here to give justice to these new multitiered proposals. However, the Gough and Wood et al. volume does provide a compelling case of nation-state failings beyond the richest nations. It also provides a stimulating generalization of EU successes. In light of these contributions, the case for multitiered welfare definitely merits ample further consideration.

References


ALEX HICKS, Emory University


Daniel Ziblatt’s *Structuring the State* is a welcome new addition to the growing literature employing comparative historical analysis. Ziblatt’s examination of German and Italian unification processes is full of interesting theoretical insights. But *Structuring the State* is not only valuable for its theoretical and historical lessons. Ranging from Iraq to the EU, the analysis of founding moments and federalism is bound to be of interest to an
audience beyond students of comparative federalism and historical institutionalism. Ziblatt wants to explain why federalism was the vehicle for national unification in Germany, while it failed to take root in Italy. What makes this an interesting comparison is the fact that Prussia was powerful enough to create a unitary state but refrained from doing so, while weaker Piedmont led a unification process that ended with a unitary state. As Ziblatt puts it: “Why did Prussia, a military heavyweight, make concessions to southern Germany to establish a federal state, while the much weaker Piedmont conquered southern Italy to establish a unitary state” (141)?

Ziblatt proposes an explanation that builds on what Michael Mann calls “infrastructural capacity,” that is, the ability to tax, maintain order, and regulate society. While Prussia could rely on the infrastructural capacity of the constituent German states, the infrastructural weakness of constituent Italian states made the imposition of central authority a necessity. This is an argument that turns the conventional idea on federal origins on its head. The widely held view is that stronger states with political, military, and economic capacity will seek to establish unitary regimes, while federalism is often the result of an inability to impose uniformity. But Ziblatt’s conclusion is that “federalism was not a second-best strategy adopted when necessary. Instead, federalism emerged when possible, while it was unitary structures that were viewed as necessary” (142). In other words, Germany became federal because it could afford to rely on the infrastructural capacity of its constituent units. Meanwhile, following the political vacuum after the collapse of the Kingdom of Two Sicilies, Italians had no option other than (re) establishing political order through the creation of a unitary state. As a result, Ziblatt’s “study finds that the most decisive factor in such moment of institutional creation is the preexisting supply of regional political institutions, shaping which strategies of institutional creation are possible and desirable” (144).

The comparison in Structuring the State is not only theoretically interesting, but it is also a good example of a thickly contextualised investigation that does not sacrifice theoretical generalizability. In this respect, the study fits with the so-called “historic turn in the human sciences” (McDonald 1996). Ziblatt should be applauded for successfully taking on such a risky endeavor. This is the type of work that is too historical for fans of decontextualized large-n studies, and too variable-based and social sciency for students of nineteenth-century European political history. But at the end of the day, Ziblatt does an outstanding job in presenting the comparison without losing either audience. However, what should have been at the core of the book is relegated to a note in the end: “Any effort to quantify complex historical processes will generate resistance from historians who know the cases well. Conversely, for quantitatively minded social scientists, the reliability and validity problems inherent in my historical date may prove equally frustrating. My account treads precisely in this treacherous domain of applying basic statistical techniques to historical data” (175).
Structuring the State is a top-quality contribution to the field of comparative politics and more specifically the origins of federal governance. However, there are a couple of points that would have benefited from further discussion. There is no question that the comparison is a fascinating one that brings out useful theoretical and substantive lessons. Yet occasionally Ziblatt appears to try a little too hard to present the two cases in symmetrical form: Prussia and Piedmont against Bavaria and the Kingdom of Two Sicilies. An important element that this symmetrical comparison ignores is the fact that German unification was a process that did not end with the establishment of the Kaiserrreich, while Italian unification—save for Rome—was more or less complete. There were pan-German sympathies in the Habsburg territories of Bohemia and Moravia, in Austria proper, in German-speaking Switzerland, in Luxembourg, in the Limbourg province of the Netherlands, and also among numerous German-speaking communities scattered throughout Central and Eastern Europe. Federalism was therefore an open-ended process that was to remain accessible to those left out of the 1871 Kaiserrreich. In addition, German-speaking states shared a preexisting federal tradition in the form of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation. In the context of pan-German nationalism, unification was more than a Prussian-led endeavor. Interestingly, Structuring the State starts with a quote from Heinrich Treitschke, who was originally from Saxony but who believed that Prussia’s lead was the only way to bring about unification. The Prussian predominance in the Kaiserrreich has led many observers to question the federal principles which supposedly characterized the political structure. For example, Karl Heinz Walper has labeled the federal structure of the Kaiserrreich as a “federalism of appearance” (Scheinföderalismus) (Walper 1966, 24). The Italian case study on the other hand, would have benefited from further elaboration as to how Italian regions like Lombardy and Tuscany, which had infrastructural capacity, ended up in a unitary system.

An additional although minor problem in Structuring the State involves the historical evidence presented. These are mostly based on citations from history books on nineteenth-century politics. That being said, the book is full of informative and useful footnotes. One tiny stylistic problem in presentation is the occasional repetitiveness in restating the main argument about infrastructural capacity. But perhaps this message concerning the limitations of political intentions in the face of structural factors beyond control is one that requires to be repeated whenever new federal systems are designed in various experiments throughout the world.

Note

Seeing the State: Governance and Governmentality in India. Stuart Corbridge, Glyn Williams, Manoj Srivastava, and Réne Véron. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005. 317 pp. $75.00 (cloth); $34.99 (paper).

On the subject of governance in contemporary India, there are two familiar accounts. One is mostly laudatory, calling attention to steady achievements in reducing levels of poverty and improving human development, supposedly as a result of new, responsive, accountable, and empowering systems of governance. The other is largely pessimistic, pointing to the hollowness of governance reform in a socioeconomic context that sustains entrenched structural barriers, in turn preventing large sections of the population, especially the poor, from accessing the state. Seeing the State charts a cautious middle path between these competing perspectives. The book argues that the new rhetoric and technologies of governance—the new public administration—have opened up new spaces of empowerment for the poor in Eastern India, although less perfectly than what the stylized accounts of good governance would have us believe. Overall, the book offers a tempered yet optimistic prognosis of the ongoing governance reform in India.

One of the central tasks of the book is to understand how poor people make sense of the everyday state, how the poor “see the state” in their interactions with local institutions and processes. To answer this question, the authors explore how two new institutions of governance—the Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS) and Village Education Committees (VECs)—have shaped encounters between the poor and the state in five field sites covering three states: Bihar, Jharkhand, and West Bengal.

Drawing on rich empirical data, they demonstrate how poor peoples’ sighting of the state is shaped by a series of engagements with the local political society (lower level officials, political fixers, political parties, and politicians), past knowledge of state engagement, dominant discourses of development, and existing patterns of socio-political exclusion. This complex set of factors lead to hybrid, uneven, episodic, and mediated sightings of the state by the poor. Often, the poor view the state not as a collection of institutions which share some unity of purpose but as fractious and discontinuous and not necessarily interconnected as a set of schemes and actors. Still, the new public administration has, albeit unevenly, reworked the terms of state–poor interaction and has expanded the sites of such interaction. Some of the new reforms have allowed better