

Capitalism and the Creation of the U.S. Constitution

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Research Article

Cite this article: Parisot J (2023). Capitalism and the Creation of the U.S. Constitution. *Studies in American Political Development* 37, 199–211. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0898588X23000032>

Received: 4 August 2022
Revised: 22 December 2022
Accepted: 5 May 2023

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Abstract

This article engages with scholars working on the history of capitalism and with scholars of American political development to form a historical materialist perspective on the creation of the American federal government. First, it returns to the debate about the state in capitalist society to develop an approach for theorizing the relations between class, capitalism, and states. Next, it addresses the position of American capitalism in the 1780s, arguing that it was still in a long transition phase. After this, it reinterprets the Constitutional Convention of 1787 in the context of the long and uneven history of American capitalist development. I argue that the U.S. Constitution created the foundations of a state that would serve capitalist interests, including capitalist slave owners, but, at the same time, provided some space for social relations of production not yet fully subordinated to the power of capitalism to coexist.

This article addresses the question, what role did the Constitutional Convention of 1787 and the creation of the U.S. federal government play in the making of American capitalism? It argues that although I am not the first to pose this question, the answer has slipped between the cracks.

The topic has been approached in different ways throughout the last several decades. First, historians of the era, including Terry Bouton, Woody Holton, and Michael J. Klarman, have convincingly shown that the Convention was the result of a fear of “excess democracy” by an elite group who built a new state partly to protect elite power, quell rebellion, and limit too much democratic participation in governance by the lower and middle classes.¹ While these discussions have highlighted the question of class, they have, with some exceptions mentioned later, generally not placed their analysis in the context of the role that state formation played in solidifying or supporting American capitalism overall.

Second, historians who have worked on the transition to capitalism in U.S. history have demonstrated that the country that became the United States after the American Revolution was not born entirely capitalist.² A snapshot of the United States in 1787 would show a society with a variety of intersecting or “articulating” modes of production. In the North, artisans still often owned their own tools and controlled their own workshops. Yeoman farm families owned their own land and engaged in “safety first” production, partly to satisfy their domestic needs and partly to trade for goods with neighbors or local country stores linked to broader chains of merchants. Coastal merchants can be classified as capitalist, as can those who engaged in land speculation. So can speculators who purchased government securities and owned private debt. In the South, capitalist plantation owners ruled over their personal empires of Black slaves, but in less fertile lands and pine barrens, small yeoman farmers produced primarily for their own households. In the context of a country on its way toward

¹Terry Bouton, *Taming Democracy: “The People,” the Founders, and the Troubled Ending of the American Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); Woody Holton, *Unruly Americans and the Origins of the Constitution* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007); Michael J. Klarman, *The Framers’ Coup: The Making of the United States Constitution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

²Some key contributions to this debate include Christopher Clark, *The Roots of Rural Capitalism: Western Massachusetts, 1780–1860* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990); James A. Henretta, “Families and Farms: Mentalite in Pre-Industrial America: Reply,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 37, no. 4 (1980): 696–700; Stephen Hahn and Jonathan Prude, eds., *The Countryside in the Age of Capitalist Transformation: Essays in the Social History of Rural America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986); Sue Headlee, *The Political Economy of the Family Farm: The Agrarian Roots of American Capitalism* (New York: Praeger, 1991); Allan Kulikoff, *The Agrarian Origins of American Capitalism* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1992); Michael Merrill, “Cash Is Good to Eat: Self-Sufficiency and Exchange in the Rural Economy of the United States,” *Radical History Review* 13 (1977): 42–71; Michael Merrill, “The Anticapitalist Origins of the United States,” *Review: Fernand Braudel Center* 13 (1990): 465–97; Robert Mutch, “Colonial America and the Debate about Transition to Capitalism,” *Theory and Society* 9, no. 6 (1980): 847–63; Elizabeth A. Perkins, “The Consumer Frontier: Household Consumption in Early Kentucky,” *Journal of American History* 78, no. 2 (1991): 486–510; Charles Post, *The American Road to Capitalism: Studies in Class-Structure, Economic Development and Political Conflict, 1620–1877* (Chicago: Haymarket, 2012); Michael Zakim and Gary John Kornblith, eds., *Capitalism Takes Command: The Social Transformation of Nineteenth Century America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012). For a more extensive bibliography of this literature, see James Parisot, *How America Became Capitalist: Imperial Expansion and the Conquest of the West* (London: Pluto, 2019), 203–4.

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capitalism yet still in transition, Allan Kulikoff and Charles Post have both argued that the result of the American Revolution led to the formation of a new state that would play a key role in ossifying U.S. capitalism.³ Yet these accounts have not looked in detail at the formation of the U.S. Constitution and have problematically viewed Southern plantation slavery as noncapitalist, rather than a form of racialized capitalism that the new state was designed to protect.

Third, the question of capitalism and slavery has in many ways been clarified by scholars working in the loosely defined area of the “new history of capitalism.”⁴ Yet it has not always been clear what scholars working in this tradition mean by “capitalism.”⁵ And this work has tended to focus on the history of slavery in the South and the history of business in the North, but it has not always systematically engaged with the older debate that raged in previous decades over capitalism, social property relations, and transitions in modes of production.⁶ Scholars working in this area have tended not to try to solve the problem this article poses, nor has it been their objective to do so.

Fourth, scholars of American political development (APD), perhaps most significantly David Brian Robertson, have examined the Convention, demonstrating the goals and challenges the framers faced.⁷ Robertson’s book remains an unsurpassed detailing of the politics of the Convention in the context of the creation of the Constitution as a “durable shift in governing authority” and a central concern for APD scholars.⁸ While he does contextualize the Convention in an economic sense, the level of abstraction used does not address the question of social relations of production, state form, and capitalism. Robertson argues that attendees at the Convention were “elite” and that they did not create a new state for personal reasons of economic gain, but rather to build a government that could support market forces and balance competing political and economic interests.⁹ But he never broaches the question of the extent to which different social relations might or might not be considered “capitalist” or the extent to which the new state was built in an age of capitalist transition. Perhaps because of a broader intellectual trajectory in which much of the APD literature has focused more on institution building than the role of the state in relation to modes of production, this work has not answered the question of where the Constitution fits into the history of American capitalism.

In this context, this article returns to the tradition of historical materialism. I begin by asking these questions: What conceptual tools might be necessary to explain the role of the state in the

history of the rise of capitalism? Is there such a thing as a specifically capitalist state? How do institutions and social classes relate? To what extent is state power “autonomous”?¹⁰

In returning to these questions, this article sets up the basis for a reconsideration of the Constitutional Convention in the history of the development of American capitalism. First, I provide a snapshot of the state of capitalism in the United States in the late 1700s. This is painted with broad strokes to contextualize the Convention. Second, returning to the original records of the Convention, I examine the ways that the Convention occurred in a society transiting to capitalism and the extent to which the framers were building a capitalistic form of governance. Here, I argue that they worked to construct a relatively autonomous state that would support capitalist interests and, in the long run, capitalist development, but also provide space for noncapitalist or less capitalist relations of production to continue, bringing the lower and middling classes into the state. Elite interests, enshrined in the institutional structure of the state, would be presented as universal hegemonic interests for all social classes—something framers such as James Madison were very consciously attempting to achieve. The new government would also protect the interests of slave-owning capitalists through the compromises that led to the final draft of the Constitution.

