

Shaped by the State

*Toward a New Political History
of the Twentieth Century*

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Contents

Acknowledgments VII

INTRODUCTION

Beyond Red and Blue: Crisis and Continuity in Twentieth-Century U.S. Political History 3
Brent Cebul, Lily Geismer, and Mason B. Williams

PART I. **Building Leviathan**

CHAPTER 1. Social Insecurities: Private Data and Public Culture in Modern America 27
Sarah E. Igo

CHAPTER 2. The Strange Career of American Liberalism 62
N. D. B. Connolly

CHAPTER 3. “Really and Truly a Partnership”: The New Deal’s Associational State and the Making of Postwar American Politics 96
Brent Cebul and Mason B. Williams

CHAPTER 4. State Building for a Free Market: The Great Depression and the Rise of Monetary Orthodoxy 123
David M. P. Freund

CHAPTER 5. *La revolución institucional*: The Rise and Fall of the Mexican New Deal in the U.S. South, 1920–1990 162
Julie M. Weise

PART II.	Crisis and Continuity	
CHAPTER 6.	The Short End of Both Sticks: Property Assessments and Black Taxpayer Disadvantage in Urban America	189
	<i>Andrew W. Kahrl</i>	
CHAPTER 7.	Clearing the Air and Counting Costs: <i>Shimp v. New Jersey Bell</i> and the Tragedy of Workplace Smoking	218
	<i>Sarah E. Milov</i>	
CHAPTER 8.	Glocal America: The Politics of Scale in the 1970s	241
	<i>Suleiman Osman</i>	
CHAPTER 9.	The Government Alone Cannot Do the Total Job: The Possibilities and Perils of Religious Organizations in Public-Private Refugee Care	261
	<i>Melissa May Borja</i>	
CHAPTER 10.	A Carceral Empire: Placing the Political History of U.S. Prisons and Policing in the World	289
	<i>Stuart Schrader</i>	
CHAPTER 11.	Fears of a Nanny State: Centering Gender and Family in the Political History of Regulation	317
	<i>Rachel Louise Moran</i>	
CONCLUSIONS		
	The History of Neoliberalism	347
	<i>Kim Phillips-Fein</i>	
	Ten Propositions for the New Political History	363
	<i>Matthew D. Lassiter</i>	
Contributors		377
Index		381

Introduction

Beyond Red and Blue

Crisis and Continuity in Twentieth-Century U.S. Political History

Brent Cebul, Lily Geismer, and Mason B. Williams

Donald Trump's ascent to the White House shocked many Americans—not least the historical community. Even before the general election, historians began to converge from a variety of different fields, adopting a consciously ecumenical approach in the hope that, by placing Trump's politics in historical context, they might help make sense of a seemingly incomprehensible turn of events.¹ By highlighting the inadequacy of America's political imagination writ large, and hence calling attention to the need for a more expansive reading of America's political history, Trump's election has presented both challenges and opportunities with which scholars of twentieth-century American political history will be grappling for many years. If they do their work well, historians will not only shed light on the Trump phenomenon but also add a greater depth to our understanding of modern U.S. history more generally.

The reaction to Trump's rise reminds us of the way historians responded a decade ago, when world capitalism nearly collapsed during the Great Recession of 2008. In the recession's wake, historians from many different fields converged around a new history of capitalism; they devised a common language and set off in search of not only the "prehistory of a bewildering present" but also a deeper understanding of how power has worked in American life.² As the Great Recession did with capitalism, the current moment in American politics challenges historians both to make sense of the present moment and to rethink what it means to study

American political history. Little wonder that the question of what counts as “political history” has recently come to the fore: events have pushed the study of American politics beyond the reach of the existing conceptions of the field.

The “all hands on deck” response to the rise of Trump has built upon (and in turn accelerated) a historiographical phenomenon which was already well under way. Over the past few decades, the call to “bring the state back in” has been so successful that scholars from a wide range of subfields traditionally understood as “social” or “cultural” history regularly make formal structures of state power integral to their analyses.³ As a result, scholarship on American politics and governance has proliferated as never before. And because it draws on an unprecedented range of perspectives and methodologies, it has never been richer. Yet the fact that much of the best political history is now being written by scholars who would not primarily consider themselves political historians indicates a certain definitional problem in the field of modern American political history—it suggests that the field lacks a set of organizing principles and theories, key questions and debates, and well-established research agendas around which “traditional” political historians and “unofficial” political historians could make common cause.

The scholars who have converged upon the ground of political history, in short, require a language with which they can speak to one another. The key obstacle to developing this language, we believe, lies not in disputes about what counts as political history or which parts of political history deserve the most attention.⁴ Rather, it lies in how political historians have thought about politics and historical time.

Explicitly or implicitly, the big narratives of modern American political history as constructed by political historians have been built around the concept of crisis: time and again, our efforts to understand why seemingly stable political orders crack up, and how American politics gets reconstructed in the aftermath of those crack-ups, center on epochal moments when established structures collapse and new ones rise from their ashes. The crisis of the 1850s gave way to the Republican ascendancy, the economic catastrophe of the early 1930s to the New Deal order, the upheavals of the late 1960s and 1970s to the rise of modern conservatism. Most recently, journalists and pundits have drafted a rushed historical framework for the twenty-first century in which the 2016 election of Donald Trump is both the result and the cause of a new crisis—and perhaps a new political era.

