

1 Ideas and Institutions in American Political Development

As the Civil War ended and the antebellum state declined, various nongovernmental institutions, both newly founded and newly defined, positioned themselves for the coming era. Seeking to establish their significance, American universities and the institutional entrepreneurs who guided them nurtured an expertise that helped to further the developing state at the turn of the twentieth century. Universities served the national state as an active partner and worked on its behalf as an independent agent. In these efforts and in their relationships with one another, the nation's leading universities initially worked through informal associations, often based on the close friendships and social ties of their presidents. However, as the demands of academic leadership and the complexity of institutional tasks continued to rise, the nation's leading universities formalized their ties.

Though the relation between universities, the state, and expertise may seem obvious to the contemporary observer, there was nothing inevitable about it. Alternative sources of expertise and alternative approaches to education certainly existed. The emerging universities' support of the developing American national state at the turn of the twentieth century has broad implications, since contemporary institutions, credentials, requirements, and expectations of expertise and higher education evolved from this era and since the founding premises of the universities still define the parameters and the procedures that influence politics and policy today.

Generally speaking, scholars of politics and history have underscored the relationship between ideas and institutions but have not necessarily explored their interactive effects. Specifically, scholars of American political development have recognized the relationship

between the emerging universities and the national state but have not detailed or fully explained its significance. Nevertheless, a consensus has formed around the belief that there was an effort to expand the capacities of the federal government and the related autonomy of its bureaucratic agents in the era of “building a new American state” (roughly 1870–1920) and that such efforts were highly dependent on expertise. Broadly defined, national state capacities have been seen as the ability of governments and their agents to influence the practice of politics, the formation of groups, the identity of individuals, and the demands of society.¹ Though helping us understand attempts to build a national state, this consensus still leaves us with some basic questions: how did expertise come to be the basis on which federal authority and related bureaucratic autonomy were extended, from where did this expertise emanate, and how was it defined?

Governmental authority is vested in ideas and institutions. Since the state itself is not necessarily fully equipped to substantiate and perpetuate the intellectual basis of its own authority, conceptions of national political institutions must recognize the fundamental role nongovernmental institutions play in the establishment, furtherance, and reform of governmental authority. In this book, focusing on American political development, I underscore the place of emerging universities in the evolution of the national state and detail the extent to which and manner in which universities legitimized and formalized the state’s authority.

The Emerging University

While highly intertwined, the relationship of universities to the national state was not all-consuming. Universities did not exist solely to develop, provide, and enforce research-based expertise. They also pursued courses and curricula that emphasized mental discipline, utility, and liberal culture.² However, by the second decade of the twentieth century, research and the pursuit of expertise had become defining missions. The university became known as the research university, spurred on by coordinating organizations, such as the Association of American Universities and the National Research Council.

The contest between academic proponents of research and expertise, service and utility, liberal culture, and mental discipline continued even after research gained prominence—and to some extent, it still continues today. Proponents of research stressed systematic examination of social and scientific problems. Proponents of utility stressed the pursuit of knowledge and the provision of skills that would not only

enable students to “make their way” in society but also contribute to the general welfare. Proponents of liberal culture stressed the creation of the “gentleman scholar” through instruction in the developing fields of art, literature, and history. Proponents of mental discipline stressed repetition and memorization of classical texts in keeping with earlier collegiate traditions.

Members of these various camps battled not only between institutions but within them as well. In this era, for example, Yale supported economist Arthur Twining Hadley, who would serve as an advisor to the Interstate Commerce Commission before becoming president of Yale; provided agricultural instruction with land-grant funds given to its Sheffield Scientific School; fostered the Elizabethan Club, which was dedicated to “free conversation of literature and the arts amongst its members”; and continued a tradition of commencement orations in Greek and Latin.

These were not pitched battles, however. The university was marked by a “diversity of mind” that not only allowed for clear lines of debate but also encouraged a general expansion of the reach, breadth, and depth of higher education.³ Thus, whatever the extent of these internal struggles, the university still promoted research-based expertise and its relevance for the developing national state. The institutional entrepreneurs who guided higher education not only promoted their schools but also promoted the expertise their schools defined. Expertise was not the only intellectual resource they offered, but it was the most prominent one.

Ideas, Institutions, and Authority

Those who examine the institutional and intellectual apparatuses of the developing state at the turn of the twentieth century acknowledge the significant role of the university in this era. Stephen Skowronek recognizes the importance of universities as a home for intellectuals concerned with the formation of a national state.