Overall, the goal of this article is to contribute to debates and approaches within APD. As Karen Orren and Stephen Skowronek discuss, APD is concerned with continuity and change within American political history. This means, for example, that the temporal boundaries of a study might be established not only by setting dates, but by attempting to locate underlying historical processes that may overlap or conflict with others that are not always easily classifiable in exact months or years. The study of political development is the study of “a durable shift in governing authority.”¹¹ Capitalism is a central part of governing authority. This suggests that the rise of capitalism and the corresponding change in state form should be a central concern of APD, one this article hopes to put more centrally than it has been in recent years.

1. Returning to the Capitalist State

The relationship between the history of APD and historical materialism is complicated. While early scholarship, such as that of Theda Skocpol, engaged with Marxism and was in some respects a reaction against Marxist state theory, much recent APD literature has avoided Marxism, and, likewise, historical materialists have rarely engaged with APD. In *Studies in American Political Development*, for instance, a 2022 search for the words “Karl Marx” revealed only ten results, the most recent being in 2007.¹²

Yet for understanding “durable changes in governing authority,” the state, and capitalism, Marx is key. The problem is that early APD scholarship moved away from Marx, and more recent

³Kulikoff, *The Agrarian Origins of American Capitalism*; Charles Post, *The American Road to Capitalism*.

⁴These approaches are very well summarized in Sven Beckert and Seth Rockman, eds., *Slavery’s Capitalism: A New History of American Economic Development* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018). Jonathan Levy, in *Ages of American Capitalism: A History of the United States* (New York: Random House, 2021), 71, 74–75, also presents a thorough summation of the current state of “capitalism” research since this turn. This massive book only briefly mentions the Constitutional Convention and does not provide an analysis of its role in the history of capitalism besides its relationship to Alexander Hamilton’s influence.

⁵Paul V. Kershaw, “Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark: Bringing Capitalism Back into the ‘New’ History of Capitalism,” *Journal of Historical Sociology* 33, no. 1 (2020): 61–73.

⁶John J. Clegg, “Capitalism and Slavery,” *Critical Historical Studies* 2, no. 2 (2015): 281–304; Charles Post, “Slavery and the New History of Capitalism,” *Catalyst* 1, no. 1 (2017): 1–20.

⁷David Brian Robertson, *The Constitution and America’s Destiny* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

⁸Ibid., 6.

⁹Ibid., 10–17.

¹⁰Perry Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State* (New York: Verso, 1989); Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, eds. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 2005); Heide Gerstenberger, *Impersonal Power: History and Theory of the Bourgeois State* (Chicago: Haymarket, 2009); Leo Panitch and Sam Gindin, *The Making of Global Capitalism: The Political Economy of American Empire* (New York: Verso, 2012); Nicos Poulantzas, *State, Power, Socialism* (New York: Verso, 2000).

¹¹Karen Orren and Stephen Skowronek, *The Search for American Political Development* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 123.

¹²Jonathan Chausovsky, “State Regulation of Corporations in the Late Nineteenth Century: A Critique of the New Jersey Thesis,” *Studies in American Political Development* 21, no. 1 (2007): 30–65 (search conducted December 19, 2022).

studies have not turned back to contemporary discussions within historical materialism. By returning to both classic and contemporary Marxist debates, I argue, a framework can be constructed that makes it possible to explain the relationships between capitalist development and state formation. And this is consistent with the overarching goals of APD scholars.

In her classic account from the 1980s, written against “neo-Marxist perspectives,” Skocpol made the case for the autonomous state. She argued, for instance, that “virtually all neo-Marxist writers on the state have retained deeply embedded society-centered assumptions, not allowing themselves to doubt that, at base, states are inherently shaped by classes or class struggles and function to preserve and expand modes of production. Many possible forms of autonomous state action are thus ruled out by definitional fiat.”¹³ For Skocpol, the Marxist idea of the “relative autonomy” of the state was vague and underestimated the extent to which state actors can be autonomous from other social forces in society. It also overlooked autonomous state capacity.

Elizabeth Sanders put it more bluntly, stating that “in its Marxist-derived variant, state theory treats all state expansion as a response to the expressed needs of individual capitalists, a hegemonic capitalist class, or the structural requirements of the capitalist system.”¹⁴ This is not to say these APD scholars viewed states as independent actors completely autonomous from class and other social forces by any means. The whole point of Sanders’s book, for instance, was to show how popular social forces change state policy. But the result, one way or another, was the formation of a gap between APD discussions and historical materialism, setting a basis whereby more recent scholars have tended not to engage with contemporary Marxist debates.

In fact, though, the question of state autonomy has been a concern of historical materialism going back to Marx. In the *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, in his detailed analysis of the ebb and flow of political power and social class in mid-nineteenth-century France, Marx considered that “only under the second Bonaparte does the state seem to have made itself completely independent.”¹⁵ He goes on to say that the state is not autonomous, after all, “and yet state power is not suspended in mid-air. Bonaparte represents a class, and the most numerous class of French society at that, the *small peasants*.”¹⁶ What he is effectively discussing here is the relative autonomy of the state. While for Marx, at times, states could function as the “executive committee for managing the common affairs of the bourgeoisie,” to paraphrase, the relationship between class power and state power was contingent.¹⁷ The level of autonomy that state actors have from social classes is dependent upon historical circumstance and shaped by the relationship between the state and class movements within and between modes of production.¹⁸

¹³Theda Skocpol, “Bringing the State Back In: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research,” in *Bringing the State Back In*, ed. Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschmeyer, and Theda Skocpol (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 5.

¹⁴Elizabeth Sanders, *Roots of Reform: Farmers, Workers, and the American State, 1877–1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 2.

¹⁵Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (New York: International Publishers), 108.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1998), 5.

¹⁸In one of his most well-known passages on the state, Marx states that “the specific economic form in which unpaid surplus labor is pumped out of the direct producers determines the relationship of domination and servitude, as this grows directly out of production itself and reacts back on it in turn as a determinant. On this is based the entire configuration of the economic community raising from the actual relations of production,

Even Nicos Poulantzas, still the most significant reference point, next to Ralph Miliband, for Marxist discussions of the state, was not as reductionist as scholars like Skocpol and Sanders seemed to think Marxists were. Poulantzas was very critical of the German “derivation” school, which attempted to derive the general functions of the capitalist state out of a model of a capitalist mode of production. This, if anything, overlooked both the historical specificity of states in particular times, as well as the fact that states have relative autonomy. In defining relative autonomy, Poulantzas says, “such autonomy is indeed constitutive of the capitalist State: it refers to the State’s materiality as an apparatus relatively separated from the relations of production, and to the specificity of classes and class struggle under capitalism that is implicit in that separation.”¹⁹ Here, there is an overlap between the historical materialist idea of relative autonomy and the idea Skocpol and others discuss of an autonomous state. The entire idea Poulantzas is putting forth is that relations of state and governance are not reducible to social class. In a capitalist society, there is a separation between the realm of the “political” and the “economic,” albeit one that is as much conceptual as material. It is, in fact, *because* state actors have autonomy—after all, a bureaucrat working up a governmental status hierarchy is different from a corporate CEO—that states in a capitalist society can regulate how capitalism operates, build institutions of government, and function as a state.