In twentieth-century American political history, the concept of crisis rests at the heart of what remains the dominant chronological and historiographical framework: the rise and fall of the New Deal order and its displacement by (depending on how one sees it) the age of Reagan or the era of neoliberalism or both. The New Deal order framework takes its organizing principle from the electoral realignment school of political science, a schema in which periodic “critical elections” (often preceded by social crises) yield relatively durable political systems.⁵ Integrating business interests, state institutions, class formation, and political culture fully into the history of American politics, scholars writing in the 1980s and early 1990s charted the development of a liberal “order of ideas, public policies and political alliances” that would shape American politics for four decades, as well as the “missed opportunities, unintended consequences, and dangerous but inescapable compromises” that led to that order’s collapse.⁶ In the early twenty-first century, historians overlaid the story of the rise of conservatism atop the New Deal order framework, showing how a diverse group of movements blending ostensibly “free-market” economic ideas and practices with staunch anticommunism and a newly assertive Christian social-cultural politics, seized the Republican Party and capitalized on the social and economic crises of the 1970s, riding to national power with Ronald Reagan’s election in 1980 and the Gingrich revolution a decade later.⁷ Some of the early works on neoliberalism did something similar, positing an abrupt shift in political economy from an “embedded liberalism” crafted in response to the crisis of the 1930s and 1940s to a neoliberalism made possible by the economic restructuring of the 1970s and 1980s.⁸

No one would doubt that American political history contains critical moments, windows during which the established order of things changes abruptly and with permanent consequences. Nor would anyone question the value of the literatures on New Deal liberalism, conservatism, and neoliberalism, which have immeasurably enhanced our understanding of twentieth-century American history. As the essays in this volume make clear, and as ongoing work on topics such as party polarization attest, their influence continues to shape political-historical analysis in profound and productive ways.⁹

But building our historical frameworks around crises comes with significant costs. The very act of invoking “crisis,” the anthropologist Janet Roitman notes, begins a subjective process of determining “what counts as history.” In the search for proximate causes and clear ruptures, more

enduring experiences, norms, and institutions can be relegated to the margins. Consequently, the concept of crisis often serves as “an enabling blind-spot for the production of knowledge.” By its very nature, crisis implies rift and change, a causal-temporal claim that “makes certain things visible and others invisible.”¹⁰ The definitional problems facing political history stem to no small degree from the fact that crisis-centered frameworks have made certain experiences and developments harder to see. Such frameworks have worked relatively well to make sense of those aspects of American politics where rupture really matters: partisan realignments, electoral coalitions, and some (though certainly not all) dimensions of political culture and policy formation, for instance. But they offer less purchase for understanding persistent features of American politics that cut across the usual break points—particularly hierarchies and privileges of race and gender, which are now at the center of scholarship on twentieth-century American history.

As a result, the established paradigms—the New Deal order, postwar liberalism, the rise of conservatism, red versus blue—risk obscuring transformations and continuities that are equally constitutive of American political life and just as central to people’s lived experiences under the American regime. Because they tend to obscure deeper forms of consensus around global capitalism, white privilege, patriarchy, and notions of American exceptionalism, these frameworks have never spoken especially cogently to research on radical politics—an obviously important problem in the age of Occupy and the white supremacist “alt-right.” They also struggle to illuminate developments that transcend partisan divisions, such as the embrace of “market-based” approaches, the place of the military or the courts in political history, and the vast and decentralized construction of the American carceral state,¹¹ or to integrate the movement of people, ideas, and institutions that cross the boundaries of the United States.¹² Meanwhile, historians of metropolitan, urban, and rural politics are finding that national partisan and ideological categories sometimes obscure the causes of important developments in local politics and governance, missing the ways in which categories like liberalism and conservatism have often been defined and redefined by a range of other social, cultural, spatial, and economic factors.¹³

The best scholarship on New Deal liberalism, conservatism, and neo-liberalism certainly integrated the study of race, gender, property rights, and consumption (among other topics) in histories of American politics and governance.¹⁴ Yet, it remains the case that in much of this scholarship

racially unequal and segregated outcomes or gendered policy structures, for instance, have most often been explained as *products* of liberalism or conservatism. More recently, however, a range of other social historians and scholars of American governance have decentered the categories of liberalism and conservatism. They have focused instead on how the American state and its regnant ideologies and parties have been structured by normative values and assumptions, and have in turn embedded or more sharply defined those same deeply rooted values through governance. Often their work intersects with subjects like the New Deal and conservative governance but in ways that do not fit easily into the established red-and-blue frameworks. For instance, Margot Canaday found that the New Deal state played an important role in the production of new categories of sex and gender nonconformity, but not because of any dynamic implied by the concept of New Deal liberalism. Rather, the creation and entrenchment of heteronormative tiers of citizenship was bound up in the state's efforts to govern in areas such as migration, poverty, and crime, embedding in state structures norms that predated the New Deal and continued well after it.¹⁵ Similarly, N. D. B. Connolly recognized the importance of New Deal housing programs in the modernization of Jim Crow's built environment in the city of Miami. But he put the structural politics of property and racial capitalism, rather than New Deal liberalism, at the center of his account.¹⁶ The carceral state literature, which stresses bipartisanship, offers another case in point; so does Mae Ngai's seminal work on immigration and citizenship.¹⁷ These works offer important examples of the possibilities of a political history that cuts across common paradigms, that is sensitive to deeper structures of continuity, and that builds bridges between flourishing subfields that are now home to some of the most exciting new political histories.¹⁸

Our approach in this book has been to start by identifying the common ground on which these "unofficial" political historians have converged. Although they frame their questions in different ways, much of this scholarship is fundamentally concerned with at least one of three central dynamics of politics in a modern liberal state: the contested relationships between state and economy, state and society, and state and citizen-subject.¹⁹ Rather than seek to uncover the logic and functioning of an "order," we have focused on these dynamics, which are foundational to understanding the problems of democracy within the contexts of the modern state, modern capitalism, and citizenship in an age of globalization. Our contributors have identified important changes and continuities in those relationships, explained how

and why they occurred, and examined how those changing relationships in turn reshaped categories, knowledge, group identities, and ideological commitments.