The challenge of building a new kind of state in America was taken up in the post-Civil War era by an emergent intelligentsia rooted in a revitalized professional sector and a burgeoning university sector. These intellectuals championed a fundamental reconstruction of the mode of governmental operations to be centered in an administrative realm possessing “finish, efficacy, and permanence.”⁴

Eldon Eisenach reflects a similar train of thought. He suggests that universities represented “the organization of specialized knowledge as a political force outside of the party and electoral system.”⁵ In attempt-

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ing to redefine American life, Progressive political ideas required institutional support. Primary among these institutions was the newly emerging university, which, Eisenach maintains, served “as something like a national ‘church’—the main repository of common American values, common American meanings, and common American identities.”⁶ Universities did not simply support and transmit the ideas of this new, American, nationalist “regime in thought.” Instead, Eisenach maintains, they navigated the divide between these ideas and the state: “political ideas and the identities they carry become altered when they become institutionalized. Most obviously, when institutionalized governmentally and enforced, these ideas become quite literally authoritative.”⁷ Eisenach observes that the university lectern became a “public pulpit” and that academics at the turn of the century “were compelled to address their competitors more directly.”

As more direct competitors for institutional political power (e.g., expert bureaucracy) and as intellectual underwriters and publicists for institutional reforms across every area of American political and economic life, they . . . had to engage in direct competition with jurists and with partisan carriers of American political life.⁸

Eisenach and Skowronek’s assessments are highly complimentary and interrelated. The university was more than simply a pulpit and/or home for the new American state’s intelligentsia. The prominence and authority of the university grew along with, if not in direct connection to, the prominence and authority of the national state. Determining and detailing the specific nature and significance of such correspondent evolution is the fundamental concern of this work.

Higher Education’s Formative Years

Histories of higher education have recognized a significant relationship between the evolution of universities and the development of post-Civil War America, especially notions of the state and public service. George Marsden⁹ focuses on the rise of secularism in the mid- to late nineteenth century. Appealing to conceptions of national service was an effective method for newly founded public universities to navigate around local sectarian concerns and squabbles that had hindered state supported institutions in previous years. Julie Reuben¹⁰ considers the same process of secularization but suggests that the marginalization of religion was the end result of universities pursuing objective science. According to Reuben, among the consequences of this secularization was a social science that attempted to merge science and ethics in

pursuit of public policy. Jon Roberts and James Turner¹¹ extend this idea, arguing that secularization was the driving force behind the expansion of the curriculum. Looking beyond American higher education's religious origins, Roger Geiger¹² suggests that private donations and state funds were more significant than federal sources, such as the Morrill Act of 1862, which he argues primarily spurred, rather than maintained, the movement toward research and service. Roger Williams¹³ finds the Morrill Act to be highly influential but stresses that its implementation was far less tidy than commonly recalled, as its beneficiaries had to fight both national and local political battles to build their institutions. Looking beyond the Morrill Act and focusing, respectively, on California and the American South, John Aubrey Douglass¹⁴ and Michael Dennis¹⁵ focus on the state and local influences that defined state universities' research and service. Summarizing the era, Laurence Veysey acknowledges that the federal state took an interest in higher education, but he also refers to government reports and publications regarding higher education in this era as "a wasteland of non-commitment."¹⁶

In detailing the rise of national higher education associations, Hugh Hawkins to some extent answers Veysey's complaint, by noting the limited reach and authority of the United States Bureau of Education (USBE): "Problems of international academic relations would in many nations have been treated by a ministry of education. In the United States, where the USBE was restricted to gathering and dispensing information, these issues suggested the formation of a voluntary association."¹⁷ The lack of a strong state organization regulating higher education was one of the primary factors leading to the formation of the Association of American Universities (AAU). Actively lobbying and partnering with the federal government, the AAU consisted of the nation's elite universities. Soon after its founding, the AAU became a defining force for the goals and standards of American higher education.

A more universal awareness of universities' impact on state authority exists beyond the specific context of American political development. The most adamant proponents of "bringing the state back in"—Evans, Rueschemeyer, and Skocpol—recognize universities' impact on state capacities. They do not examine the role of universities beyond consideration of social knowledge, but they do suggest that further studies should attend "to the interplay of state agencies with institutions and professions oriented to the production and dissemination of knowledge" and should detail "the inter-relations of officials with all groups that advance claims over information and social theories in con-

nection with political struggles over state action."¹⁸ By focusing on the American state and the institutions primarily responsible for the production of social knowledge, my study furthers some of these universal interests.

State Authority and the Rise of Institutional Entrepreneurs

Clyde Barrow's *Universities and the Capitalist State*¹⁹ is one of a few studies to detail and specifically consider the relationship between American higher education and government authority. Barrow's work is useful for my consideration here, as he examines the university's role in furthering the "capitalist state," balancing capitalism and democracy, and transforming American economic structure at the turn of the twentieth century. I would argue, however, that there are limits to his approach. Barrow assumes that the relationship between prominent capitalists and universities was unidirectional, with the universities being co-opted by industrialists who Barrow believes were directing the state.

