including the right to associate and organize, to the broader population. While the initial aim of this move was market expansion for elites, an unintended consequence was an opening for policies that contradicted direct elite interests, including social provision and redistribution. Thus, liberal approaches echo the class-analytic emphasis on social forces but sidestep a discussion of class conflict and social rights.

By contrast, the neo-Weberian perspective treats welfare state formation as at least partially autonomous from class structures, elite pressure groups, or the "structural prerequisites" of industrialization.[18] Some scholars focus on the preferences of bureaucrats, which are treated as autonomous from social pressures and are often more driven by geopolitical or organizational concerns (Weir et al. 1988; Orloff 1993). A second variant emphasizes the influence of formal political institutions and points to constitutional features, for example, federal or unitary systems (Obinger et al. 2005), or "veto points" (Immergut 1992) as crucial in blocking or facilitating the implementation of welfare policy. A third variant focuses on the intended social "buffering" and legitimation effects of welfare states in open economies (Rieger and Leibfried 2003; Obinger et al. 2010). Neo-Weberian analysts are also concerned with the causal impact of policy feedback and path dependence. A particular social policy might create vested interests that crystallize into constituencies motivated to defend "their" programmes (P. Pierson 1996). What cuts across these different lines of arguments is that state institutions play a crucial, structuring role in systems of social provision, and state officials have their own preferences that are often incongruent with dominant economic interests (Nullmeier and Rüb 1993).

Culturalist approaches are primarily concerned with the cultural and discursive foundations of social policy. In this perspective, "needs" and "risks" are treated as historical constructions that require close scrutiny themselves (Fraser and Gordon 1994; Wacquant 2009), while implicitly held assumptions about race, class, and gender often have major implications for the form and extent of social provision. Whether they are capitalists, party leaders, movement activists, or state officials, actors involved in making social policy draw on and perpetuate ideas about who is "in need" and deserves assistance (Gans 1996). Another culturalist line of work explores the ideological transformations underpinning modern welfare state development. Specifically, scholars focus on the invention of "the social" as necessary for modern welfare policy (Ewald 1986; Kaufmann 2012). Social insurance or old-age pensions presuppose the notion of a distinct domain between the state and the economy that can and should be regulated through expert knowledge and intervention (Steinmetz 1993). The main point of culturalist contention with the other three analytical traditions is thus the supposedly "thin" rationalist understanding of actors found in class-analytic, liberal, and neo-Weberian theories of the state.

In sum, the conceptualization of the state and explanations of its emergence are closely entwined. Wearing a particular theoretical lens regarding what the state is inevitably influences subsequent explanations of its historical origins. This, in turn, has notable implications for how each perspective problematizes contemporary state transformations.

[18] For the neo-Weberian approach, Elmar Rieger's (1999) reconstruction of Weber's analysis of social policy development, a perspective Weber himself never really elaborated, is an important text.

4 Explaining State Transformations

Since the 1980s the global political economy and the international state system have undergone several profound changes. Complementing more comprehensive chapters in the Handbook, this section presents an overview of how the four traditions conceptualize and explain state transformations based on examples from industrial policy and social provision.

Class-analytic theories of the state point to shifts in the balance of class power and accumulation regimes as key drivers of contemporary state transformations. Industrial relations scholars drawing on this theoretical lens see greater capital mobility and economic openness as increasing the strength of economic elites. For example, transnational corporations enjoy greater flexibility in choosing their production sites, and the increasingly blurry boundaries between national and transnational capital make it more difficult for states and economic elites to invest in a shared project of national industrial development (Chibber 2003; Kohli 2004). Class-analytic scholarship on the welfare state employs a similar approach. With the internationalization of finance and greater capital mobility governments lost important leverage to generate employment, putting additional strains on existing welfare policy. Similarly, the internationalization of production reduced the bargaining power of organized labor since the stakes vis-à-vis capital exit are quite high. Some works in the class-analytic tradition therefore suggest that economic globalization has led to welfare state retrenchment (e.g. Korpi and Palme 2003).[19]

In its analysis of contemporary state transformation the liberal approach emphasizes a variety of factors, including trade liberalization, global and regional integration, privatization, the rise of new social movements, and public-sector reform. The result is the decentralization of state power and the rise of "multi-level governance," or multiple sites of decision-making, each including different actors and interests (Sørensen 2004). Liberal scholarship on industrial policy argues that current state responses are shifting towards rule-making, delegation, and the establishment of complex networks with non-state actors (Jordana and Levi-Faur 2004). The ultimate goal is to boost economic development by fostering social capital and synergy effects (Putnam et al. 1993; Woolcock 1998). Similarly, liberal analyses of contemporary welfare state change focus on the extent to which new or transformed social policies protect outsiders over insiders and overcome unemployment and welfare dependency (Ferrera et al. 2000; Rueda 2005; Emmenegger et al. 2012). These studies also show that shifts in party constituencies and partisan alignments do not map neatly on class dynamics anymore, yet that these shifts nonetheless shape the strategic interactions among state officials and non-state actors.