This approach yields no grand narrative of twentieth-century American political history. But by giving us a better sense of the relation of change to continuity, it brings into clearer focus the ways in which phenomena exemplary of a particular historical moment build on and articulate deeper structural forces of American politics. This volume's treatment of neoliberalism, a phenomenon that has moved to the center of twentieth-century U.S. political history in the past decade, offers a case in point.²⁰ Each of the book's chapters engages with a key theme of neoliberalism: financialization, precarity, public-private partnerships and coadministration, turns toward surveillance and punishment, individual freedoms, and resistance to regulation. But they do not adhere to the standard story of neoliberalization—they posit no abrupt shift toward deregulation, privatization, marketization, and political demobilization in the 1970s. On the contrary, they trace the conditions, assumptions, institutions, and practices associated with neoliberalism across modern American political history, suggesting, as N. D. B. Connolly writes in his chapter, that there is “nothing ‘neo’ about it.”

Indeed, many of the arrangements associated with neoliberalism are not new. State recourse to private or nongovernmental actors, elite preferences for subdued and subjugated labor markets, and broadly shared convictions about the importance of maintaining white supremacy and the government's role in creating markets are, in fact, deeply rooted in American governance. These techniques and assumptions became steadily amplified when the associational state of the nineteenth century became modern “big government” as it responded to the exigencies of depression and war. And as the chapters that follow suggest, the twentieth-century state emerged within these long-standing structures and ideologies of markets and social power defined by race, gender, class, and hierarchies of citizenship.

In stressing continuity, we do not mean to claim that nothing important changed in the 1970s, much less to insist on a neo-consensus framework of political history. But we do wish to highlight some of the problems with making neoliberalism an overarching historical framework rather than a subject of inquiry. And more importantly, we want to suggest some ways to return a sense of historical contingency to a phenomenon which can come to seem totalizing and inescapable. Once we see the ways in which “neoliberal” dynamics are embedded within the deep structures of state-

economy, state-society, and state-subject relations, we can understand more fully why these dynamics have become especially prevalent at certain moments in our history—including the current one.²¹

Continuity and Change in Modern American Political History

One of the great strengths of the liberalism-and-conservatism paradigm is that it conceived of American politics as an ongoing contest between multiple traditions. Breaking with the midcentury consensus school's assumptions about the hegemony of liberalism and the inevitable course of modernization, it took conservative and populist ideas seriously, an expansion of vision that allowed it to offer a more nuanced reading of American political history. One of the weaknesses of this paradigm—perhaps its primary weakness—is that it tended to subsume other crises, structures, patterns, and experiences of citizenship and historical development within the framework of these relatively few, unitary political traditions. The development of a Fordist and mass consumption economy, local racial orders, the urban crisis, the rise of law-and-order politics—all of these became subordinated, analytically, to the primary structure of the New Deal order.

Meanwhile, the construction of this paradigm coincided with flourishing studies of the experiences of underrepresented groups. By the 1990s, a variety of emerging subfields took their cues from the “new” social history of the 1970s and 1980s, which had begun focusing on the lived experiences of marginalized groups. More recently mobilized identity groups' rights claims also came to drive the historical inquiry in a range of fields like African American history, Latino history, histories of immigration, and women's and gender studies, to name just a few. Soon, with the arrival of works such as George Chauncey's *Gay New York*, projects proliferated that were profoundly “political” but did not map onto the liberalism-conservatism paradigm.²² By arguing for the political agency and subjectivity of disfranchised groups, these scholars highlighted patterns of marginalization, identified weapons of the weak, and pinpointed deep continuities of and developments within systems of white supremacy, patriarchy, and economic exploitation both in political history and within the historical profession. Such accounts decentered “big” moments like World War II or the 1980 election. But they also insisted on emphasizing the persistence and adaptability of white supremacy, patriarchy,

and economic oppression across the full sweep of American history, even through watershed moments of social or racial political progress.

As they did so, these scholars of what we might call the “newer” social history wrote their way back to structures of state power, which the earlier generation had largely eschewed in pursuit of the linguistic and cultural turn.²³ The newer social historians developed nuanced accounts of particular policies or political processes that were implicated in their historical subjects’ experiences of citizenship. Examples include important studies of the creation of public health regimes in San Francisco’s Chinatown, radical sharecroppers’ role in the Communist Party in the South during the Great Depression, the experiences of civil rights movement figures such as Ella Baker, the role of the border patrol in policing and criminalizing migrants from Mexico, the ideas of citizenship fostered by the migrant labor workers who participated in the bracero program and the families they left behind in Mexico, women’s resistance to punitive welfare policies, the transformation of the labor movement into a working-class movement of women, and the role of popular culture in influencing U.S. policy interests in the Middle East.²⁴ All of these studies and more have provided critical insights into the development and dimensions of policy and political culture, and the role of state power in shaping a wide range of citizenship experiences and state developments. Today, such sustained attention to the experiences of a broad cross section of Americans has cracked open and democratized the very definition of “the political.” These histories have expanded the political-historical imagination as never before.