Building on the "garbage can model" of organizational choice²⁰ and on John Kingdon's²¹ application of this model to public policy, I would argue that the relationship between universities and capitalists worked both ways and often in the opposite direction. Academic leaders acted as entrepreneurs, often seeking out wealthy patrons and offering their programs and institutions as solutions to the problems of complexity that events at the turn of the century posed. In my study, I am concerned with the state's relationship to institutions and ideas, whereas Barrow is concerned with its structuring of markets and capital. Barrow's arguments do not contradict and in fact can be incorporated within my consideration of university support for the intellectual and institutional apparatuses of the state.

I should stress—in regard to the expansion of the American national state—that though the intellectual apparatus of social knowledge was the primary component of universities' support; it was not the only component. The institutional apparatus provided by credentials, partnerships, and training was also essential. In other words, universities not only legitimized but also formalized expertise, creating structures—both as active partner and independent agent—that extended the state's authority further than it would have gone on its own.

University leaders often worked as institutional entrepreneurs. Attempting to establish and build their fledgling universities, these entrepreneurs needed to find relevance for their school's research-based expertise. By offering their institutions as a solution to the prob-

lems of American state expansion, they found this relevance. The university did not necessarily pursue research and expertise in response to the demands of building the national state, and the national state did not always look to the university as an immediate solution to the problems inherent in such expansion. However, university leaders gradually linked the solutions their institutions offered with the various problems and challenges the developing state faced.

American Political Development, 1870–1920

Current models of and rationales for governance have their origins in the era of building a new American state. The institutional and intellectual forces that define contemporary public policy, bureaucratic autonomy, and reform efforts were developed at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries.²² This period of redefinition saw the beginnings of federal government expansion and a related shift in state authority.

There exists some dispute regarding the extent to which the federal government was able to establish central state authority;²³ these efforts were often met with resistance and limited success. However, a general consensus has formed around the belief that such attempts at centralization were driven by rapid economic expansion, industrialization, and urbanization.²⁴

America's initial experiment with bureaucratic order was derived from the regulative, hierarchical needs of urban-industrial life. Supporting this order was a newly emerging "national class." This class helped to define the expanding national state, while it valued and promoted expertise that "carried the burden of hopes for a new era of specialized parts and systematized wholes where nothing worked without carefully mastered bodies of knowledge."²⁵ With the rise of this order, political life and public institutions offered prominent roles to men who were interested in ideas and scholarship.²⁶

This new bureaucratic order was fundamentally national in its efforts and orientation.²⁷ However, the institutional and intellectual apparatuses that furthered this new national authority should not simply be equated with the federal government. Proponents of the new American state sought to standardize and rationalize not only federal procedures and activities but also those of state and local governments, through incentive-laden land grants, specialized journals, "good-government clubs," and schools of public administration. The development of the new American state thus meant not only the expansion of

national administrative capacities but also the reform of existing modes of local governance.

*The Fundamentals of the New American State:
Ideas and Institutions*

Skowronek and Eisenach provide the broadest assessments of the structures and philosophies underlying the new American state. Skowronek surveys the institutional developments of the period but also acknowledges that the state "is an intellectual enterprise."²⁸ Eisenach primarily examines the intellectual roots of the period but also grants that political ideas are greatly impacted through institutionalization.

Both Skowronek and Eisenach not only recognize the relation between ideas and institutions but also stress the importance of universities in developing this relationship. In an effort to bridge the gap between the two authors and assess the dynamic relationship between ideas and institutions, I concentrate on one institution—the emerging American university—that was essential in establishing the institutional and intellectual frameworks that marked the national state in this formative era.

Scholars of American political development have long acknowledged the influence of universities and expertise but have not detailed the process by which they came to be influential. In this study, I detail the processes by which universities established such influence; thus, this study sheds light not only on the formation of universities but also on the development of the American administrative state itself. Understanding the development of the administrative state is fundamental for contemporary conceptions of politics and policy. Brian Cook notes: "the administration of government is a prime target for agitating for change in the American polity. Indeed, the question of how the Republic can best administer its affairs has been at the center of nearly every political conflict that has marked a new stage in the nation's development."²⁹ Administration is not simply an instrument of political actors, it is itself an independent actor with constitutive force. Thus, the origins of administrative authority are relevant to anyone with interest in current governmental activity.