The major difference between Marxist and early APD state autonomy perspectives is that historical materialists give more weight and force to the power of processes of capital accumulation to shape *all* aspects of life and governance in capitalist society. Just as no one in capitalist society can live outside capitalism, including state bureaucrats, so, as Leo Panitch and Sam Gindin put it, “it is in these terms that we should understand the ‘relative autonomy’ of capitalist states: not as being unconnected to capitalist classes, but rather as having autonomous capacities to act on behalf of the system as a whole.”²⁰ These authors make a distinction between the “differentiation” and “separation” of state and economy. In other words, state and class power are different: one can conceptually separate the two, and in fact, needs to, in order to explain how they interact. But they are *not* separate. State workers do not live outside capitalism; state institutions are inevitably shaped by the flowing, circulating power of capital. And the pressures and contradictions of capitalism are reflected *inside* state institutions.²¹

While in some regards, APD has moved on from these debates, although not completely, it has left open avenues that are ripe for

and hence also its specific political form.” Marx goes on to say this is the “innermost secret” and “hidden basis of the entire social edifice, and hence also the political form of the relationship of sovereignty and dependence, in short, the specific form of state in each case.” He says this has “endless variations and gradations in appearance, as the result of innumerable different empirical circumstances.” In other words, historically specific modes of production tend to articulate with new and different forms of state, but this always depends on context. This does not mean, for instance, the rise of capitalism automatically somehow changed state form. His analysis also opens space for gradual change so, for instance, while capitalist relations may develop in some places, older state forms may hold on for some time, just as under a more “capitalistic” form of state, degrees of non-capitalist relations may persist. Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol. 3 (New York: Penguin, 1991), 927.

¹⁹Poulantzas, *State, Power, Socialism*, 127.

²⁰Panitch and Gindin, *The Making of Global Capitalism*, 4.

²¹Rafael Khachaturian, “The State as Social Relation: Poulantzas on Materiality and Political Strategy,” in *Research Handbook on Law and Marxism*, ed. Paul O’Connell and Umüt Özsü (Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar, 2021), 177.

reconsideration.²² Representative of existing conceptions of the state, in the nearly 800-page *The Oxford Handbook of American Political Development*, Suzanne Mettler and Richard Valelly say that “another basic contribution of APD scholarship is its insistence that, like other polities, America has a *state*. By that we mean a coherently (though not necessarily tightly) connected ensemble of legitimate, stable, and resilient (but also evolving) national and subnational institutions of representation and legislation, governance, and jurisprudence building.”²³ The authors continue: “While responsive to social demands and public opinion the men and women in the state are therefore also ‘autonomous,’ that is, their views and behavior are rooted in intellectual worldviews, public philosophy, ‘reason of state,’ professional ethics, entrepreneurial visions of new roles for government, access to and dialogue with experts, and of course patriotism and public spirit.”²⁴

In fact, this perspective is perhaps closer to Marxism than the authors might give credit for. Marx was aware in *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, as noted, that mid-nineteenth-century French politicians acted based upon “reasons of state,” status, and power not reducible to class interests alone, although not entirely separated from them either. And by radically historicizing the state and placing political power in the context of modes of production, so “durable shifts in governing authority” might be located that current perspectives may be missing.

To expand, just as the history of the capitalism is the history of states, so the history of modern politics is the history of capitalism. And modes of production are not just economic. Forms of social relations of production and forms of state have historically, internally, co-shaped each other. And while Skocpol may have written that “properly speaking, there is no such thing as a generically ‘feudal state’ or ‘capitalist state.’ Rather there are variously organized states coexisting with various patterns of economic production and exchange,”²⁵ there were certainly profound changes in state form that occurred with the rise of capitalism which might be considered uniquely capitalist in political form.

Perhaps more strongly than anyone else recently working in the Marxist tradition, Heide Gerstenberger has made the case for the centrality of the state to secure and support the development of capitalist relations of production in the history of capitalism. Gerstenberger argues that it was not simply that social relations changed first, and state form second. For the author,

²²For recent examples of APD discussions of state autonomy and bureaucratic autonomy, see William D. Adler, “State Capacity and Bureaucratic Autonomy in the Early United States: The Case of the Army Corps of Topographical Engineers,” *Studies in American Political Development* 26, no. 2 (2012): 107–24; Harry Blain, “No Gestapo: J. Edgar Hoover’s World-Wide Intelligence Service and the Limits of Bureaucratic Autonomy in the National Security State,” *Studies in American Political Development* 35, no. 2 (2021): 214–22; Daniel P. Carpenter, *The Forging of Bureaucratic Autonomy: Reputations, Networks, and Policy Innovation in Executive Agencies, 1862–1928* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001); David F. Ericson, “The United States Military, State Development, and Slavery in the Early Republic,” *Studies in American Political Development* 31, no. 1 (2017): 130–48; Sam Lebovic, “No Right to Leave the Nation: The Politics of Passport Denial and the Rise of the National Security State,” *Studies in American Political Development* 34, no. 1 (2020): 170–93.

²³Suzanne Mettler and Richard Valelly, “Introduction: The Distinctiveness and Necessity of American Political Development,” in *The Oxford Handbook of American Political Development*, ed. Richard Valelly, Suzanne Mettler, and Robert Lieberman (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 7.

²⁴*Ibid.*, 7–8.

²⁵Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995), 43.

capitalism did not just rise out of feudalism. Instead, the development of the European ancien regime state form was central to the process.²⁶ In other words, it was this political form that made it possible for social relations below to change. While Gerstenberger’s case study focuses on England and France, the question she poses raises a central concern for U.S. history as well: what was the role of the state in the rise of American capitalism? How did the form of state shape social relationships toward a more capitalist direction?

In the American case, this question has been taken up by Marxist scholars Kulikoff and Post. Kulikoff argues that “the American Revolution can be dubbed a bourgeois revolution because its dominant ideology meshed with bourgeois ideals, and the contingencies of war and state formation accelerated capitalist development.”²⁷ Kulikoff theorizes the revolution and after from a consequentialist perspective.²⁸ In this respect, a bourgeois revolution is not necessarily one in which a capitalist class leads the revolution or instrumentally builds a new state. Rather, it means that the long-term consequences of the revolution tended to have the effect of leading to the development of capitalism as the dominant mode of production within a given social formation. And Post argues, “in the US, however, class-conflicts during the post-revolutionary period created a very different type of state – one committed to and capable of enforcing legal claims on landed property in the countryside.”²⁹ For the author, “the new state-institutions allowed merchants and land-speculators to defeat independent household-producers in the cycle of class-struggles of the 1780s and 1790s.”³⁰

Yet, first, neither author details the Constitutional Convention. A historical materialist analysis of the creation of the U.S. Constitution remains undeveloped. And second, both authors also argue that plantation slavery was a noncapitalist mode of production, which precludes analyzing the extent to which the new state reinforced and supported slave capitalism.

Recent work in the “new” history of capitalism has challenged the idea of plantation slavery as noncapitalist. This work has shown that plantation slavery was a dynamic, expanding, profit-oriented, and, of course, violent and exploitative system of the mass production of goods such as cotton for the world market. Under plantation slavery, though, it is not just the workers’ labor power and labor time that is purchased, but the entirety of the workers themselves.³¹ In this sense, if the general tendency of capitalism is to commodify and marketize all aspects of social and political life, so racialized plantation slavery was in some respects a uniquely pure form of capitalism, mediated by a specific Southern culture with values of honor, masculinity, and patriarchy. This raises questions for a historical materialist conception of the state. If plantation slavery was capitalist, an analysis of state formation should show how the class interests of slave owners were built into the “institutional materiality” of the state.

