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States of Credit: Size, Power, and the Development of European Polities

By David Stasavage

Princeton University Press, United States, 2015. Paperback. Book Condition: New. 231 x 152 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book. States of Credit provides the first comprehensive look at the joint development of representative assemblies and public borrowing in Europe during the medieval and early modern eras. In this pioneering book, David Stasavage argues that unique advances in political representation allowed certain European states to gain early and advantageous access to credit, but the emergence of an active form of political representation itself depended on two underlying factors: compact geography and a strong mercantile presence. Stasavage shows that active representative assemblies were more likely to be sustained in geographically small polities. These assemblies, dominated by mercantile groups that lent to governments, were in turn more likely to preserve access to credit. Given these conditions, smaller European city-states, such as Genoa and Cologne, had an advantage over larger territorial states, including France and Castile, because mercantile elites structured political institutions in order to effectively monitor public credit. While creditor oversight of public funds became an asset for city-states in need of finance, Stasavage suggests that the long-run implications were more ambiguous. City-states with the best access to credit often had the...



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