According to Skowronek, efforts at building the new American state and the expansion of national administrative capacities from 1877 to 1920 attempted to place power in the presidency and federal bureaucracy while wresting control from the locally oriented Congress, courts, and political machines. Relying on organizational, procedural, and intellectual redefinition, this building and expansion sought the con-

centration of authority at the national center of government, the centralization of authority within the government, and the specialization of institutional tasks and individual roles.³⁰

As Skowronek states, "providing the national institutional capacities commensurate with the demands of an industrial society required nothing less than a different kind of state organization."³¹ New, bureaucratic forms of government needed to be adopted. These new forms represented, "the great departure in American institutional development," as "new national administrative institutions first emerged free from the clutches of party domination, direct court supervision, and localistic orientations."³²

Intellectual support was crucial for the development of the state. Skowronek aptly articulates its overall significance to state building.

Associated with all highly institutionalized states is a special intellectual cadre that maintains an underlying continuity in governmental activity through social and political changes. The intellectuals must be recruited through an established church, an aristocracy of birth, or a university. Such institutions tend to confer legitimacy on the state as they generate the personnel to operate it. By their education and their social status, the intellectuals come to embody the special identity of the state.³³

In the expansion of the federal state at the turn of the twentieth century, this cadre did not come primarily from the church or aristocracy. They came from the university. During this era, "new communities of intellectual competence—socially differentiated and internally ordered—were heralded in broad-ranging movements to establish formal professional recruitment and practice, and to build universities that would train specialists and define expertise."³⁴ I would stress that universities were built to do more than simply train specialists and define expertise. Universities also sought to build character, provide skills, and elevate "gentleman." Seeking to establish their fledgling research universities, the institutional entrepreneurs who led higher education needed to emphasize their relevance to the newly redefined frameworks of the national state; training specialists and defining expertise was the most effective way to do this.

Eisenach stresses that commensurate with creation of this new American state were new ideas of and new approaches to politics and public life. Comprised largely of academics and other public intellectuals, a Progressive "regime in thought" focused on creating a nationalist ideological framework. Seeking common American values, meanings, and identities, this "regime in thought" created institutional locations, primarily within universities, for a new form of social knowledge that

articulated ideas of a national public good unmediated by party, interest, region, or sectarian religion.³⁵

The emergence of this “regime in thought” was crucial in the United States, according to Eisenach.

Our only source of a common American identity is political; our fundamental political ideas are largely constitutive of our personal ideas as Americans. If the moral and intellectual integrity of our most basic political ideas is in doubt, so, too, are its ideological products and the authority of political groupings organized around those ideologies.³⁶

Extracting from Eisenach, we see that political ideas shape not only the state but also the identities of the citizenry, the values of the public, and the meanings of the civilization.

Tensions certainly did exist between the various strains of Progressive political thought.³⁷ However, these tensions were joined in a common belief that the previous American state of courts and parties and its spoils system were corrupt and needed to be replaced by a more efficient, expert, and fair national system of government. “Efficiency,” notes Cook, “was in a very real sense a moral concept.”³⁸ Correspondingly, it was also a national concept. For Woodrow Wilson, Henry Carter Adams, and others of this era, the challenge was to incorporate European models of rational, bureaucratic, and expert governance while maintaining American democratic values.

Because of the “moral” and nationalistic components of the push for efficiency and expertise, universities and their institutional entrepreneurs were uniquely well positioned to support this pursuit. Institutions of higher learning already produced good and patriotic young men. With the establishment of new schools and credentials, the production of good and patriotic experts was an appropriate and logical next step.

Institutionalizing the Authority of Expertise

Rapid economic expansion, industrialization, and urbanization expanded interdependence and increased complexity in most all aspects of American life. In response to such forces, Skowronek’s “new American state” and Eisenach’s Progressive “regime in thought” developed as capstones to a “broad movement to establish or reestablish authority,” a movement that “made some people receptive to expert advice about human affairs and provided others the confidence to give it.”³⁹ Such expertise was more than simply specialized knowledge. It was specialized knowledge codified and formalized primarily through the university and its credentials.

The new American state developed from the acceptance of expertise and the formalization of this acceptance through institutions in which "experts were heavily represented and the official language and justifications for reorganization were apolitical, couched in efficiency terms rather than policy terms."⁴⁰ As the new American state developed, expertise became almost a "habit," structuring individual and institutional preferences and alternatives.⁴¹ March and Olsen explain that the authority of experts stems from knowledge that was defined through "a collection of rules": "Although . . . rationalized to some degree, rules [were] learned by experts as catechisms. . . . The rules [were] enforced by the standards of professions and the expectations of patrons."⁴²

The emerging university and the federal government were both standard enforcers and expectant patrons of such expertise. As the state expanded and the university emerged, producing experts meant more than simply educating smart men, it meant educating men in particularized bodies of knowledge and training them in the best manner and methods to apply such knowledge.

