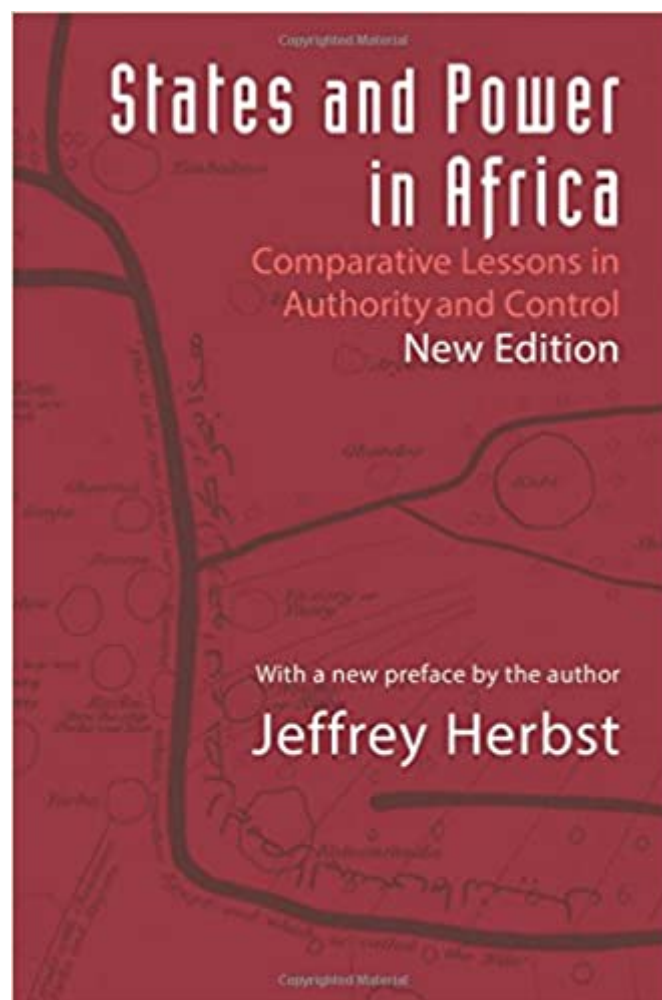




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States And Power In Africa: Comparative Lessons In Authority And Control, Second Edition (Princeton Studies In International History And Politics)





Synopsis

Theories of international relations, assumed to be universally applicable, have failed to explain the creation of states in Africa. There, the interaction of power and space is dramatically different from what occurred in Europe. In *States and Power in Africa*, Jeffrey Herbst places the African state-building process in a truly comparative perspective. Herbst's bold contention that the conditions now facing African state-builders existed long before European penetration of the continent is sure to provoke controversy, for it runs counter to the prevailing assumption that colonialism changed everything. This revised edition includes a new preface in which the author links the enormous changes that have taken place in Africa over the past fifteen years to long-term state consolidation. The final chapter on policy prescriptions has also been revised to reflect the evolution of African and international responses to state failure.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Co-Winner of the 2001 Gregory Luebbert Best Book Award, Comparative Politics Section of the American Political Science Association "This ambitious and original book turns a comparative historical lens on state-building in Africa. . . . A brave effort to rethink some outdated approaches to fundamental problems."--Foreign Affairs

"An original and intriguing book, which I read with the greatest interest. Herbst's argument is provocative and lucidly presented. This book will be read and debated not only by Africanists but also by others in the political science community. It is the most important and successful contribution to the literature on African politics since Jackson and Rosberg's *Personal Rule in Black Africa*."--Robert H. Bates, Harvard University, author of *Open-Economy Politics: The Political Economy of the World Coffee Trade*

Herbst's arguments will excite controversy among students of African history and politics, who have built up an extensive story about European transformations of African politics. His analysis raises doubts about how deeply those transformations went; rather, he maintains that durable conditions of topography and social structure have long constrained African state formation. Herbst offers an integrated account of state formation, transformation, and deformation in sub-Saharan Africa."--Charles Tilly, Columbia University, author of *Durable Inequality*

I published my extensive grad school notes at my For Unofficial Use Only page but I've included a brief summary here. This book is not going to be a thrilling read for most people but its mandatory reading to begin to study Africa. In this book, Herbst argues that African leaders (pre, during, and post-colonization) have all faced similar issues when attempting to rule and have often come to the same conclusions on how to solve their problems. He compares the formation of African states to Europe. He claims that the consolidation of power over distance, as the dependent variable, is affected by the costs of extending power, the nature of boundaries, and the nature of the state system. These 3 factors matter in every period. He wants to be a thicker structuralist. If everyone makes the same choices due to environment--then what's the point of examining individuals though. While Herbst says he's not geographically deterministic--he kind of is as he goes on. His conclusion: If you accept Herbst's argument--the incentives that decision makers make (thick structure) are not directing them toward state building because of high cost of projecting power (substitute potential access to money via foreign AID vs. taxation), borders continue to be recognized (territory not threatened), internal sovereignty is eroded (much more internal intervention). These are all disincentives to state building--so we (intl community) need to change these incentives. Cost of projecting can't be directly affected aside from pulling aid and making collection of taxes more important. One could create a new international norm that says sovereign states must act like it--if we decertified Somalia then Somaliland could be recognized. How do we distribute AID--shift to NGOs--but this hasn't been very effective--NGOs have been usurping sovereignty from government. Can AID can be only given to reforming governments--or given to develop specific institutions like taxation. (Could

AID be matched to tax revenues collected by the government?)

A great read

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