a result of socialization, by example or out of conviction. Others are more formalized, having codified rules and organization—governments, parties, bureaucracies, legislatures, constitutions, and law courts. Institutions structure the behaviour of individuals and groups. In that sense they are constraints. On the other hand, they serve as resources for the knowledgeable who navigate their way through them to achieve desired outcomes. Thus, institutions are both constraints and resources.

→ See Chapter 12 for a discussion of Duverger's Law.

Students of politics tend to concentrate more upon formal institutions, which form political systems. This is especially true of those who work on Western political systems, where such institutions dominate political life. They try to identify the regular processes of change that are intrinsic to the system itself or to parts of it. Sometimes they claim to have identified regularities that can be elevated to the level of 'laws', as in the natural sciences. One example, to which we shall return in Chapter 12, concerns Duverger's Law. This stated that first-past-the-post electoral systems produce two-party systems. At the same time, however, political studies also focus on the environment in which these systems are situated. Any political system may be buffeted by pressures arising either in the society surrounding it, or in the international arena. This may lead to disruption or even breakdown, in the form of revolutions; but in most cases, states adapt to these challenges. Political scientists attempt to identify regular patterns of adaptation as a way of generalizing more widely about the behaviour of political institutions.

As Steinmo put it: 'Institutions define the rules of the political game and as such they define who can play and how they play. Consequently, they ultimately can shape who wins and who loses' (2001: 7555).

It is, however, important also to grasp the relationship between political institutions and the surrounding environment of other political, social, and economic forces. We will use a simplified version of structuration theory, originally formulated by Giddens, to clarify these relationships. He distinguished between 'system', 'structure', and 'structuration' (Giddens, 1979: 66). We will adapt the term 'system' to mean 'political system'. We will use the term 'structure' to mean 'political institution'. And structuration will refer to the complex of factors that both constrain and also provide resources for changes in the operation of institutions and the system as a whole. These can range from levels of economic development, through regional or class group activity, to the behaviour of individual political actors. In studies of politics, as in the social sciences more generally, it is rarely the case that big events or changes can be attributed to a single factor. Most political decisions are the product of the interaction of several factors. It is the relative weight of these factors that determines the specific outcome. Thus, explanation of causation is a matter of judgement.

→ See Chapter 22 for an exploration of the relationship between the state and economic institutions.

At this point it is important to introduce another basic distinction from the categories used in studies of politics to explain political events: 'structure' versus 'agency'. Here, what is meant by 'structure' is the impact of the particular configuration of institutions. To what extent did they determine the outcome, or at least predispose a particular outcome? Sometimes this is presented in terms of 'path-determined' outcomes. The contrast is with 'agency', i.e. the effect of choices and actions by one or more agents, whether individuals or groups of them. Since politics is a social activity, it is very rarely the case that a particular political outcome was absolutely determined by structure alone. Nor is it the case that agents have complete freedom. Their options are always constrained by structures of one kind or another.

KEY POINTS

- Institutions play a vital role in structuring political behaviour.
- Political, economic, and social factors all provide structuration in political life and determine particular outcomes.
- 'Structure' and 'agency' perform complementary and contrasting functions in determining outcomes.

STATES

Chapter 2 outlined the concept of the state, as well as some of its ambiguities. Let us recall the definition that was given there: 'the state is sovereign, its institutions are public, it is based upon being legitimate, it is in the business of domination, and it covers a particular territorial area'. To this let us add one other characteristic that will be elaborated more in Chapter 10. In addition to their monopoly on the means of violence, states, especially modern states, also claim a monopoly on law-making. Pre-modern societies evolved binding rules for their members through a variety of means: edicts of rulers, clan or family traditions, religious prescriptions, and so on. They also often allowed a variety of agencies to enforce them. Modern states, however, claim the sole right to formulate laws and they insist that state courts enforce them.

At its most general, the state becomes a synonym for the structure of rule and authority within a particular geographical area. It is abstract. 'In some important senses, the state is more an idea held in common by a group of people, than it is a physical organism' (Buzan, 1991: 63). We talk of the nation-state, the welfare state, and so on.