By developing and nurturing expertise, the university did not simply produce trained personnel for government employment. It also defined national standards and expectations for a widening array of disciplines, fields, and professions. These efforts were often driven by coordination among the leading universities. Such coordination meant that national systemization of knowledge did not necessarily include the federal government. In some policy domains, such as forestry, the federal government was intimately involved in defining expertise. Universities worked as active partners of the national state in developing standards and expectations. In other domains, such as education, the federal government was only marginally involved in defining expertise.

Universities coordinated with one another to develop national standards and expectations; thus, they served as agents of the national state. In assessing the influence of university-based expertise, one must consider not only how institutions of higher learning supported the formal apparatus of the federal government but also how they supported the less structured networks that would serve to extend the reach and the authority of the national state.

The Apparatuses of the State

Before discussing my particular examination of universities' contribution to the development of the American administrative state, it is worthwhile to place such examination in a broader context. The rela-

tion between institutions and ideas is not simply defined by historical perspective. The power of political institutions and public ideas can also be discussed more generally. It has been widely recognized that the structure of institutions and the construct of ideas can possess authority and influence on their own. However, by defining what political institutions and public ideas mean, we create new questions as to how their influence is enhanced by one another. Institutions need intellectual support, and ideas need an institutional home to develop and thrive in the world of politics.

The Institutional Apparatus

Whether viewed as a single entity seeking a particularized set of agendas and goals or as one of a series of institutions that influence and structure politics and policy, the state has been recognized as a distinct element outside of the individual citizens who comprise it, the particular leaders who govern it, and the various state organizations that exist to petition it. As Weber observes and as Poggi, Skocpol, and others reiterate, the state does more than simply claim control over territories and the people.⁴³ It is more than “government.” It is a series of administrative, legal, extractive, and coercive organizations.

The ability of these administrative, legal, bureaucratic, and coercive systems to establish policies and goals as more than simply conduits is characterized as “state autonomy.” The ability to implement such policies and goals is characterized as “state capacities.”⁴⁴ In defining the state, the distinction between autonomy and capacities is not as significant as the understanding of the state as a political actor somewhat independent of the citizens, leaders, and groups that constitute it.

Within these conceptions, the whole of the state is greater than the simple sum of its political parts. Its authority is defined as the ability to influence the practice of politics, the formation of groups, the identity of individuals, and the demands of society. The state is more than simply the activities of governmental officials and institutions. Theories of state building recognize that educational institutions often supplement and extend such state authority. They contribute to the sum of the state’s overall authority. Thus, in examining here the institutional development of universities closely tied to the national state, I also consider the broader development of the state itself.

The Intellectual Apparatus

The ability of the state to influence the practice of politics, the formation of groups, the identity of individuals, and the demands of society does not rest solely in its institutional activities and structures. Public ideas

greatly influence these abilities as well as the activities and structures themselves. Whether we consider the state to be a single entity defining other institutions or only one of many institutions shaping society, changes in the state's ability to exert authority and establish constraints do not depend entirely on its own structural characteristics and activities. Reforms also depend on the power of public ideas that exist beyond it.

Politics and policy should be seen as more than the conflict and ordering of interests. It should also be seen as the conflict and ordering of ideas. While focusing on individual and collective interests who petition the state, Kingdon finds that ideas are crucial. Major changes in public policy often occur when the power of an idea whose "time has come" bowls over existing interests and constituencies. The power of ideas is not limited to their ability to influence the outcomes of conflict between interests. They also greatly influence institutional structures and activities, as well as political outcomes. For Kingdon, "it is difficult to understand the origins, attraction, and tremendous power of such movements as abolition, civil rights, environmental protectionism, feminism, and consumerism without resorting to the power of ideas."⁴⁵ I would add that it is also difficult—well-nigh impossible—to understand the origins, attraction, and power of the state without including the role of ideas.

Mary Douglas⁴⁶ attempts to parse out the specific influence of ideas on institutions. She does not disagree with Skocpol, North, Jackman, and others who argue that institutions can structure ideas as well as outcomes and activities.⁴⁷ Rather, she emphasizes the reciprocal relationship between ideas and institutions. For Douglas, the formation and maintenance of institutions is an intellectual process as much as an economic and political one. That politics and policy are, as we can infer from Kingdon, an intellectual enterprise does not mean we should disregard institutions. Rather, as Douglas underscores, it means we must examine how ideas affect the state's ability to structure outcomes and activities, as well as consider the state's ability to influence ideas. Douglas thus offers a method for understanding social, political, and economic puzzles: "half of [the] task is to demonstrate this cognitive process at the foundation of the social order. The other half is to demonstrate that the individual's most elementary cognitive process depends on social institutions."⁴⁸

In other words, when examining questions of politics and policy, we must acknowledge that ideas are shaped by their institutional context and that institutions are shaped by their intellectual underpinnings. Therefore, whether considered as a series of institutions or as a single

entity, the state, as an independent actor, is more than just an institutional construct. It is also an intellectual construct in which ideas as well as institutions influence the practice of politics, the formation of groups, the identity of individuals, and the demands of society.