The United States would support the institution of capitalist plantation slavery by giving slaveholders representation in the state and by creating laws and institutions that would protect slave-owning capitalists. The power of master over slave was

²⁶Gerstenberger, *Impersonal Power*, 17.

²⁷Kulikoff, *The Agrarian Origins of American Capitalism*, 124.

²⁸For the most comprehensive discussion of consequentialism, see Neil Davidson, *How Revolutionary Were the Bourgeois Revolutions?* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2012).

²⁹Post, *The American Road to Capitalism*, 188.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 190.

³¹Parisot, *How America Became Capitalist*, 112–24.

certainly personal, although slave owners also hired managers to control and enact violence against their property to enforce work discipline and quell resistance. But this power was made possible by a broader legal and state architecture that supported it. The rest of the article will ask, How was this built? To what extent was the U.S. federal government created as a “capitalist state”?

2. Was the United States Capitalist in the 1780s?

In the 1980s and 1990s, an outpouring of literature argued, in many variations, that the United States was not born capitalist. Rather, focusing on the North, scholars showed that the United States went through a transition to capitalism in which farmers and artisans were dispossessed of their means of production and a mass proletariat was formed.

This perspective has been criticized by Woody Holton, who has argued that “in the search for a useable past, many Marxist scholars have turned ordinary Americans of this era into protosocialists.”³² Instead, for Holton, “far from fitting the Marxist caricature of farmers fighting a rearguard defense against the encroachment of bourgeois social relations, taxpayer advocates often employed rhetoric that was aggressively pro-market.”³³

Holton is partly right: most rural American farmers were not anti-market. But just because they were not against *some* degree of market interaction does not mean they were capitalist either. Scholars such as Christopher Clark, whom Holton directly criticizes, were not arguing that farmers were “protosocialist.” Rather, Clark specifically argues that his interpretation finds a balance between “market” and “social” interpretations of the rise of American capitalism from the late eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century.³⁴ In other words, depending on location, time, and context, farmers had different levels of integration with markets. But market exchange was not always *capitalist* exchange. Farmers who owned their own land and means of production and produced partly to take care of household needs, and partly to obtain some goods on the market (sometimes through barter, sometimes with money) were not capitalists, nor were they “protosocialist.” Post has distinguished these relationships as a transition from “independent household production” to “petty commodity production.”³⁵ Farmers in the American Northeast, over many decades, slowly became more incorporated into markets, but even in the mid-1800s, they still often owned their own means of production as petty commodity producers.

And while Holton has done admirable research—perhaps the closest recent work to problematizing what this article suggests—and written specifically about “the capitalist constitution,” because of a lack of engagement with the relationship between mode of production and state form, so his approach is problematic. The history of capitalism, from this angle, becomes a history of commerce, finance, and politics, but the history of capitalism as a history of a revolution in social life becomes hollowed out, as his focus is not the mode of production but the way the Constitution created a country safe for investors.³⁶

³²Woody Holton, “Primitive Accumulation,” *Labor: Studies in Working Class History of the Americas* 6, no. 3 (2009): 33. Holton titles this article using Marx’s concept of “primitive accumulation,” although he does not actually engage with the vast literature on the topic, nor does he clarify what he means by the term besides a short mention toward the end of the article.

³³*Ibid.*, 4.

³⁴Clark, *The Roots of Rural Capitalism*, 13.

³⁵Post, *The American Road to Capitalism*, 58–60.

In other words, market integration is one key part of the history of capitalism, but a distinction needs to be made between market relations and capitalist relations. After all, markets have existed throughout world history, but capitalism as the dominant mode of social life has not. Small rural farm families—in some cases—may have been pro-market, but this did not necessarily make them pro-capitalist or anti-capitalist. One of the insights of these debates was to take notice of the fact that many rural farmers engaged in “safety first” or “composite” farming.³⁷ This meant farm families would produce partly for self-sufficiency and partly for the market. And their ideology was often built around the goal of obtaining “competency.” This did not mean living outside the market, nor did it mean being dependent upon it for all the necessities of life. Rather, it meant that a balance in which some market activity—from bartering with neighbors to purchasing select goods from the local country store—was part of life, but so was producing for subsistence.

This mode of production, with its gradations of degrees of market integration, makes it difficult to generalize about the state of U.S. capitalism in the post-Revolutionary War era. On one hand, some capitalist relations existed throughout the white-settler colony in both the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, from profit-driven plantation slavery, to a Northeastern fishing industry in which dispossessed workers operated under captains, to mining that used wage labor, and beyond.³⁸ Clark has recently argued that in the American countryside, there was no single path to capitalist development. It had “many faces.”³⁹ This was also shaped by geography, as those who were closer to waterways, merchants, and markets often participated in market activities to a higher degree. In the late 1700s, the newly formed United States was still as much a “society with capitalism” as it was a “capitalist society.”⁴⁰ In the North, the transition from rural independent production to petty commodity production was slowly in motion, as was the gradual process through which the artisan-journeyman-apprentice system began to incorporate wage labor and scattered putting-out relations of production formed unevenly.⁴¹ It would also be early to speak of large-scale industrialism: after all, the first significant industrial production in the North, the famous Slater Mill of Rhode Island, would not start operating until the 1790s.⁴² In the South, there existed social relations of production ranging from small farmers who owned no slaves to large plantations. And this complex and uneven set of articulating modes of production would shape the new state, which would create a structure to support capitalists, including merchants and financial and land speculators, as well as yeoman farmers and artisans, both classes in control of their own means of production.

The challenge of making sense of U.S. state formation in this complex class context is a question of layers of historical time. As Fernand Braudel discussed, history is more than a linear series of

³⁶Woody Holton, “The Capitalist Constitution,” in *American Capitalism: New Histories*, ed. Sven Beckert and Christine Desan (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018).

³⁷Richard Lyman Bushman, “Markets and Composite Farms in Early America,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 55, no. 3 (1998): 351–74.

³⁸Parisot, *How America Became Capitalist*, 20–37.

³⁹Clark, “The Many Faces of Rural Capitalism,” 11.

⁴⁰Parisot, *How America Became Capitalist*, 2.

⁴¹Bruce Laurie, *Artisans into Workers: Labor in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Noonday Press, 1989).

⁴²Jonathan Prude, *The Coming of Industrial Order: Town and Factory Life in Rural Massachusetts 1810–1860* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 40–42.

events. Of course, events matter, and individual personalities matter: history is, after all, contingent. But under the surface level of events, other structural processes may be at work.⁴³ The rise of capitalism is a process measurable in centuries, rather than years or decades. The transition to capitalism in the United States likely needs to be periodized as a two-and-a-half-century process, give or take. And by the late eighteenth century, while the speed at which capitalist relations were developing was starting to pick up, it is difficult to classify the United States, on the whole, as a “capitalist” or a non-“capitalist” country. Rather, a gradation of more capitalistic and less capitalistic relations existed at many scales with many gradations.