Yet there is another, more limited and more concrete use of the term. This is used to designate the apparatus of institutions and individuals who are responsible for managing public affairs. It includes executives, legislatures, courts of justice, the armed forces, and central and local officials. This apparatus also collects revenue to pay for the services that it provides, whether through taxes or other forms of contributions. This use of the term is easier to grasp, but the overlap between the two levels of meaning of the term 'state' complicates the individual's relationship with the state. As Edelman wrote over fifty years ago: 'The state benefits and it threatens. Now it is "us" and often it is "them". It is an abstraction, but in its name men are jailed or made rich..., or killed in wars' (Edelman, 1964: 1). Commentators may alternate between the two and it is important always to keep this in mind. Most of this chapter will concentrate on the more organizational features of the state, although you should not forget the broader usage of the term. The rest of this chapter will focus first on the rise of the European state and then its proliferation across the world with the spread of the European state system. After that will follow a discussion of the modern state, and then of strong and weak states.

In more distant times, there was a much greater variety of forms of rule in tribes and small communities around the world. The antecedents for European ideas on government are to be found in writings from classical Greece and Rome, including the idea of democracy, and they were revived during the Renaissance after centuries of oblivion. However, the modern European state emerged gradually between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. And then, as we

shall see, it spread to other parts of the world. Although there certainly were alternative forms of rule in other parts of the world that preceded it, such as the imperial system of classical China, modern states in other parts of the world display key features that make them more similar to the European model than their own historical predecessors.

KEY POINTS

- The term 'the state' is used in a great variety of ways, some concrete and some abstract. This makes detailed analysis difficult and contentious.

THE RISE OF THE EUROPEAN STATE

The first thing to note is the growth of state capacity over the last three centuries—a key fact that has already been mentioned in Chapter 2 and to which we will return again in Chapter 22. In Chapter 2, we introduced you to the theoretical concept of the state. Here, we will focus more upon its historical evolution. As Tilly put it, over the last 1,000 years, the European state has evolved from being a wasp to being a locomotive (Tilly, 1990: 96). By this he meant that the state has evolved from a small inconvenience to the people that it ruled into becoming a powerful driver of social and economic development. As we will show in more detail in Chapter 15, the origins of the modern state are to be found in Europe as it emerged between the seventeenth and the nineteenth centuries. Up until then, it was impossible to separate the personality of the state from the personality of the ruler. The ruler used personal appointees as officials to run the affairs of state. The ruler was also responsible for paying them and although some states did impose taxes, a great deal of the upkeep of officials came from the ruler's own property and income. A salaried bureaucracy began to emerge, and one of its most important functions was to collect and administer taxes. Gradually what emerged was a system for extracting taxes from broader sections of property owners, especially to pay for the most expensive state activity, which was warfare. Protracted wars risked bankrupting a monarch. As Tilly put it: 'War made the state and the state made war' (Tilly, 1975: 42). Time and again the need to raise funds for fighting drove further governments to devise new ways of raising money. The USA, for instance, introduced income tax in 1861 to pay for the effort of the civil war. Gradually this capacity, allied with access to a modernizing and industrializing commercial economy and a large rural population, enabled some states to dominate others (Tilly, 1990: 15). They in turn became the models with which others had to deal and, if possible, surpass.

→ See Chapter 2 for an exploration of different theoretical conceptions of the state.

→ See Chapter 22 for an exploration of states in a globalizing world.

The French Revolution transformed the powers of the state, as it introduced a level form of taxation for all its citizens and the principle of the modern mass army. This enabled the French for a while to dominate continental Europe. Britain was forced to emulate it so as to resist it. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, as Hegel recognized, the bureaucracy itself had become the state, elevating itself high above and separate from the rest of society (van Creveld, 1999: 143). This was a decisive development. First, what was expected from state officials was a primary loyalty to the state and the public good, rather than to any individual monarch or section of society. Then, second, they evolved rules and patterns of administration that further separated them

from the rest of society. Later, Weber publicized the importance of the new bureaucratic form of public administration: impersonal, rule-based, goal-oriented activity, with promotion of officials exclusively based on merit and performance. He made it into an ideal type of social organization, which he identified, not without misgivings, as part of a process of ever-growing rationalization of social life. He emphasized the technical superiority of bureaucratic over any other form of organization. Subsequent commentators have coined the term 'Weberian' public administration to denote this type of organization.

→ See Chapter 16 for a more detailed discussion of the rise of the modern state system.