From these various approaches to the question of what defines “the state” and its relation to institutions and ideas, a useful definition emerges. The state operates as an autonomous actor whose institutions exert authority and structure conflict. Ideas have weight on their own and can shape politics and social interaction. State authority is grounded in the interplay of institutions and ideas. More important, for this discussion, the state depends on social knowledge that is supported primarily by nongovernmental institutions. The institutions that support such knowledge are not beyond the influence of the state. State action creates demands for knowledge about the social processes and structures that state interventions seek to influence. The knowledge basis of such action, as well as the processes by which the state affects the development and application of social knowledge, are of central importance to state authority.⁴⁹ Most succinctly, to understand state authority, we need to consider more than state institutions. Puzzles of state authority are also puzzles of social knowledge and of the institutions that create and disseminate such knowledge.

Research Design

In addition to rendering an overview of political institutions and ideas at the turn of the twentieth century, Skowronek and Eisenach also present a useful methodological framework. Skowronek employs case studies of selected governmental agencies to assess the structure of the new American state. He focuses on governmental reform and expansion in civil administration, the military, and business regulation. Skowronek explains why he elects to use this approach.

By identifying patterns of development over three distinct areas of administrative innovation, we can move beyond a history of each towards a cross-sectional view of a transformation in the integrated networks of institutions, procedures, and human talents that constitute the state as a working organization. In a comparative framework, the reform efforts complement each other in illuminating a single political process of reconstructing the American state around national administrative capacities in the industrial age.⁵⁰

Incorporating an approach similar to Skowronek’s, I employ case studies of distinct schools to illuminate the coordinated process of university support for national state authority.

Eisenach uses case studies of selected individuals to examine the ideas of the era. In selecting writers and writings, Eisenach attempted to identify “potential candidates for the title ‘inventor’ of Progressivism.” The final short list of candidates he focused on “is not intended to be ‘representative’ in the sense of encompassing the entire range of reform movements, causes, or ideas.” Instead, it represents “a core group whose writings and institutional innovations first defined the larger terms by which Progressivism was defined in all its variety and conflict.”⁵¹

In this project, I parallel Skowronek and Eisenach’s methods and attempt to build on their analysis. I rely on historical, archival case studies of individual schools. Previous archival histories of the research university at this time—such as Laurence Veysey’s *The Emergence of the American University*, Roger Geiger’s *To Advance Knowledge*, and Julie Reuben’s *The Making of the Modern University*—furnish background as well as guides to pertinent collections. These works emphasize the unique influence of the American university in the post-Civil War era. Veysey aptly characterizes the challenge inherent in examining the university and its relation to society when he asserts, “the university must be understood as a magnet for the emotions, not alone as a project of conscious definition.”⁵²

Case-Study Selection and Rationale

To understand the emotion and conscious definition of the university’s relation to and support of the national state, I compare schools drawn from four distinct groupings. Three are drawn from Geiger’s categorization of early members of the Association of American Universities (AAU): older eastern elite institutions; newer private institutions; and newer midwestern and western state institutions.⁵³ The fourth grouping—antebellum southern state institutions—is comprised of schools that at the time of their founding lagged behind the expansion and research that marked the AAU schools. The members of each category are as follows:

Older Eastern Elite Institutions

Columbia University
Harvard University
University of Pennsylvania
Princeton University
Yale University

Newer Midwestern and Western State Institutions

University of California
University of Illinois
University of Michigan
University of Minnesota
University of Wisconsin

Newer Private Institutions
 University of Chicago
 Cornell University
 Johns Hopkins University
 Massachusetts Institute
 of Technology
 Stanford University

Antebellum Southern State Institutions
 University of Georgia
 University of North Carolina
 University of South Carolina
 University of Tennessee
 University of Virginia

These four categories allow me to draw cases from a core group of institutions that defined the university's relation to the national state both formally, through the AAU, and informally, through their institutional leadership and training of faculty and administrators who would staff schools across the country.

