State and Society in the Philippines. **By Patricio N. Abinales and Donna J. Amoroso. New York and Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2005. Softcover: 351pp.**

One could mistake this volume simply as a history textbook about the Philippines. However, it is more than that. It is primarily about state formation and the dynamics of state-society relations that shaped the country's politics, economy, and history all the way from the Spanish colonial period well into the post-Marcos era. The book is divided into ten chapters that are rich in documentation and narratives (in boxes), as well as in-depth description and analyses of contexts and actors, which are quite essential in understanding the nuances of the Philippine state's evolution and state-society relations. The principal concern of the book's authors is to examine "the long history of institutional weakness in the Philippines" as well as the attempts to hurdle the state's "structural fragility and strengthen its bond with society" (pp. 2–3). They also want to stimulate thinking about why the Philippine state remains resilient despite its "weaknesses" (for example, inability to deal with armed rebellions, corruption, mismanagement, and tax collection) and why it has so far not ended up a failed state. Crawford Young's eight main attributes of a modern state served as the basic framework of the book's examination of the nature of the Philippine state and its interactions with various "social forces" defined by Joel Migdal as "powerful mechanisms of associative behaviour" (p. 9) in society.

Chapter 2 of the book situates the Philippines as part of maritime Southeast Asia. The authors argue that, although pre-Spanish Philippines had less centralized polities compared with other parts of the region, it shared the same cultural and political attributes and ruling practices found in many early Southeast Asian states. In particular, small villages called *barangays* were connected through a web of rulers called *datus* that had kinship practices, religious traditions, and a system of hierarchy and dependence, which formed part of early state formation even in the absence of larger "supra-*barangay*" political institutions (p. 38). Archeological, anthropological, and historical evidence and records were cited in the book to support the claim about early state formation, including the Laguna copperplate inscription found in 1986 that was carbon-dated to 900 CE (common era).

The origins of the weak state in the archipelago were attributed by the authors to the (im)balance of power between the clerical and secular state officials during the Spanish colonial period. In particular, the secular administrators were weak in terms of both personnel and power,

which made them dependent on the friars for the state's basic functions such as collecting tribute. In fact, for the first two centuries of Spanish colonization, the colonial state essentially lacked the administrative and military control of the archipelago even as it also had to deal with both upland retreat (a response to colonial intrusion by indigenous peoples who were labelled *remontados*) and rival state building in the Muslim south — in particular, Maguindanao and Sulu, which pursued their own commercial and diplomatic ties with the larger Islamic world of maritime Southeast Asia.

The authors were quite successful in describing and explaining the changing nature and character of the state throughout different periods in Philippine history. During the high colonial period (1764–1898), the colonial state in Manila became more centralized as part of Spain's efforts to improve administrative performance in its colonies. This was done through better financial accountability in different levels of government, the separation of executive from judicial functions of the state, as well as putting an end to the arbitrary rule of the friars (p. 84). These reform efforts were primarily aimed at improving the conditions in the colony to prevent further social unrest. However, the authors argued that these reforms were undermined by the "autocratic imposition of new policy — a hazard of centrally imposed reform" (p. 87). The reforms initiated in Manila were also met with strong resistance from the friars, "[who] dominated local state and society alike" (p. 88).

Meanwhile, state building during the early years of American rule sustained the "rationalizing and strengthening of the colonial state" initiated by the Spanish through "increasing capacity and infrastructure and consolidating control throughout the territory" (p. 119). In contrast, however, the Americans expanded Filipino involvement in governance and made universal education more accessible to Filipinos. There were also parallel state building efforts in the "special provinces" (that is, the Moros in Mindanao and those in the Cordilleras — a classification that was similar to the "military" provinces under Spain), which were administered by the US Army. The authors contend that, notwithstanding the short period of parallel state building in these areas, the legacy of American colonial rule was the realization of the Philippine "geo-body". For them, the modern Philippine state is "a colonial state creation as well as a nationalist imagining" (p. 125). At the same time, they acknowledge that while the territorial relationship between "insider" and "outsider" was settled under the American colonial period, the issues pertaining to political exclusion remained unresolved.