In addition, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the economic and military might of the dominant European powers, reinforced by superior technology, enabled them to develop empires overseas. This spread the European type of state to other continents through colonies, albeit in a cut-down version. Sometimes a private agency took over public functions. In India, for example, individual behaviour was traditionally regulated by caste associations rather than by the state. And the state had little power to levy taxes. 'Politics was thus consigned to the realm of spectacle and ceremony. No concept of a state, an impersonal public authority with a continuous identity, emerged: kings represented only themselves, not enduring states' (Khilnani, 2004: 20). Therefore, when the British arrived, the East India Company could start raising its own funds for public services without competing with the existing state authorities. In Burma, what made the colonial state different was also the concern of the new rulers with the growth of trade, something the traditional rulers had ignored (Taylor, 2009: 70). Administration in colonies was always more rudimentary than in the metropolitan countries, but even if it was a pale shadow of the original, it was still a recognizable copy.

→ See Chapter 13 for a discussion of theories of bureaucratic policy-making.

The power of the model can be seen in the response of a state such as Japan. While the imperial European powers imposed their systems on the peoples that they colonized, not all territories became colonies, although most did. Japan was an exception. It had cut itself off from the outside world for 300 years when, in 1854, the American Commodore Perry led a number of warships into Tokyo Bay and demanded that Japan open up to international trade. The Japanese had no ships that could challenge the Americans and they were forced to agree. This set in train a whole series of transformations of Japanese society and the state as the Japanese sought to modernize, so that they could compete with the West and make Japan 'rich and strong'. This led to the imposition at first of a more authoritarian system of rule with the restoration to more effective power of the Meiji Emperor in 1868. The government swelled into a much larger civilian bureaucracy that could develop resources for the state. It sent representatives abroad to learn more about the political, legal, and technological strengths of the West, so that the best could be transplanted to Japan. The traditional class of independent warriors—the samurai—were forced to serve the state, either by becoming officials or officers in the new national army. In 1890 the first Japanese constitution came into force, which set limits (albeit ambiguous ones) on the powers of the Emperor. This also established a parliament and an independent judiciary. All of these reforms transformed Japan. From a backward and introverted nation it gradually became a recognizably modern state that by 1895 was able to defeat its biggest regional rival, China, and by 1904–5 was the first non-European state to win a war against a European imperial power—Russia. Japan then developed its own empire. Within a few decades, Japan had exploited the new state to expand its national might in a process that had taken European nations centuries.

Turkey is another of the few examples of the territories that did not become a Western colony but which adopted Western forms of rule so as to compete with the West. By the nineteenth

century, the Ottoman Empire was in decline, and significantly, it was the military that took the lead in looking to the West for ideas and models of reform so that Turkey could compete. It was military considerations that drove increasingly radical reforms of the state in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This culminated in the rise of Ataturk as president of a secular republic in 1923, who pushed through a full separation of state and religion that was modelled primarily upon principles of laicism borrowed from France (Starr, 1992: 8–15).

After independence, the former colonies took over these state apparatuses and also the institutions that they had established. Whether it was the former Spanish colonies in Latin America during the nineteenth century, or the former British, French, German, and Italian colonies in the twentieth century, the newly independent states largely adopted the same basic attributes of rule, the same apparatus of institutions, even though they also in other respects usually expressed a forthrightly anti-imperialist ideology. Most importantly, they also adopted and often developed the bureaucratic machine that extracted resources from the people to pay for government. In some cases the innovation of the separation between ruler and officials that had earlier marked the rise of the modern state was now reversed. In what have been called patrimonial states, some rulers came to use the state to extract resources from the rest of society for their own benefit. This practice has been associated with African states, although it is not exclusive to that region.

As the European states grew stronger, gradually new institutions were devised to try to prevent them from becoming too despotic. Legal principles were established that would also constrain rulers, particularly through constitutions. Finer emphasized two events that were crucial in this respect: the American Revolution and the French Revolution. For him:

> **the transcendent importance of the American Revolution is that it demonstrated for ever that quality of the Western European government we have called 'law-boundedness'. Here is a government which draws its powers from and can only act within a framework of fundamental law—the Constitution—which is itself interpreted by judges in the ordinary courts of the country. Could law-boundedness go further, could it receive a more striking affirmation?** (Finer, 1997: 1485)

From this followed six innovations, as can be seen from **Box 8.1**.

It was the American constitution that introduced the formal principle of 'separation of powers'. To some extent this evolved from practice in Britain, which had had a constitutional monarchy since 1689, and which had been extolled by Montesquieu (1689–1755) in his work *On the Spirit of Laws* of 1748, a strong influence upon many of the framers of the American Constitution.