As the next section will demonstrate, I argue that the pressures of different relations of production played a role in shaping the institutional structure of the federal government. Focusing on the Constitutional Convention as a starting point, I argue that the new state would not be easy to classify as a purely capitalist state—although it did generally lean that way—as it also allowed space for noncapitalist relations to continue and even to have representation. On one hand, the framers worked to make sure yeoman and market-dependent, yet not exactly capitalist, artisans were represented. Independent artisans, in particular, were often big supporters of the Constitution, seen in their celebrations after it was created, as they viewed the new government as able to secure their economic futures.⁴⁴ Yet, on the other hand, aspects of the new state were capitalist. In particular, the federal government created the legal infrastructure to protect merchants and financial and land speculators, whose power would grow in the following decades. It also created a common market and trade policies that would support both the basic continued independent existence of the country, along with protecting the rising capitalist elite.⁴⁵ Capitalist slave owners would also be protected by the new government. And the creation of a standing army allowed the government to conquer land from indigenous peoples, as well as to punish Northern rural squatters who viewed land more as a use value than an exchange value. Overall, while various modes of production may have run through the state, the Convention worked to create what Antonio Gramsci called “hegemony.”⁴⁶ The interests of the elite would be presented as the universal interests of all social classes, under which consent for class domination could be forged, backed by military force and violence, if necessary.

3. The Constitutional Convention

Saying anything new about the personal politics of the framers or the day-to-day events of the Constitutional Convention is nearly impossible, given how many works have been published on the topic.⁴⁷ And this article does not claim to have any unique

⁴³Fernand Braudel, “History and the Social Sciences, The Longue Durée,” *Review: Fernand Braudel Center* 32, no. 2 (2009): 171–203.

⁴⁴Pauline Maier, *Ratification: The People Debate the Constitution, 1787–1788* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010).

⁴⁵While Kulikoff does not detail the Convention, he does mention that “the Revolution accelerated this incipient capitalism, throwing up in its wake a new class of financial and industrial capitalists. The diffusion of commodity markets continued apace, encouraged by new states and a federal Constitution that mandated a continental common market and protected private property.” Kulikoff, *The Agrarian Origins of American Capitalism*, 105.

⁴⁶Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, 55–60.

⁴⁷Some general overviews of the Convention that this author has found particularly useful include Richard Beeman, *Plain, Honest Men: The Making of the American Constitution* (New York: Random House, 2009); Catherine Drinker Bowen, *Miracle at Philadelphia: The Story of the Constitutional Convention May to September 1787*

insights into the events or personalities of representatives at the Convention. Nor does it present a comprehensive, event-by-event summary. However, I argue that what still needs to be developed is perspective: what is yet to be written is an account of the Convention, and the larger state-building process afterward, including the complex and long ratification process, that situates early American state building in the context of the development of U.S. capitalism. What is highlighted in the narrative that follows is certain class aspects of the Constitution-building process and the Convention debates in relationship to class and capitalism.

In many ways, the question of the Constitution and capitalism is the question that Charles Beard addressed in his famous book *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States*.⁴⁸ For Beard, the Constitution was ultimately a project built by the elite for the elite, specifically to protect their financial and speculative interests. This work was published over a century ago, of course, and has been criticized on many grounds, most systematically by Forrest McDonald, who showed that during the ratification process, support for and criticisms of the Constitution were not so easy to place into “class interest” boxes.⁴⁹ Holton has pointed out that while Beard was not completely wrong, as many of the Convention’s attendees did hold securities, “Beard’s interpretation does not explain the enthusiasm that the proposed national government inspired in men such as Madison and Alexander Hamilton...neither of whom was a major creditor and neither of whom owned government bonds.”⁵⁰

Recent works have shown, though, that the creation of the U.S. Constitution was an elitist project to protect against “excess democracy” from below. But the scholarship has *not* taken it one step further to ask, Where does the Constitution Convention fit, overall, into the history of the transition to capitalism? This is likely due to in part to the misrepresentation and dismissal, as noted earlier, from scholars such as Woody Holton, of the question of capitalist transition and a proper engagement with those debates. But without situating the Convention within the context of the rise of capitalism, “excess democracy” perspectives can only go so far in explaining the extent to which the Convention was a class project.

On May 29, with rules set and George Washington unanimously selected as head of the Convention, Edmund Randolph “commented on the difficulty of the crisis, and the necessity of preventing the fulfilment of the prophecies of the American downfall.”⁵¹ Randolph followed this by listing the “defects” of the existing system under the Articles of Confederation. The fragile alliance of states lacked the ability to prevent foreign invasion, could not manage tensions and issues between states, could not manage a central state budget organized around voluntary state requisitions that often did not come, could not override state law that might conflict with national interest, could not control rebellion, could

(New York: Little, Brown, 1986); David O. Stewart, *The Men Who Invented the Constitution: The Summer of 1787* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2008).

⁴⁸Charles A. Beard, *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States* (New York: Dover, 2004) (originally published 1913).

⁴⁹Forrest McDonald, *We the People: The Economic Origins of the Constitution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

⁵⁰Holton, *Unruly Americans*, 22.

⁵¹According to James Madison’s records, in Max Farrand, ed., *The Records of the Federal Convention Volume 1* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1911), 18. For an overview of Madison’s influence on the Constitution and Bill of Rights, see Shlomo Slonim, *The American Nation, 1787–1791: James Madison and the Federalist Revolution* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

not contain states printing paper money, and could not make sure treaties were not violated.⁵² On the whole, the United States was thought to be in a crisis of existence, as it lacked, for the most part, all the features a functioning government needed. The result was “anarchy from a laxity of government.”⁵³

He then introduced the famous Virginia Plan: a list of fifteen resolutions, masterminded by James Madison and other representatives who had met privately before the Convention’s quorum was achieved, that could serve as the basis for the new state. The overall function of the government would be “common defense, security of liberty and general welfare.”⁵⁴ Participation in government representation would be based on either “quotas of contribution” or the “number of free inhabitants.” The legislature would consist of two branches. The first would be elected by the people, and the second branch chosen by the first. To avoid possible corruption, legislators would not be allowed to serve in other state-level positions while working as national representatives. Acts would be allowed to be introduced by either branch. Congressmen (given the patriarchy and racism at the time, it was not questioned that the government would be run by white men) would be paid a stipend during their time serving the country. The executive and judicial branches would be a check on the legislative. Those in the national judiciary would be chosen by legislators and hold office indefinitely based on “good behavior.” Laws would be created for the admission of new states. The federal government would guarantee the territorial power of each state. Rules would be created to allow for amendments to the new government. State governments would be bound by oath to support the central government. And the new central government would be submitted to states and the people to “consider & decide” on it.

The Virginia Plan famously set the contours of debate of the whole Convention: from the counterattack of the New Jersey Plan to the Connecticut Compromise. And from the start, one central overriding concern was, as James McHenry noted about Randolph’s message, that “our chief danger arises from the democratic parts of our constitutions.”⁵⁵ McHenry continued, “none of the constitutions have provided sufficient checks against the democracy.”⁵⁶

But what were these democratic forces the framers were so scared of, and what was their relationship with capitalism? Take the case of Pennsylvania, which Terry Bouton has detailed, although not explicitly in terms of a transition to capitalism.⁵⁷ Bouton shows that in the period between the end of the Seven Years’ War and the American Revolution, Pennsylvania farmers—those independent household and petty commodity producers—lived in a state of crisis. They owed taxes to the government and to private storekeepers, linked to private merchants, linked to the Atlantic trade system, that they could not afford to pay, especially given the scarcity of paper money, made worse by Britain’s Currency Act, which prevented more colonial paper money from being printed. Artisans and merchants also struggled as, for instance, capitalist merchants laid off workers, who filled

the poorhouses.⁵⁸ In this context, some Pennsylvanians began to criticize both the British Empire and the local wealthy elite, whom they saw as part of the cause their struggles.⁵⁹ When it was time to create the state’s constitution, it was highly democratic and created space for noncapitalist yeoman farmers who owned their own means of production to have their interests represented. This entailed, for example, lowering property requirements so that any twenty-one-year-old man who had paid state or local taxes (about 90 percent of white men) could vote.⁶⁰

But for the framers of the U.S. Constitution, too much democracy would lead to instability and anarchy. The poor and middling classes were too unstable, too easily swayed by figures such as Massachusetts’s Daniel Shays, who could incite rebellion and violence. Instead, many believed in the idea of a “natural aristocracy”—that because of natural differences, some people were smarter and superior to others, and these people tended to rise to the top of society. Wealth was often a sign of their superiority.⁶¹ While yeoman farmers and poor workers and artisans should have *some* say in the federal government—after all, the framers did agree to the radical idea of government based on consent—their power needed to be controlled and limited.