While this cohort illuminated the experiences of groups whose histories had traditionally failed to obtain notice as political history, another group of scholars revitalized scholarship on the processes of governance by placing the state itself at the center of historical political analysis. Beginning in the 1970s, scholars working within the traditions of policy history and the “organizational synthesis” framed their work in ways that cut across epochal crises as well as the frameworks of liberalism and conservatism.²⁵ A decade later, a multidisciplinary band of scholars of historical institutionalism and American political development drew historians’ attention to institutional structures and logics that transcended episodic crises, administrations, realignments, and movements, shaping and constraining political change in ways incomprehensible within, and often directly challenging to, the liberalism-conservatism paradigm. These scholars zeroed in on durable patterns of governance in part because they saw that in the wake of the 1960s, the Vietnam War, and Watergate, social and political movements

often failed to penetrate and reform critical features of the American state. Against a tradition that viewed the United States as peculiarly “stateless” and American politics as characterized by a powerful antistatist tradition, these scholars began to illuminate sources of the state’s strength and autonomy as well as its significance as a powerful if often subtle social and political actor in its own right, that is, through its agencies, bureaucrats, and extragovernmental partners.²⁶

In different ways, then, the newer social historians and historical institutionalists were both writing political histories of *continuity*: continuities of structural racism, continuities of political marginalization and regimes of difference, and continuities of bureaucratic autonomy and state development. Strikingly, too, the approaches represented two sides of a coin undervalued by traditional political historians: a state that continued to grow despite regnant ideologies, a political structure that responded unevenly to minority concerns and social movements, and bureaucracies that constructed their own politics. Yet despite their considerable strengths and their potential for offering powerful insights, especially if paired, historical institutionalism and the various subfields that sprang from social history remained overwhelmingly siloed. While the newer social historians zeroed in on political developments particularly germane to their subjects, the institutionalists too often risked the inverse: writing nuanced analyses of political or economic institutions that did not fully integrate social and cultural history.²⁷ This siloing also developed in part thanks to different methodological approaches, theoretical frameworks, and disciplinary jargon. “Policy feedbacks” and “subaltern” politics easily passed each other in the night.

Each subfield produced powerful analyses and rich descriptions of particular aspects of political experiences and institutions. Yet at the very moment that explorations of “the political” in U.S. history has flourished as never before, the field of political history has grown decidedly fragmented, lacking unifying concepts, theories, and frames of reference beyond the outmoded red-blue divide.²⁸ The time is right to integrate these approaches to political history. Such an approach begins from an understanding of the state’s development as historically situated within, and in turn acting upon, ideas of race, gender, class, sexuality, and economy; that is, it rejects the notion that institutional structure, political cultures, market forces, and cultural or racial experiences of the state and society can somehow be disaggregated. *Shaped by the State* seeks to offer just such a vertically, socially, and disciplinarily integrated political-historical

methodology: sensitive to crises of continuity as well as disjuncture; attentive to political, economic, social, and cultural sites of power and agency; shorn of siloing jargon and connected to the social bases of experience and political authority.²⁹ A political history attentive to these kinds of continuities and renegotiations can help us make better sense of crucial questions about twentieth-century politics that are irreducible to mere partisanship or ideology.

An Unbounded Political History

The essays that follow proceed chronologically and thematically while also emphasizing themes emerging from our three primary spheres of inquiry: the emergence and experience of a leviathan state as it reoriented politics during the twentieth century (state-society); the persistence, reformation, and influence of the market in American politics as well as in Americans' political imagination (state-economy); and the ways in which these and other forces constrained and constructed differing tiers of rights-bearing citizens and subjects and created forms of governing authority often beyond the reach of popular democracy (state-subjects). The contributions come from scholars working in a variety of different traditions and subfields; some essays are archivally driven while others are more historiographical, blending theory with practice. Together, however, they identify significant lines of political-historical continuities and fruitful comparisons that cut across lines of public and private, of red and blue, and of class, race, and identity.

The chapters in part 1, "Building Leviathan," point to the emergence of the New Deal state and its discontents as they were constructed and reconstructed through the crises of depression and war. The essays suggest that as state builders confronted structural realities and limitations inherited from earlier eras as well as broader contemporary social and structural realities, the state they built entrenched and developed certain governing logics—accommodation with Jim Crow, techniques of surveillance, public-private partnerships, cultivation of highly contingent labor markets, and profound but obscure interventions on behalf of maintaining the fiction of free markets. These chapters emphasize not only the expansive and pervasive dimensions of the New Deal state but also the ways in which Americans understood and grappled with the reality of this powerful and diffuse, yet increasingly distant national government. They

also emphasize the overlapping and often constitutive relationships between modern liberalism, modern conservatism, and phenomena associated with neoliberalism.

In the opening chapter, Sarah Igo explores several of the central themes of the volume in her examination of the lived experience of Social Security. As Igo reveals, the New Deal's rollout of Social Security gained cultural legitimacy by its use of the Social Security number, which was quickly embraced by a wide range of citizens as a powerful symbol of inclusion in the national polity. This acceptance of the Social Security Administration's forms of surveillance show the multitude of ways that the New Deal changed the relationship between the public and private. Cultures of state formation and surveillance, Igo suggests, defy easy ideological categorization but can be profoundly consequential in shaping the meaning of politics, the experiences of citizenship, and definitions of liberalism and conservatism as these cultures change over time.