BOX 8.1
The Governmental Innovations of the American Revolution

1. The deliberate formulation of a new frame of government by way of a popular convention.
2. A written constitution.
3. A bill of rights enshrined within it.
4. Guaranteed protection for these rights through judicial review.
5. The separation of powers along functional lines.
6. The division of powers between the national and the state governments.

(Finer, 1997: 1485)

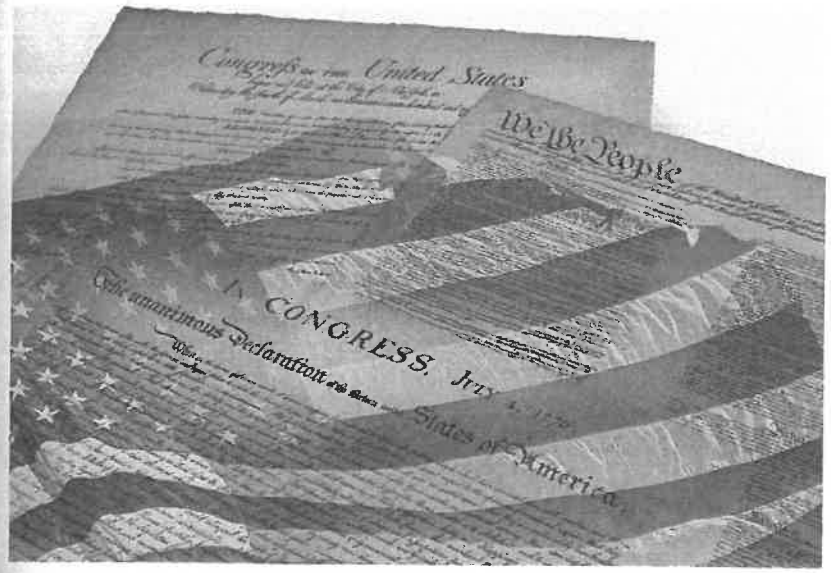

Photo 8.1 The US Constitution/Bill of Rights. *Shutterstock RF: Pamela Au/Shutterstock.com*

However, whereas in Britain, and in other states in continental Europe, the basis for the different houses of parliament was social class—e.g. the House of Lords and the House of Commons—the distinction in the American Constitution was entirely abstract and functional—the House of Representatives and the senate. It was a more democratic form of institutionalization, which assumed that all citizens were equal and subject to the same laws.

At the time, the combination of new institutions and principles was an experiment. No one knew whether they would all work together. However, the American constitution has proved a model and a starting point for all subsequent writers of constitutions.

Then, only just over a decade later, another revolution further transformed the theory and practice of government: the French Revolution.

> **The French Revolution is the most important single event in the entire history of government. The American Revolution pales beside it. It was an earthquake. It razed and effaced all the ancient institutions of France, undermined the foundations of the other European states, and is still sending its shock-waves throughout the rest of the world.** (Finer, 1997: 1517)

The governmental legacy of the French Revolution can be summarized in four main points. **(See Box 8.2.)**

As can be seen from this list, not all of the points can be reconciled with each other. The French Revolution celebrated the Rights of Man making all men equal, and at the same time inaugurated an era of populist dictatorship. Although the revolution had a universal appeal, France became

BOX 8.2
The Governmental Legacy of the French Revolution

1. The Declaration of The Natural Rights of Man and the Citizen established the legal basis for the sovereignty of the democratic state, based upon the General Will.
2. Nationalism—it laid down the national unity of all French citizens, and their primary obligation of loyalty to it. The Napoleonic wars spread the doctrine throughout Europe and provoked a matching response from the peoples of other nations.
3. Citizen armies—in the defence of the Revolution the French state mobilized far more citizens to fight on its behalf than had ever been seen in Europe, which forced its enemies to compete.
4. Neo-absolutism—the rise of the Committee of Public Safety followed by the Napoleonic dictatorship.

(Finer, 1997: 1538–66)

the prototype nation-state, with nationalism as its core political ideology and it provoked a backlash among other peoples, especially in the German states, that led to the creation of nation-states throughout Europe in the nineteenth century. And although it preached universal harmony, it also devised a new form of military organization—the mass citizen army—that became the model for military organization throughout Europe. Yet in their different ways, these diverse elements became the precursors for various forms of modern government not just in Europe, but also throughout the world. Both modern democracies and dictatorships, rule by law and by force, were prefigured by the French Revolution. Thus, although the French Revolution began as an attempt to create checks upon the absolutist monarchy, it instituted new forms of state activity that led to far greater intrusion in the lives of ordinary people than ever before. In that sense, as Finer puts it: 'all four [of these elements] are still alive, working like a leaven throughout the globe. In that sense the revolution is a Permanent Revolution. Nothing was ever like it before and nothing foreseeable will turn this Revolution back' (Finer, 1997: 1566).