Tension between more capitalist interests supporting the Constitution and less capitalist interests open to challenging it would also occur during the ratification process as states—most importantly, North Carolina and Rhode Island—were slowly pushed into joining the United States. Rhode Island, the pariah repeatedly mentioned during the Constitutional Convention, was in 1787 in the midst of pursuing a debt relief program for small farmers, against the will of the state’s merchant capitalist class. During the Revolutionary War, small farmers increased market production by producing food for the war effort and expanded production by buying more land on credit. After the war, “the market for these crops disappeared as the armies left the state, but the farmers’ debts did not disappear, and the farmers faced bankruptcy and foreclosure proceedings.”⁶² The state was divided by two political parties: the Mercantile Party, comprising the coastal merchants and creditors, and the Country Party, whose agenda was organized around printing money to relieve economically distressed indebted petty commodity producing farmers.⁶³ At the Constitutional Convention, the fact that a state government supported non-/less capitalist farmers over creditors and capitalists who “justly” deserved to be paid back fully outraged many of the framers of the Constitution. One central concern at the Convention would be preventing states from printing money for debt relief purposes: a class policy to favor capital over yeoman.⁶⁴

North Carolina, a state that would go on to resist ratification until it became the twelfth state to do so, was also a state in which the dominant mode of production was not exactly capitalist. With a population of 400,000, it was a large state, but it was

⁵⁸Ibid., 16–30.

⁵⁹Ibid., 28–29.

⁶⁰Ibid., 53.

⁶¹Paul D. Ellenbogen, “Another Explanation for the Senate: The Anti-Federalists, John Adams, and the Natural Aristocracy,” *Polity* 29, no. 2 (1996).

⁶²John P. Kaminski, “Rhode Island: Protecting State Interests,” in *Ratifying the Constitution*, ed. Michael Allen Gillespie and Michael Lienesch (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1989), 369.

⁶³Ibid., 370–71.

⁶⁴This is not to say that *all* small farmers supported printing money by states for debt relief purposes—many did not—only that this was a policy some states pursued that primarily benefited farmers at the expense of speculators who hoped to profit from speculation on securities.

⁵²Madison’s notes, in Farrand, *The Records of the Federal Convention Volume I*, 18–19.

⁵³Madison’s notes, *Ibid.*, 19. The best overview of the process leading up to the Convention written in recent years is George William Van Cleve, *We Have Not a Government: The Articles of Confederation and the Road to the Constitution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017).

⁵⁴Madison’s notes, in Farrand, *The Records of the Federal Convention Volume I*, 20.

⁵⁵James McHenry’s notes, *ibid.*, 26.

⁵⁶McHenry’s notes, *ibid.*, 27.

⁵⁷Bouton, *Taming Democracy*.

also “a land of small farmers.”⁶⁵ In the territory, “small-scale subsistence farmers found a haven in North Carolina, while larger landholders, along with those engaged in business and the professions, discovered the going particularly rough.”⁶⁶ And while the lines were not entirely clear-cut, most leading Federalist politicians were large landowners and people of high status, while Anti-Federalist politicians were more popular with small farmers.⁶⁷ In states such as Rhode Island and North Carolina, those democratic forces opposed to the Constitution tended to be yeoman farmers, while those in support were often from the more capitalist-oriented classes.

As the Convention proceeded, then, the question underlying some of the issues at hand was how to build a state that would support the interests of merchants, speculators, and capitalists in a way that brought the lower and middling classes into the system but limited their power as so they could not challenge the power of the financial and merchant elite.

4. Class and Institutions of Governance

Early in the Convention, one central way the question of class emerged was in debates over the institutional form of the state, especially its heart: Congress. But class would shape, or overdetermine, practically all aspects of the Convention. This was also due to the class composition of the framers. On one hand, the middling, property-owning farmer population was the majority voting population. On the other, most of the framers were “gentlemen revolutionaries.”⁶⁸ And their class positions shaped their ideas. As Richard Beeman reminds us, those who gathered were the elite. At a time when it was rare to go to school, out of fifty-five, twenty-nine had college degrees and twelve had done postgraduate study. Many of the framers practiced law, many had high-up positions in the military during the Revolutionary War, and “fourteen of the delegates were merchants, three made their primary income through manufacturing, and ten were involved to some degree in the world of banking and finance.”⁶⁹ Many were involved in land speculation, owned slaves, and, like Abigail and John Adams (who was not present at the Convention), were financiers who had purchased war debts and government bonds they wanted to make sure were paid back.⁷⁰ This is complicated by the fact that “the task of identifying any one delegate with a specific set of economic interests is not an easy one. The Founding Fathers lived in an age in which many men pursued multiple careers simultaneously, or, conversely, in which some gentlemen may not have felt any need to engage in the grubby pursuits of the marketplace.”⁷¹ In other words, it was rare for one person to pursue a single profession, such as an investment banker or an industrial capitalist, yet many of the framers engaged in capitalist activity. Additionally, as the country was still going through a transition to capitalism, the legacy of the idea of merchants as lower in status than the gentlemen elite who did not have to engage in market relations may have persisted to some extent.

⁶⁵Michael Lienesch, “North Carolina: Preserving Rights,” in Gillespie and Lienesch, *Ratifying the Constitution*, 345.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, 346.

⁶⁷*Ibid.*, 348.

⁶⁸Tom Cutterham, *Gentlemen Revolutionaries: Power and Justice in the New American Republic* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017).

⁶⁹Beeman, *Plain, Honest Men*, 66.

⁷⁰Holton, *Unruly Americans*, 33–38.

⁷¹Beeman, *Plain, Honest Men*, 66.

After the Convention began, the class politics of institutions emerged, for instance, in the question of who would vote for those who would serve in the federal legislature. On June 6, Charles Pinckney made a motion “that the first branch of the national Legislature be elected by the State Legislatures, and not by the people.”⁷² He argued that “the people were less fit judges” and that state governments would be more likely to support ratification if they had this power. Elbridge Gerry also commented that, as seen in the Massachusetts state government, “the worst men get into the legislature.”⁷³ He agreed that one of the two branches should be chosen by the popular will to inspire confidence. But he also suggested, for the second, that it should not be state legislatures that chose, but people nominated in districts, “out of whom the State Legislatures shd. make the appointment.”⁷⁴

Debate on this subject continued for some time. In this context, James Madison stepped in. He was often the framer with the most sophisticated—at the time—class analysis, and he was very aware that they were creating a state led by an elite but based on popular consent. He started by agreeing that one branch of government should be elected by the people. This would make sure they chose representatives they supported, as well as avoid problems raised by the power of state governments. Democracy, for Madison, did have “inconveniences.” The challenge was to craft a state that had democratic elements, but within controlled limits.