N. D. B. Connolly explores the lived experience of liberalism from a decidedly different vantage point. Yet, like Igo, he demonstrates the analytical fruits of integrating formal state institutions, subjectivity, and the differing forms of mediation between them. Connolly offers important insight into the troubling history of African Americans' relationship to midcentury liberalism. In Connolly's telling, liberalism often cultivated African American partners in its recourse to markets, its endorsement of state violence, its pragmatic embrace of paternalistic alliances, and its reliance on brokered rather than direct democracy. The result was the maintenance of white supremacy that transcended the ostensible high-water marks of the civil rights era. In his exploration of these dynamics, Connolly locates striking lines of continuity between the seemingly distinct political crises of black disfranchisement and modern neoliberalism, which is too often defined as a crisis of the white working class.

In their chapter on the complex legacies of New Deal federalism, Brent Cebul and Mason Williams argue that red-blue binaries, which often took on regional dimensions (e.g., the "conservative" South and the "liberal" North), have led scholars to miss the centrality of the New Deal in creating not only urban liberalism but also Sunbelt conservatism. By mapping the New Deal's reliance on loosely regulated fiscal relationships between national and local governments and public and private actors, Cebul and Williams excavate the importance of local politics in shaping the day-to-day realities of the New Deal and postwar state. In their recounting of New Deal federalism, the legacies of Progressive Era reform, the contingent

development of mass democratic publics, Jim Crow, the subtleties of fiscal federalism, the long history of public-private partnerships, and the fierce competition between local elites over the spoils of federal spending emerge as significant factors shaping not only what the New Deal accomplished but also how local actors—urban progressives and Sunbelt boosters alike—remembered and misremembered the importance of the New Deal as they constructed and reconstructed their political ideologies.

As the chapters by Igo, Connolly, and Cebul and Williams all suggest, far from snuffing out the centrality of the market and market actors in Americans' political and cultural imagination, the development of the leviathan state proceeded through market forces and ironically redoubled Americans' recourse to markets as alternatives to increasingly unwieldy or undemocratic governing institutions. As David M. P. Freund argues in his study of New Deal era financial policy, a new economic orthodoxy emerged around public debt and the money supply that justified unprecedented state interventions between 1932, when Herbert Hoover signed the first Glass-Steagall Act, and Franklin D. Roosevelt's passage of the Banking Act of 1935. Yet as Freund reveals, politicians and economists from across the political spectrum masked the implications of the government's new stake in finance, arguing that it mattered not whether public or private assets "stood behind" the currency's value. Instead, Freund argues that the "U.S. state fundamentally remade the financial landscape in the twentieth century by collateralizing it with public resources," and that the state's new powers would be essential to financing unprecedented postwar growth. Freund ultimately contends that policy makers and economists, liberals and conservatives, have been complicit in obscuring this transformation by portraying the value of modern money as purely market driven, further submerging the role of the state and helping maintain fictions of free markets and limited government.

In her chapter, Julie M. Weise highlights how turning to the rural margins can yield new ways of understanding the role of the New Deal state, its transnational dimensions, and its maintenance of contingent labor markets. She explores the experience of Mexican migrant laborers in the Arkansas Delta who came to the United States as part of the bracero program. Begun in 1942 and in effect for twenty-two years, the program was established initially thanks to wartime agricultural labor shortages. But it expanded most rapidly in the decades following the World War II. As Weise suggests, despite New Deal era guarantees of fair wages, humane working conditions, and access to public accommodations, braceros instead faced deplorable working conditions, shelter, and usurious compen-

sation. Denied assistance by U.S. officials, in their efforts to improve their lot, braceros instead turned to the Mexican government, which, as Weise makes clear, more effectively promoted and instituted the New Deal's purported values than did postwar liberals themselves.

In part 2, "Crisis and Continuity," the chapters explore the ways in which earlier techniques of governance and experiences of citizenship became renegotiated and amplified through a subsequent period of crisis, the 1970s. The essays identify not only deep continuities between historical techniques of what we might call neoliberal governance but also continuities and convergences between the experiences of contingent forms of citizenship and citizens' perspectives on the state itself. To be sure, changes in the global political economy and the rights revolutions of the 1960s refashioned the relationships between state and society, state and market, and the lived experience of the leviathan state. But they did not rewrite these relationships on a clean slate. Rather, through a particular emphasis on the 1970s, the chapters suggest ways in which these relationships became recast in the context of earlier state developments and dependencies.

Expanding on themes introduced by Connolly, Andrew Kahrl reveals that racial and ethnic depredations of the U.S. political economy extended and intensified after the Great Society. By focusing on state and local tax-policy administration, Kahrl uncovers a variety of bureaucratic and administrative practices used to punish and exploit the poor and politically disfranchised. Providing a new way to think about the tax politics of the 1970s, Kahrl maps unseen sites of discrimination and chronicles the double injury that myths about black tax delinquency and the undemocratic state have perpetuated: abetting a misguided radical anti-tax, pro-market, and antigovernment mood that infects both parties and which simultaneously enforces a locally based, regressively redistributionary tax regime.

In her chapter, Sarah Milov offers a different view of the relationship between the state and citizens seeking new forms of political and workplace rights in the 1970s. Focusing on the battle for smoke-free workplaces, Milov shows how activists often had to go to war with the unions to which they belonged—unions that otherwise bargained for worker health and safety. Milov exposes the complex legal, gendered, and biopolitical forces that could fuse the interests of worker-activists with corporations concerned primarily with efficiency. Ultimately, Milov argues that the workplace battle she uncovers was less a factor in the eclipse of the New Deal order and was instead a legacy of New Deal era "law, administration, and ideas about health and the environment [that] had expanded the

realm of the contestable.” Crucial continuities, in other words, played an overlooked role in creating labor’s decade of crisis.