Obviously, the universities from this group do not represent the whole of higher learning at the turn of the twentieth century. Women's colleges, urban Catholic colleges, and historically black colleges emerged at this time, and many existing liberal arts colleges flourished. Therefore, I also include broader considerations of these institutions, along with detailed examinations of research universities, in order to develop an understanding of how this core group of schools came to define higher education and its relation to the national state in this era and for generations to come. The influence of the leading universities and their leadership on other schools was summarized by Wellesley College president Caroline Hazard in her conclusion to a letter asking Harvard's Charles Eliot for advice about the organization of her faculty, where she stated, "everyone in college work looks to you as the ultimate authority."⁵⁴

By focusing on more established schools, I am not suggesting that these were the only institutions that influenced American political development. I am, however, suggesting that to some extent, research universities grew out of a desire to serve the state. Since this period witnessed the rise of more coordinated efforts and an increased awareness of "peer institutions," these particular studies also incorporate more general considerations of the other institutions within the group.

Using the preceding institutional categories enables both generalization about universities' role in the institutionalization of the American state's authority and examination of particular institutional differences in their approach and commitment to this role. The categories allow for consideration of distinctions that might have influenced the relation of the university to the national state: regionalism, age, and funding source. Regionalism has long been considered a factor in American politics and state building.⁵⁵ Organizational age is often considered a sig-

nificant institutional characteristic.⁵⁶ Funding sources clearly can impact a nongovernmental institution's support of state authority.⁵⁷ Categorizing the institutions as I have done allows for comparison of southern schools where the national state was being reconstructed, western schools where the state was being newly settled, and eastern schools where the state was being reestablished. It also allows for comparison of institutions built from public munificence with those built from private generosity. Finally, it allows me to undertake a particularized as well as a comprehensive consideration of the manner and method in which universities further the development of the expanding national state.

University Archives and the "Golden Age" of Presidents

In examining the role of the university in American political development, I relied heavily on university archives as well as contemporary accounts and writings of academic leaders. Owing to their long tenures in office and their prominent positions in public life, such collections as the James Burrill Angell Papers at the University of Michigan's Bentley Historical Library, the Arthur Twining Hadley Papers at Yale's Sterling Memorial Library, the Benjamin Ide Wheeler Papers at the University of California's Doe Memorial Library, and the Charles Eliot Papers at Harvard are all major sources of academic correspondence from this period. These collections contain more than personal letters; they also serve as the primary repository of institutional reports and academic addresses of the period and therefore as the best resource for capturing the diversity of academic and political debate among university leaders and faculty in this period.

The university presidents of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries came to embody their institutions in a way not seen before or since.⁵⁸ Ralph Waldo Emerson once referred to institutions as "the long shadow of men." In considering the university's role in state building at the turn of the twentieth century, one can see the long shadows of university leaders stretched not just over the ivory towers of academia but to the White House, the capitol, the courts, and the executive offices of the new American state. Though certainly the most high-profile example of an academic leader defining an institution and stretching into the public sphere, the election of former Princeton president Woodrow Wilson to the presidency of the United States in 1912 simply reflected the very active role university leaders took as "public men" in the politics and policy of the new American state.

In taking such active roles, university leaders were greatly assisted

by lengthy tenures that allowed them to both establish and perpetuate their personal and institutional identities. Having established their identities as “public men,” the leading administrators and educators of the era often became prominent figures in the new American state. Such men as Daniel Coit Gilman, who twice was “runner-up” for the Yale presidency and who served briefly as president of the University of California before guiding the newly founded Johns Hopkins University for twenty-seven years (1875–1902), served among the longest tenures that have ever been seen at their respective institutions. Gilman’s initial contact with California came on an assessment visit sponsored by the United States Department of Agriculture. While head of Johns Hopkins, he served on a number of boards and commissions concerned with the promotion of rational and “good” government. After retiring from Hopkins at the age of sixty-five, Gilman served as founding president of the Carnegie Institution. Gilman’s good friend and fellow Yale alumnus Andrew Dickson White had a similar record of public service. White served as president of Cornell for its first seventeen years (1867–85). In this time, he also was drafted to run for governor of New York but declined, and he served as the State Department’s minister in Berlin. Later, he served a lengthy stint as minister to Russia.

Newly founded and privately capitalized universities, such as Johns Hopkins and Cornell, were not the only institutions to witness such long shadows. James Burrill Angell guided the University of Michigan for a remarkable thirty-eight years (1871–1909). The exceptional length and breadth of his shadow over the Ann Arbor campus can be seen in the fact that though he chaired the Deep Waterways Commission in 1895 and took significant leaves of absence to head diplomatic missions (in China in 1880–82 and in Turkey in 1897–98), he remained a hands-on administrator who was seen as so indispensable to the institution that his initial letter of retirement in 1905 was unanimously rejected by the university’s elected Board of Regents.