The question of democracy and its limits was directly tied to the question of social class. For Madison, “All civilized Societies would be divided into different Sects, Factions, & interests, as they happened to consist of rich & poor, debtors & creditors, the landed the manufacturing, the commercial interests, the inhabitants of this district, or that district, the followers of this political leader or that political leader, the disciples of this religious sect or that religious sect.”⁷⁵ The challenge was that the majority tend to oppress the minority, and if they had too much power, class interests would not be balanced. His terms “majority” and “minority” are also class terms: for example, merchants were a “minority” who could possibly have their interests overridden by other classes, given the size of their population compared with society as a whole. The role of the state for Madison was to manage these class tensions and different class interests. The state legislatures, and the state overall, he argued, needed to be designed in a way to prevent these tensions from turning into something larger: “In a Republican Govt. the Majority if united have always an opportunity. The only remedy is to enlarge the sphere, & thereby divide the community into so great a number of interests & parties, that in the 1st. place a majority will not be likely at the same moment to have a common interest separate from that of the whole or of the minority; and in the 2d. place, that in case they shd. have such an interest, they may not be apt to unite in the pursuit of it.”⁷⁶

In other words, Madison’s goal in framing the state was to establish a hegemonic position between the upper and lower classes in a way that allowed enough democracy for the classes below to consent to the rule of the central state, while giving space for the elite to control the reins of the state. This, he thought, was the best way to build a state that could manage an unequal

⁷²Madison’s notes, in Farrand, *The Records of the Federal Convention Volume I*, 132.

⁷³Madison’s notes, *Ibid.*, 132.

⁷⁴Madison’s notes, *Ibid.*, 132.

⁷⁵Madison’s notes, *Ibid.*, 135.

⁷⁶Madison’s notes, *Ibid.*, 136.

class society. He wanted to create a state with “relative autonomy”: one that was structured to protect the property and interests of the wealthy and powerful—a supposedly inevitable part of modern civilization—while at the same time give all interests enough representation to consent to governance. This would entail, for example, the creation of a strong Senate, which Madison saw as a “check” on democracy.⁷⁷ In this light, the question of the balance of the three branches of government was also a question of class balance. The legislature, driven partly by the people, might try to push policies that the elite classes might see as going against their interests or overextending their prerogative. But by creating a national legal system essentially standing above all, presented as unbiased or legitimate, the extent to which the entire legal structure would be structurally designed to support certain powerful class interests above others would not be questioned.

As class continued to shape the debates, the New Jersey Plan was not only about state size, but what *sort* of class state was being built. John Dickinson, for example, “wished the Senate to consist of the most distinguished characters, distinguished for their rank in life and their weight of property, and bearing as strong a likeness to the British House of Lords as possible; and he thought such characters more likely to be selected by the State Legislatures, than in any other mode.”⁷⁸ But the New Jersey Plan proposed a single house instead of two: something the state government of Pennsylvania, often said to be the most democratic state government, had. This plan also, of course, suggested representation based on states, rather than the population as a whole. This was sometimes posed as a class question. For instance, William Paterson asked, “What, pray, is intended by a proportional representation? Is property to be considered as part of it? Is a man, for example, possessing a property of £4000 to have 40 votes to one possessing only £100? This has been asserted on a former occasion.”⁷⁹ Paterson, who called Congress “the sun of our political World,”⁸⁰ spoke against the idea that larger states contribute more tax money and therefore should have more representation. He argued that “a rich State and poor State in same Relation as a rich individual and a poor one. 2. For the Sake of preserving the Liberty of the others 3. Wealth will have its Influence.”⁸¹ If wealth was to have power over politics, as was inevitably the case in a class society, it would be those wealthy people in the big states that would have the most power in the federal government, and from this perspective even those wealthy people in small states would find their influence underrepresented in the Virginia Plan.

In the lead-up to the Connecticut Compromise, the question of social class would also shape the debates. On June 25, for instance, Charles Pinckney began his speech with a reexamination of the social structure of the country. Pinckney’s analysis of the class structure suggested that he, like Madison and others, was aware of the challenge of creating a state that would have a class basis and would act, in turn, to represent or support specific class interests. He did not oppose those wealthy merchants and professional men, many of whom were delegates to the Convention. His goal was to build a state in which these codependent class interests could be balanced toward a common, general

interest and build a government “best suited” to this class structure.⁸²

The day after Pinckney presented his class analysis, on June 26, Madison presented a class perspective of his own. In his analysis, he advocated the creation of a government that would limit the “fickleness and passion”⁸³ of representatives, arguing, “A necessary fence agst. this danger would be to select a portion of enlightened citizens, whose limited number, and firmness might seasonably interpose agst. impetuous counsels.”⁸⁴ For Madison, this enlightened elite would likely come from particular social classes, as “in all civilized Countries the people fall into different classes havg. a real or supposed difference of interests. There will be creditors & debtors, farmers, merchts. & manufacturers. There will be particularly the distinction of rich & poor.”⁸⁵ He then stated that he agreed with Charles Pinckney that the United States did not have the sort of hereditary distinctions as in Europe, or as high a degree of wealth inequality. But, he argued, “We cannot however be regarded even at this time, as one homogeneous mass, in which every thing that affects a part will affect in the same manner the whole.”⁸⁶ As the population increased, Madison argued, the size of the lower classes would increase.⁸⁷

Madison was also concerned with lower-class and farmer rebellions: “No agrarian attempts have yet been made in this Country, but symptoms of a leveling spirit, as we have understood, have sufficiently appeared in a certain quarters to give notice of the future danger.”⁸⁸ Democracy would lead to instability, as “democratic communities may be unsteady, and be led to action by the impulse of the moment.”⁸⁹ And people of different social classes would also have different perspectives on politics, as their material conditions shaped their ideologies: “There will be debtors and creditors, and an unequal possession of property, and hence arises different views and different objects in government.”⁹⁰ The new state would have to find ways to incorporate classes with a potential “leveling spirit” in a way that still ultimately protected the interests of the supposedly inevitable upper-class minority. Thus, he asked, “How is this danger to be guarded agst. on republican principles? How is the danger in all cases of interested coalitions to oppress the minority to be guarded agst.?”⁹¹ Madison’s solution was to create a government that was “sufficiently respectable for its wisdom & virtue, to aid on such emergencies, the preponderance of justice by throwing its weight into that scale.”⁹² That virtue and wisdom would be embodied in the Senate, where those supposedly enlightened elite would sit for long terms, above the fickle and unstable movements of the people below.

5. Wealth and Class Representation

Struggling to find a compromise, the Convention finally formed a ten-person Grand Committee on July 2 and proceeded agree to

⁷⁷Robert Yates’s notes, *Ibid.*, 222.

⁷⁸Madison’s notes, *Ibid.*, 150.

⁷⁹Yates’s notes, *Ibid.*, 222, 182.

⁸⁰William Paterson’s notes, *Ibid.*, 276.

⁸¹Paterson’s notes, *Ibid.*, 275.

⁸²Madison’s notes, *Ibid.*, 402–3.