KEY POINTS

- A crucial importance in the development of the European state was the separation of state officials from personal servants of the ruler.
- Another crucial development was the separation of the state from the rest of society through institutionalization and bureaucratization.
- Warfare was a catalyst for increasing the raising of funds for the state from society and increasing the state's reach.
- The American and French revolutions developed modern principles of government.
- This led to the invention of institutions to check the power of the state.

THE SPREAD OF THE EUROPEAN STATE SYSTEM

States today have two sets of roles or functions. The first consists of functions that they exercise towards their own populations. The second is those that they perform towards other states. States 'recognize' each other and by doing so confer an additional degree of legitimacy.

→ See Chapter 16 for a more detailed discussion of the globalization of the modern state system.

The rise of the European state also transformed the international system. We will briefly outline it here because it explains the spread of the European type of state across the world. We will then return to it a more detailed discussion of the state and the international system in Chapter 16.

The modern European state system is normally taken to have resulted from the treaties that established the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 and ended the Thirty Years War. This led to the paradigm of a

> **European state . . . [that] was a sovereign, territorially delimited political unit, facing other similar units, each striving for supremacy but never achieving it owing to their rapidly adopted skill of forming combinations that would defeat such a purpose, that is, the techniques of the 'balance of power' first developed by the Italian city-states in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.** (Finer, 1997: 1306)

In subsequent centuries Europeans spread their patterns of inter-state behaviour around the world as they built up empires, first in South America, then North America, Africa, and Asia. Western concepts of state sovereignty, originating with Bodin (see Chapter 16), differed from traditions in other parts of the world in two respects. First, they were based upon formal legal principles. Second, they insisted upon the sovereignty of a state running uniformly throughout territory within prescribed boundaries. In Africa, by contrast, authority and rule were more fluid. According to Clapham:

→ See Chapter 16 for discussion of state sovereignty.

> **African [states] formed islands of relatively settled government beyond which stretched deserts, forests or zones of progressively impoverished savannah which a strong ruler would seek to control but from which a weak one would retreat. Dissident or defeated groups could strike out into the borderlands to conquer or establish kingdoms of their own.** (Clapham, 1996: 29)

Likewise in South-East Asia, traditional understandings of state sovereignty focused more upon the mystical power of the ruler at the centre of the state which radiated outwards, like a force-field or like a cone of reflected light. Thus, the power was weaker the further that one went from the centre, until it ran up against a stronger force field from another state (Suwannathat–Pian, 1988: 29). In both continents states were defined by their capitals rather than by their perimeters. Therefore, traditional rulers concentrated more upon maintaining and strengthening the power at the centre and they paid less attention to what was happening on the periphery (Anderson, 1990: 21–36).

Western states imposed stronger boundaries on their territories and insisted upon undivided sovereignty right up to those borders. They drew much firmer borders, imposing them, often arbitrarily, upon peoples that they colonized. This was particularly true of South America and sub-Saharan Africa. The consequences of this for state legitimacy and viability are still with us

today. When these colonies became independent, they usually took over the existing legal framework and these borders, reasserting the latter's inviolability. After independence they then tried to build modern nation-states, attempting to forge nations out of citizens on the European model. Thus, in many parts of the world it has been the state that has created the nation, whereas in Europe it has often been the nation that has created the state.

KEY POINTS

- The European type of state spread to lands on other continents.
- War and colonial expansion were the key elements in doing so.
- This also led to the emergence of a European-type system of states around the world.

8

THE MODERN STATE

Today the state has become the universal form of political organization around the world. Currently, 193 states are members of the United Nations, ranging in size from China with a population of over 1.3 billion to Tuvalu with a population estimated at 12,000. In area, they range from Russia with over 17 million sq. km to Monaco with an area of 2 sq. km. A third set of functions performed by a state relates to its relations with other states. States have to manage relations with each other through diplomacy and they have to devise defence policies to protect their territory and their people against attacks from outside. Equally importantly, states recognize each other as legitimate rulers over defined areas of territory and in this way they reduce the anarchy that exists, at least potentially, at the global level because of the lack of a global government. This diplomatic recognition provides reassurance against attack, although it is not an infallible guarantee. On the other hand, it also means that states expect their counterparts to interact with them in familiar and predictable ways. Bureaucratic agencies in one state that deal with the outside world—and in an era of globalization this is increasingly the case—expect to find equivalent agencies in other states. This strengthening international society contributes to the proliferation of government agencies in individual states.