In his chapter, Suleiman Osman reveals that the “politics of scale” that emerged in the 1970s cut across the ideological and partisan divides and reflected a yearning for both a return to the local and a quest to harness new globalizing capacities. Osman points out the existing limitations in many of the historiographical understandings of that “pivotal decade” and instead calls for an approach that attends to the codevelopment of global and local political outlooks. Through close attention to varieties of political expression and experience on the ground, Osman roots the emergence of neoliberal policy prescriptions not only in the crisis of the national state but also in a multivalent quest to cultivate governing local and global capacities capable of maintaining continuities of rights and opportunity.

Melissa Borja’s contribution further demonstrates the complicated ways that global and local scales and state and private organizations interacted in the 1970s. Borja reveals how the federal, state, and municipal governments of the United States joined forces with religious organizations to give relief and resettlement assistance to hundreds of thousands of Indochinese war refugees. Rather than simply discharging responsibility for social services to nongovernmental organizations (as “privatization” narratives would suggest), Borja shows that American governments were able to expand their social welfare capacity by partnering with religious institutions. In the process, voluntary agencies came to serve as an extension of the state, which created new possibilities but also challenges of accountability and coercion. Borja, therefore, offers a more precise understanding of the fault lines in the church-state debate, voluntarism and privatization, and the emergence of the Religious Right in the 1970s and beyond.

Like Weise, Osman, and Borja, Stuart Schrader suggests that looking beyond national boundaries can provide new ways of understanding how the New Deal state evolved over time and ultimately generated what is perhaps the fundamental social and political crisis of our time: the crisis of black, male incarceration. Like Freund, he explores the way political narratives can obscure forms of state power, and, like Igo, he uncovers roots of the neoliberal surveillance state in New Deal and postwar state-building projects—in his case, abroad. Schrader examines the literature surrounding the “carceral state” and spotlights how the turn toward transnationalism or “the U.S. in the world” has been notably absent. By tracking institutions both inside and outside the state, including law-enforcement agencies and professional organizations, Schrader demonstrates the need

for close empirical attention to the transnational dimensions of the carceral state, suggesting that key aspects of the construction of a postwar U.S. empire have come home to roost.

The final essay in the volume, by Rachel Moran, also challenges prevailing ideas of culture wars politics of the last decades of the twentieth century. Moran demonstrates shifting cultural perceptions of the state, following as liberals moved from subsidizing a mass consumer economy in the postwar years to regulatory policing of the family-consumer economy in the 1970s. While scholars have illuminated the gender dynamics of specific policy regimes, Moran reveals how gendered metaphors for specific policies, in this case the Federal Trade Commission's efforts to regulate commercials targeting children, shaped the language Americans used to describe the state itself. While these terms have surely taken on partisan valences, Moran reveals how such gendered metaphors were animated by anxieties about big government that also emerged across the Atlantic in other Western democracies in crisis, and in the process reshaped the very meanings of liberalism and conservatism at home.

The volume ends with two synthetic conclusions. In the first, Kim Phillips-Fein offers a more sharply delineated appraisal of the promise and perils of the emerging neoliberalism paradigm, suggesting as well auspicious new sites of historical study and analysis. In the second, Matthew Lassiter explores how the kind of political history suggested by this volume (and the works that inspired it) will provide ways to move beyond the emphasis on critical elections, partisan realignment, polarization, and totalizing narratives of neoliberalism. Lassiter's is also an implicit call to unify the flourishing if fragmented fields of inquiry concerned with the relationship between state power, capitalism, and the experiences of citizenship—of uniting disciplines attuned to both crisis and continuity in political history.

Notes

1. See, e.g., the "Trump Syllabus" crafted by Keisha Blain and N. D. B. Connolly, which drew from more than one hundred scholars in a wide variety of disciplines (<http://www.publicbooks.org/trump-syllabus-2-0/>; accessed February 19, 2017).

2. Timothy Shenk, "Apostles of Growth," *Nation*, November 5, 2014, <https://www.thenation.com/article/apostles-growth/>. For a critical audit, see "Interchange: The History of Capitalism," *Journal of American History* 101, no. 2 (September 2014), 503–36. Thank you to Tim Shenk for suggesting this analogy to us.

3. This pattern was evident by the time of Meg Jacobs, William J. Novak, and

Julian E. Zelizer's landmark volume *The Democratic Experiment*, which included essays by a number of scholars who would have been regarded primarily as social or cultural historians. Since then, the flourishing of research involving the state in the fields of the history of gender and sexuality, the history of capitalism, environmental history, the history of immigration and citizenship, and the history of the African diaspora, to name only a few, has tilted the balance much farther. See Jacobs, Novak, and Zelizer, eds., *The Democratic Experiment: New Directions in American Political History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003).

4. For all the real issues at stake in the often-contentious conversation launched by Fredrik Logevall and Kenneth Osgood's widely read op-ed on the place of political history within the discipline, historians on all sides broadly agreed on the importance of state power, institutions, and elite actors. See Logevall and Osgood, "Why Did We Stop Teaching Political History?" *New York Times*, August 29, 2016.

5. The classic statement is Steve Fraser and Gary Gerstle, eds., *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order, 1930–1980* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989). For a critique of the theory on which the concept of political order is built, see David R. Mayhew, *Electoral Realignments: A Critique of an American Genre* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004).