Though the discussion in this book relies extensively on Angell’s papers, it does so without overstating his influence and reputation. Angell was, by any measure, a national figure. His leadership of the University of Michigan and his governmental service helped establish his reputation as a leading man of letters and public service. Early in his career, many suggested he return to his native Vermont to run for the United States Senate.⁵⁹

Perhaps the best reflection of Angell’s stature was the nationwide outpouring of editorials that greeted his retirement in 1909. The *Port-*

land Oregonian noted Angell's departure with regret and with praise for his work and for the university it saw as his legacy.

The University of Michigan is the immediate model which all successful state universities have followed. . . . The university was the creation of the common people of Michigan, led by a great commander. Like the career of Lincoln, it [Angell's career] shows the inner meaning of democracy. The University of Michigan is typical of the future wonders which the people shall work not only in education, but in everything else.

The *Wheeling News* in West Virginia characterized Angell as "one of the most imposing figures in the realm of education in America" and praised him for the "reforms introduced and results produced."⁶⁰

Angell's influence and stature were heightened by his unique position in Ann Arbor and by the incredible length of his tenure. The leaders of fledgling western and southern universities often referred to him as the "father" of public higher education and sought to draw on his remarkable experience. The leaders of established eastern schools similarly trusted his experience but also valued his position detached from their own rivalries. Perhaps no one expressed this sentiment better than Harry Pratt Judson, who served as the University of Chicago president from 1906 to 1923.

Pres. Angell we feel is not solely the property of the Univ. of Michigan. He belongs to all of us who are interested in educational work in the west and throughout the country. His ripe experience, his rare personal qualities, his sound judgment have endeared him to all. We look to him for leadership and regard him in a very large sense as one of the most trusted leaders and advisors of educational thought in the entire nation.⁶¹

It would not be uncommon for Angell to receive correspondence from two academic leaders each expressing frustration with or skepticism about the ideas or plans of the other. Angell, therefore, is not only a central figure but also a linchpin for understanding the process of university support in the development of the national state.

The oldest and most established schools in the country were also witnesses to lengthy presidencies. Charles Eliot ran Harvard for forty years (1869–1909), and Frederick Barnard led Columbia for twenty-five years (1864–89). Arthur Twining Hadley guided Yale for twenty-one years (1899–1920),⁶² during which time he also actively served the federal government in various capacities—most notably, chairing a special commission established to direct reform of interstate railroad rates.

Even the relatively languid schools of the South reflected this significant trend of strong and continued academic leadership. Thanks largely to Chancellor David Barrow's patience and longevity in dealing

with a conservative legislature and public, the University of Georgia, though “remaining behind national norms,” evolved beyond a school once described by one of Barrow’s predecessors as “a scheme that sets up an aristocracy of pretensions to culture.”⁶³ Recognizing that “every other leading institution of higher education in the country was operating under this form of governance,” the University of Virginia’s Board of Visitors appointed Edwin Anderson Alderman as its first president.⁶⁴ Alderman oversaw the university for twenty-seven years (1904–31) and undertook efforts to establish it as a “full university of national prominence.”⁶⁵

The significance of such lengthy tenures does not lie in the fact that these academic leaders had a monochromatic vision of higher education and its relation to the federal state. These leaders and their institutions represented the various strains of academic emphasis—mental discipline, culture, utility, and research—that melded into the emerging American university. Such lengthy tenures often meant that academic leaders came not only to embody the particular institution they served but also to represent higher education as a whole.⁶⁶ Thus, no matter what emphasis his particular vision for higher education reflected, the university president was often speaking on behalf of both his particular institution and his vision for the American university in general.

Overview of This Book

My purpose in this book is to develop a systematic understanding of the university’s role in American political development. Building from general considerations of this role, I argue that the university provided both intellectual and institutional apparatuses that legitimized and formalized national state authority. Defining state authority as the ability to influence the practice of politics, the formation of groups, the identity of individuals, and the demands of society, I argue that such non-governmental institutions as universities are crucial for modifications of and reforms to state authority. I also contend that the support of these institutions was not necessarily co-opted by the state as much as it was offered by institutional entrepreneurs seeking to establish the societal relevance and significance of their institutions. To illuminate these discussions, I examine the university’s role as agent and partner in legitimizing and formalizing the new American state in first the “loosely coupled” era (1862–99) and then the “formally aligned” era

(1900–1920). I conclude by discussing the evolution of this role and its consequences for American political development and policy.

In simplest terms, scholars of politics, history, and many other disciplines have recognized the importance of expertise in the expansion of the American state. However, in acknowledging this relationship, most have posited that the state recognized the need for experts and then turned to universities who dutifully obliged in their provision. Examining the period between the end of the Civil War and the end of World War I, I note that just as often, universities and the institutional entrepreneurs who guided them developed experts and then worked actively to create a market for their services. This shift to a more shared causality has significant implications not only for our historical understanding of American political development but for our current assessment of public policy and of higher education's impact on it.