There is no doubt about the national importance of state apparatuses—given the growing share of state expenditure in individual countries' GDP, as can be seen from **Table 8.1**.

This charts their growth, particularly since the end of the Second World War. Figures on the size of government bureaucracies tell the same story, as seen in **Table 8.3**, even though there are great differences between the practices of countries over whom they count as state officials. Some states have been proportionately much bigger than these three.

How, then, do we generalize what states are and what they do? One way is to focus upon their origins and sources of legitimation. Stepan has proposed a distinction between what he terms 'nation states' (e.g. France, Sweden, Japan, and Portugal) and 'state nations' (e.g. Belgium, Canada, India, Spain, and Ukraine) (see **Table 8.2**). The differences between them are explained in **Box 8.3**. But it is worthwhile considering a third type of state which does not otherwise fit easily into this typology, namely Islamic states. So the key debate also presents a synopsis of key features of such states.

Table 8.1 Growth of general government expenditure in selected countries, 1870–2016 (% of GDP)

General government for all years	About 1870	1913	1920	1937	1960	1980	1990	1995	2006	2016 (*2015)
Australia	18.3	16.5	19.3	14.8	21.2	34.1	34.9	37.4	34.9	37.2*
Austria	10.5	17	14.7	20.6	35.7	48.1	38.6	56.3	49.4	51.1
Canada			16.7	25	28.6	38.8	46	48.5	39.3	41.6
France	12.6	17	27.6	29.	34.6	46.1	49.8	54.4	52.7	56.5
Germany	10	14.8	25	34.1	32.4	47.9	45.1	54.8	45.3	44.3
Italy	13.7	17.1	30.1	31.1	30.1	42.1	53.4	52.5	49.9	49.6
Ireland			18.8	25.5		48.9	41.2	41.1	33.8	28.1
Japan	8.8	8.3	14.8	25.4	17.5	32	31.3		36	39.4*
New Zealand			24.6	25.3	26.9	38.1	41.3	41.4	39.9	39.5*
Norway	5.9	9.3	16	11.8	29.9	43.8	54.9	50.9	40.5	51.1
Sweden		10.4	10.9	16.5	31	60.1	59.1	65.1	54.3	50
Switzerland	16.5	14	17	24.1	17.2	32.8		35	33.7	33.9*
United Kingdom	9.4	12.7	26.2	30	32.2		39.9	43.9	44.2	42.1
United States	7.3	7.5	12.1	19.7	27	31.4	32.8	37	36.4	37.7*
Average	10.8	13.1	19.6	23.8	28	41.9	43		42.1	43.8*

Source: Tanzi and Schuknecht (2000: 6–7); OECD *Government at a Glance 2009* (https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/governance/government-at-a-glance-2009/general-government-expenditures-as-a-percentage-of-gdp-1995-2006_9789264075061-graph4_1-en#page1); OECD *Government at a Glance 2017* (https://stats.oecd.org/viewhtml.aspx?datasetcode=GOV_2017&lang=en).

A second approach to analysing and comparing states is functionalist. This focuses upon the different types of functions that they perform. Gill has suggested that there are three basic types of internal roles performed by the modern state. The first is that of the state as partisan. In other words, the state operates on the basis of, and pursues, its own interests. This is reinforced by a Weberian state bureaucracy with its own structure and procedures that resist pressures from the rest of society. This would be typical of authoritarian regimes.

The second role is that of the state as guardian. Here the state stabilizes and where necessary rebalances society in a way of which society itself is incapable. Therefore, the state is essential for social stability. This could be because of fundamental conflict in society which threatens to tear it apart. Examples of this would be federal or consociational political systems which have been designed to counter fundamental cleavages in society and to which we shall return in more detail in Chapter 10. Or it could take the form of a developmental state already mentioned in Chapter 2, as in East Asia, where the state directs the development of society and the economy in what it regards as a path of development that is in the national interest, e.g. industrialization and economic modernization.

→ See Chapter 2 for a description of the developmental state.

8