6. Fraser and Gerstle, *Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order*, ix–x.

7. They did so in the wake of Alan Brinkley's call to take seriously the history of conservatism. Brinkley, "The Problem of American Conservatism," *American Historical Review* 99, no. 2 (April 1994), 409–29. Two excellent reviews of the vast literature that emerged are Kim Phillips-Fein, "Conservatism: A State of the Field," *Journal of American History* 98, no. 3 (December 2011), 723–43; and Julian E. Zelizer, "Rethinking the History of American Conservatism," *Reviews in American History* 38, no. 2 (June 2010): 367–92.

8. Leading works include David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); Jefferson R. Cowie, *Stayin' Alive: The 1970s and the Last Days of the Working Class* (New York: New Press, 2011); Greta R. Krippner, *Capitalizing on Crisis: The Political Origins of the Rise of Finance* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012); and Judith Stein, *The Pivotal Decade: How the United States Traded Factories for Finance in the Seventies* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010).

9. For an exemplary recent example, see Sam Rosenfeld, *The Polarizers: Post-war Architects of Our Partisan Era* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017).

10. Janet Roitman, "Crisis," *Political Concepts: A Critical Lexicon* 1 (2011), <http://www.politicalconcepts.org/issue1/crisis/>.

11. Daniel T. Rodgers, *The Age of Fracture* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011). Historians have recently joined geographers, sociologists, and political scientists in emphasizing the bipartisan nature of the punitive turn. Outstanding full-length works in this vein are Elizabeth Hinton, *From the*

War on Poverty to the War on Crime: The Making of Mass Incarceration in America (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), and Julilly Kohler-Hausmann, *Getting Tough: Welfare and Imprisonment in 1970s America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017); see also the earlier statements by Lassiter, “Political History beyond the Red-Blue Divide,” 763; Heather Ann Thompson, “Why Mass Incarceration Matters: Rethinking Crisis, Decline, and Transformation in Postwar American History,” *Journal of American History* 97, no. 3 (December 2010): 729–31. In the social sciences, see, among others, Marie Gottschalk, *The Prison and the Gallows: The Politics of Mass Incarceration in America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Naomi Murakawa, *The First Civil Right: How Liberals Built Prison America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

12. A number of scholars have examined the transnational origins of domestic developments. See especially Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996); Daniel Immerwahr, *Thinking Small: The United States and the Lure of Community Development* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015); Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004); Andrew Preston and Doug Rossinow, eds., *Outside In: The Transnational Circuitry of U.S. History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016); Daniel J. Sargent, *A Superpower Transformed: The Remaking of American Foreign Relations in the 1970s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

13. In his conclusion to this volume Matthew Lassiter explores this issue in more detail. See also Matthew D. Lassiter, *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006); Lassiter, “Suburban Strategies: The Volatile Center in Postwar American Politics,” in *The Democratic Experiment: New Directions in American Political History*, ed. Jacobs, Novak, and Zelizer (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), chap. 13; N. D. B. Connolly, *A World More Concrete: Real Estate and the Remaking of Jim Crow South Florida* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014); Brent Cebul, *Illusions of Progress: Business, Poverty, and Development in the American Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, forthcoming); David M. P. Freund, *Colored Property: State Policy and White Racial Politics in Suburban America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007); Lily Geismer, *Don't Blame Us: Suburban Liberals and the Transformation of the Democratic Party* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015); Andrew Needham, *Power Lines: Phoenix and the Making of the American Southwest* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014); Robert O. Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003).

14. In addition to the works cited in the previous note, see especially Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919–1939* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Gary Gerstle, *Working-Class Americanism:*

The Politics of Labor in a Textile City, 1914–1960 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), and Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001); Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996); Alice O'Connor, *Poverty Knowledge: Social Science, Social Policy, and the Poor in Twentieth-Century U.S. History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002); Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001); Joseph Crespino, *In Search of Another Country: Mississippi and the Conservative Counterrevolution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009); Kevin M. Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007); Kim Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands: The Making of the Conservative Movement from the New Deal to Reagan* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2009); Angus Burgin, *The Great Persuasion: Reinventing Free Markets since the Depression* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012); Jennifer Burns, *Goddess of the Market: Ayn Rand and the American Right* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); Bethany Moreton, *To Serve God and Wal-Mart: The Making of Christian Free Enterprise* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009); Meg Jacobs, *Pocketbook Politics: Economic Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007); Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumer's Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Vintage, 2003); Alice Kessler-Harris, *In Pursuit of Equity: Women, Men, and the Quest for Economic Citizenship in 20th-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); Nancy MacLean, *Freedom Is Not Enough: The Opening of the American Workplace* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2006); Molly C. Michelmore, *Tax and Spend: The Welfare State, Tax Politics, and the Limits of American Liberalism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010). More recently, scholars of media have emphasized the importance of emergent forms of mass communication in driving the conservative resurgence. See, for example, Nicole Hemmer, *Messengers of the Right: Conservative Media and the Transformation of American Politics* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016). Several edited collections have offered important contributions as well. In addition to Fraser and Gerstle, *Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order*, see especially Bruce J. Schulman and Julian E. Zelizer, eds., *Rightward Bound: Making America Conservative in the 1970s* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008); Kim Phillips-Fein and Julian E. Zelizer, eds., *What's Good for Business: Business and American Politics since World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

15. Margot Canaday, *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009).

16. Connolly, *World More Concrete*.

17. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*.

18. For recent examples of scholarship on the history of business and politics that challenge the neat alignment of business and conservatism and limited government orthodoxy, see a number of the essays in Richard R. John and Kim Phillips-Fein, eds., *Capital Gains: Business and Politics in Twentieth Century America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016).