Research in the neo-Weberian tradition emphasizes that the internationalization of finance and production has pushed states away from the management of the national economy towards a regulatory role that facilitates cooperation across public agencies and private units. Most prominently, state reforms "after neoliberalism" focus on achieving export-oriented industrialization and social inclusion through "reregulation" (Snyder 2001), the creation of strategic public-private partnerships, and decentralization (Glatzer

[19] But see Huber and Stephens (2001) for a class-analytic approach that argues against this claim.

and Rueschemeyer 2005; Falleti 2010). In that sense, what distinguishes liberal from neo-Weberian approaches is the former's more optimistic take on the fragmentation of state power and the rise of multilevel governance. Neo-Weberians are generally more skeptical about this, especially in light of the future pursuit of sustainable economic development and social provision projects.

The culturalist tradition helps to investigate both the constitutive and causal role of culture in transformations of stateness. Some culturalists treat "the state" as a mythical device to project the idea of a single, durable force onto diverse strategies and arrangements. In this view, recent state transformations are first and foremost attempts to secure rule by changing the behavior of individuals. Industrial policy has become deeply immersed in discourses about "efficiency" and "international competitiveness" rather than "national development," while social programs seek to incentivize "community" and "civil society" into taking on welfare provision (Rose and Miller 1992; Li 2007). Culturalist works also focus on the rise of new discourses and ideologies and their impact on state capacity (Ferguson 1990; Lemke 2007). Most prominently, the rise of "neoliberalism" as an ideological platform strengthened political and economic forces in their struggle to minimize state intervention in markets and civil society, thereby transforming industrial relations and welfare provision into more flexible forms.

5 Conclusion

In charting the terrain of state theory this chapter has identified four theoretical approaches to the state: class-analytic, liberal, neo-Weberian, and culturalist. These perspectives and their respective conceptualizations of what the state is inform their subsequent explanations of the rise of modern states and welfare state development. The four theoretical views also provide varying starting points for the study of state transformations.

One major implication of this discussion is that these analytical traditions offer distinct but complementary analytical windows in understanding contemporary puzzles of state transformation. Each perspective points to different research questions and offers alternative explanatory factors and processes of relevance.[20] In this sense, the four traditions are best treated as a general tool kit for approaching the theoretical challenges posed by recent transformations of statehood.

At the same time, these analytical frameworks are not mutually exclusive. Class-analytic, liberal, neo-Weberian, and culturalist approaches often complement each other. As a matter of fact, many recent works emphasize the fruitfulness of explicitly combining these different theoretical traditions. For example, the literature on state formation has moved away from treating states as formal organizations or condensed class relations, and instead focuses on states as institutional configurations in which political conflicts and alliances unfold (Vu 2010). Similarly, a combined focus on organizational and cultural features is a growing trend in the recent sociological literature on state formation (e.g. Loveman 2005). The emphasis is on how particular state structures contribute to the

[20] See Rueschemeyer (2009) for a more thorough discussion of this mode of theorizing.

formation of distinct public representations of state power and how those public images in turn circumscribe the goals and capacities of state organizations.

Overall, this chapter has illustrated that the field of state theory remains an active one. Engaging a diverse set of literatures, the chapter has taken a snapshot of how debates around the conceptualization and origins of states in different (though sometimes overlapping) quadrants of the field unfold. Together, these arguments point to new avenues for advancing work on state change. For example, until recently, there has been very limited research on how states, especially those in the Global South, promote social welfare provision and redistribution after neoliberalism (see Huber and Niedzwiecki, Chapter 43, this volume).[21] Of particular urgency is thus to explore more systematically how the four theoretical traditions can be combined when studying contemporary state transformations.

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[21] For notable exceptions, see Erik Kuhonta (2011) and Hans-Jürgen Burchardt et al. (2012)

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