During the period of the Filipino colonial state (1902–46),

the authors argued, the focus of state building shifted from "the [institutional] concerns of the Malolos congress to 'politics' — the battle to capture the machinery of representation" (p. 135). The Philippine Assembly became the locus of power and the main venue for political socialization and, consequently, nation-building. The shift from "institutionalism" to "politics" was exemplified in the political careers of two powerful politicians during the American period, namely, Manuel L. Quezon and Sergio Osmeña. Both men utilized their connections with American officials and provincial networks of politicians to win seats in the Philippine Assembly. It was also in this period that the American Governor-General, Francis Burton Harrison, was tasked to implement the "Filipinization" of the colonial state. Specifically, Harrison broadened the powers of Filipino politicians in appointing local and provincial officials; and secondly, ended parallel state building in the "special provinces" by transferring the authority to administer these from the US Army to Filipino civilian officials. However, when Leonard Wood (a former military governor of the Moro province who was popular among Muslims) became Governor-General of the Philippines (1921–26), he reversed many of Harrison's policies and strengthened the capacity of the central state. By refusing to surrender to the "politicization" of the colonial state, Wood became a symbol of "anti-Filipino" Americans in the country at the height of political skirmishes with Quezon and Osmeña who both tried to undermine his administration.

In the post-war period (1946–64), the Philippine state was characterized by the authors in varied ways: (1) as an "ineffective" state under Roxas and Quirino due to serious corruption problems, even though there was also evidence of "professional governance" (p. 177); (2) a "populist" state under Magsaysay, which used his popularity — by mobilizing social forces directly — to "make administrative changes aimed at strengthening the central state as well as his own stature as leader" (p. 181); and (3) a "patchwork" state under Garcia and Macapagal, which was characterized by a "mixture of plunder and professionalism" where there are "small patches of good governance adjoined by larger patches of corruption and inefficiency" (p. 184).

During the Marcos period (1965–86), the state took on different characteristics: (1) a "patchwork" state where "cupidity coexists with national commitment and self-interest overlaps with 'reason of state'" (p. 196); (2) a "dictatorial" state, which saw the height of state dominance over society and endured until 1986; and (3) a "crony capitalist" state that facilitated the capture of the state by vested interests under a capitalist system that was based "not on competition but on monopoly,

special access, and brute force" (p. 214). Crony capitalism, which effectively plundered the state, precluded economic reforms and contributed to the country's economic deterioration. The authors also highlighted the social forces that challenged the authority of the state during this period (for example, armed communist and Muslim separatists rebels, the Catholic Church, the Reform AFP Movement, urban middle class, and economic elites), which ultimately led to the collapse of the authoritarian regime in 1986.

The remaining chapters of the book covered the post-Marcos period (1986–2004) and focused primarily on the problems and challenges faced by the Aquino, Ramos, Estrada, and Macapagal-Arroyo administrations in pursuing good governance, political and economic reforms, as well as the emergence of civil society organizations in a restored democratic order. Compared with the previous sections of the book, these chapters highlighted more the power of social forces in the country in constraining the autonomy and capability of the state especially in pushing for economic and political reforms. Current issues (for example, parliamentary versus presidential government, the fiscal crisis, Muslim separatism, and the Filipino diaspora) are presented in the final chapter of the book as themes that need further study in relation to state formation in the Philippines.

Notwithstanding the book's outstanding scholarship and admirable depth and breadth of discussion and analyses about state formation and the dynamics of state-society relations in the Philippines, a salivating reader of Philippine politics is left *bitin* (Tagalog for hanging) because the authors did not provide their tentative, if not bold, assessment about why the Philippine state to this day remains resilient despite its weaknesses.

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International Relations in Southeast Asia: The Struggle for Autonomy. **By Donald E. Weatherbee et al. Oxford, UK: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2005. Softcover: 306pp.**

In the preface of this volume, the principal author, Donald Weatherbee, offers a disarmingly frank and accurate assessment of the book, its