19. In framing political history this way, we distinguish between a politics involving the state and infrapolitics—what the theorist James C. Scott refers to as “a diagonal politics,” a politics of everyday stealth and evasion, “a politics that ‘dare not speak its name.’” In emphasizing this distinction, we emphatically do *not* wish to diminish the importance of infrapolitics and other forms of exercising and contesting power apart from the state, nor do we mean to suggest that the history of these forms of power merits less scholarly attention than does the history of politics involving the state. To the contrary, we hope that the treatment of political history offered in this book will help scholars to see that the relationship between the two is essential to the production of “the political”: the most profound democratic movements often have their genesis in the transformation of infrapolitics into politics. On infrapolitics, see especially James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985); Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990); Robin D. G. Kelley, *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class* (New York: Free Press, 1994).

20. Kim Phillips-Fein’s conclusion to this volume discusses the key works; see “The History of Neoliberalism.”

21. We can also better understand how progressive aspects of the New Deal and postwar state persist despite such seemingly sweeping ideological or partisan change since the 1970s. For an influential reading of the wholesale decline and historical exceptionalism of New Deal liberalism, see Jefferson Cowie, *The Great Exception: The New Deal and the Limits of American Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016). For a critique of Cowie’s reading of twentieth-century political history and periodization that emphasizes continuities in the form of the persistence of New Deal institutions and social expectations, see Sam Rosenfeld, “There’s No Going Back,” *Democracy: A Journal of Ideas*, no. 40 (Spring 2016), <https://democracyjournal.org/magazine/40/theres-no-going-back/>.

22. George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture and the Making of the Gay Male World* (New York: Basic Books, 1994).

23. These trends are reflected in a variety of disciplines well beyond twentieth-century U.S. political history. See, for instance, Nathan Perl-Rosenthal’s exploration of a new generation of social historical interest in questions such as “How does it work? How does it happen?” Perl-Rosenthal, “Comment: Generational Turns,” *American Historical Review* 117, no. 3 (June 2012): 807.

24. Nayan Shah, *Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco’s Chinatown* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Robin D. G. Kelley,

Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists during the Great Depression (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990); Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Kelly Lytle Hernandez, *Migra! A History of the U.S. Border Patrol* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010); Ana Elizabeth Rosas, *Abrazando el Espíritu: Bracero Families Confront the US-Mexico Border* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014); Rhonda Y. Williams, *The Politics of Public Housing: Black Women's Struggle against Urban Inequality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Annalise Orleck, *Storming Caesars Palace: How Black Mothers Fought Their Own War on Poverty* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2005); Dorothy Sue Cobble, *The Other Women's Movement: Workplace Justice and Social Rights in Modern America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004); Melani McAlister, *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and U.S. Interests in the Middle East since 1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

25. For an overview of the field of policy history, see Julian E. Zelizer, "Clio's Lost Tribe: Public Policy History since 1978," *Journal of Policy History* 12, no. 3 (2000): 371–94. For a substantial revision of the organizational synthesis which nonetheless shares its critical approach to the conventional periodizations, see Brian Balogh, *The Associational State: American Governance in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015).

26. Among many others, see Stephen Skowronek, *Building a New American State: The Expansion of National Administrative Capacities, 1877–1920* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol, eds., *Bringing the State Back In* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1992); Daniel P. Carpenter, *The Forging of Bureaucratic Autonomy: Reputations, Networks, and Policy Innovation in Executive Agencies, 1862–1928* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001); William J. Novak, "The Myth of the 'Weak' American State," *American Historical Review* 113, no. 3 (June 2008): 752–72 (esp. 752–63); Brian Balogh, *A Government out of Sight: The Mystery of National Authority in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Balogh, *Associational State*; Karen Orren and Stephen Skowronek, *The Policy State: An American Predicament* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017); James T. Sparrow, William J. Novak, and Stephen W. Sawyer, *Boundaries of the State in US History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015); Suzanne Mettler, *The Submerged State: How Invisible Government Policies Undermine American Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011); Christopher Howard, *The Hidden Welfare State: Tax Expenditures and Social Policy in the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997); Gail Radford, *The Rise of the Public Authority: State Building and Economic Development in Twentieth-Century America* (Chicago: University of

Chicago Press, 2013); Jennifer S. Light, *From Warfare to Welfare: Defense Intellectuals and Urban Problems in Cold War America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004).

27. As Margot Canaday notes in her landmark book, “The best work on the state by historians takes state institutions seriously, but incorporates rather than jettisons the ‘society’ or ‘culture’ side of the binary, blending social and cultural with legal and political history.” Canaday, *Straight State*, 5. For a powerful example of blending institutional and social historical methodologies that sheds light on cultures of state building, see James T. Sparrow, *Warfare State: World War II Americans and the Age of Big Government* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

28. As the cultural and intellectual historian Daniel Rodgers has argued, the result of such disaggregated attention to agency, institutions, and experience was that “notions of structure and power thinned out.” Likewise, Nell Irvin Painter warned social historians about the risks of attending to experience and agency without corresponding attention to institutionalized power and scale ironically risked obscuring historians’ subjects’ full humanity. Rodgers, *Age of Fracture*, 5; and Nell Irvin Painter, “Soul Murder and Slavery: Toward a Fully Loaded Cost Accounting,” in *Southern History across the Color Line*, ed. Nell Irvin Painter (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 15–39.

29. We borrow the notion of vertically integrated history from Peter James Hudson in his participation in the *Journal of American History*’s “Interchange: The History of Capitalism,” 504.