⁸³Madison’s notes, *Ibid.*, 422.

⁸⁴Madison’s notes, *Ibid.*

⁸⁵Madison’s notes, *Ibid.*

⁸⁶Madison’s notes, *Ibid.*

⁸⁷Madison’s notes, *Ibid.*

⁸⁸Madison’s notes, *Ibid.*, 422–23.

⁸⁹Yates’s notes, *Ibid.*, 430.

⁹⁰Yates’s notes, *Ibid.*, 431.

⁹¹Madison’s notes, *Ibid.*, 423.

⁹²Madison’s notes, *Ibid.*

reconvene on July 5.⁹³ The committee agreed to create one legislative house with one representative for every 40,000 people. States with fewer people would receive a single representative. And in the second house, states would have equal representation. On July 5, the Convention reconvened as a whole, and the committee submitted its report, which was read aloud and discussed. While some began to compromise over the state form, the elitist Gouverneur Morris still argued that “property ought to be taken into the estimate as well as the number of inhabitants.”⁹⁴ If property was “the main object of Govt.”⁹⁵ it should be reflected in the structure of the state. He also argued that Atlantic states should have more power, as newer states in the west would have less understanding of the overall public interest. John Rutledge agreed and put forward a motion “that the suffrages of the several States be regulated and proportioned according to the sums to be paid towards the general revenue by the inhabitants of each State respectively.”⁹⁶ But others did not agree, and George Mason noted that new states in the west should not be discriminated against.

As the debate over representation continued, some still argued that those states with more wealth should have more power in the government. Gerry argued “that Representation ought to be in the Combined ratio of numbers of Inhabitants and of wealth, and not of either singly.”⁹⁷ And Rufus King stated “that property was the primary object of Society; and that in fixing a ratio this ought not to be excluded from the estimate.”⁹⁸ Pierce Butler argued that basing representation on population size alone was faulty, and “He contended strenuously that property was the only just measure of representation. This was the great object of Govern: the great cause of war, the great means of carrying it on.”⁹⁹ But as the final result would show, others thought that basing representation on property and wealth would be impractical. Charles Pinckney thought that “the contributions of revenue including imports & exports, must be too changeable in their amount; too difficult to be adjusted; and too injurious to the non-commercial States. The number of inhabitants appeared to him the only just & practicable rule.”¹⁰⁰

Also discussed was the question of property and qualification for office. Given that the framers were creating a class state, and the executive was to be drawn from the higher classes, a resolution was put forward by George Mason that required “certain qualifications of landed property and citizenship in the United States for the Executive, the Judiciary, and the Members of both branches of the Legislature of the United States; and for disqualifying all such persons as are indebted to, or have unsettled accounts with the United States from being Members of either Branch of the national Legislature.”¹⁰¹

Debate ensued. Gouverneur Morris thought it wrong to punish people with unsettled accounts: “What will be done with those patriotic Citizens who have lent money, or services or property

to their Country, without having been yet able to obtain a liquidation of their claims? Are they to be excluded?”¹⁰² And Morris also worried that it “was but a scheme of the landed agst the monied interest.”¹⁰³ From another angle, King “observed that there might be great danger in requiring landed property as a qualification since it would exclude the monied interest, whose aids may be essential in particular emergencies to the public safety?”¹⁰⁴ In other words, the state was to be dependent, to some degree, on creditors for financing, especially in a crisis or emergency. The government needed to be in good favor with financiers who might potentially be in debt.

John Dickinson also expressed a criticism that the Constitution was becoming too elitist and opposed qualifications such as landed property. He “doubted the policy of interweaving into a Republican constitution a veneration for wealth. He had always understood that a veneration for poverty & virtue, were the objects of republican encouragement. It seemed improper that any man of merit should be subjected to disabilities in a Republic where merit was understood to form the great title to public trust, honors & rewards.”¹⁰⁵ Gerry responded by arguing that, given they were building a state with a goal of protecting propertied classes, “if property be one object of Government, provisions for securing it can not be improper.”¹⁰⁶

Afterward, Madison made a motion to cut the word “landed” for qualification purposes. But his reason for this was not about empowering the people, so much as a skepticism that the best people chosen would be those whose wealth came specifically from landownership. He said, “Landed possessions were no certain evidence of real wealth. Many enjoyed them to a great extent who were more in debt than they were worth. The unjust laws of the States had proceeded more from this class of men, than any others. It had often happened that men who had acquired landed property on credit, got into the Legislatures with a view of promoting an unjust protection agst. their Creditors.”¹⁰⁷ In other words, it would be possible that a person who had bought land on credit, and was technically landed, might try to get elected and use their position of political power for self-protection and self-gain.

Following Madison’s remarks, the Convention threw out the word “landed.” It then moved on to the question of debtors. Daniel Carroll successfully moved to strike the line about “unsettled accounts,” and Nathaniel Gorham backed him, stating “that it would put the commercial & manufacturing part of the people on a worse footing than others as they would be most likely to have dealings with the public.”¹⁰⁸ Luther Martin responded by saying that if “unsettled accounts” was taken out, but a term disqualifying “debtors” was left in, then those with unsettled accounts who, if settled, would be in debt would have a reason not to settle their accounts. And James Wilson argued that excluding debtors and those with unsettled accounts would “put too much power in the hands of the Auditors, who might combine with rivals in delaying settlements in order to prolong the disqualifications of particular men.”¹⁰⁹

⁹³Yates’s notes, *Ibid.*, 520. For a broader analysis of the role of committees at the Convention, see John R. Vile, “The Critical Role of Committees at the U.S. Constitutional Convention of 1787,” *American Journal of Legal History* 48, no. 2 (2006): 147–76.

⁹⁴Madison’s notes, *Ibid.*, 533.

⁹⁵Madison’s notes, *Ibid.*

⁹⁶Madison’s notes, *Ibid.*, 534.

⁹⁷Madison’s notes, *Ibid.*, 541.

⁹⁸Madison’s notes, *Ibid.*

⁹⁹Madison’s notes, *Ibid.*, 542.

¹⁰⁰Madison’s notes, *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹Max Farrand, ed., *The Records of the Federal Convention Volume II* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1911), 116–117, and Madison’s notes, 121.

¹⁰²Madison’s notes, *Ibid.*, 121.

¹⁰³Madison’s notes, *Ibid.*, 122.

¹⁰⁴Madison’s notes, *Ibid.*, 123.

¹⁰⁵Madison’s notes, *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶Madison’s notes, *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷Madison’s notes, *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸Madison’s notes, *Ibid.*, 125.

¹⁰⁹Madison’s notes, *Ibid.*

Later, on August 10, the Convention returned to the question of property requirements to run for legislature. Charles Pinckney stated that he worried the committee that was supposed to set property requirement rules for politicians instead seemed to leave it to the legislatures. The problem was that if “it be left on this footing, the first Legislature will meet without any particular qualifications of property; and if it should happen to consist of rich men they might fix such qualifications as may be too favorable to the rich; if of poor men, an opposite extreme might be run into.”¹¹⁰ To counteract this potential problem, it would be necessary for some federal regulations on property requirements for representation to be set in a way that did not give all power to the wealthy, nor too much power to the lower and middle classes. He even went so far as to suggest, “Were he to fix the quantum of property which should be required, he should not think of less than one hundred thousand dollars for the President, half of that sum for each of the Judges, and in like proportion for the members of the Natl. Legislature.”¹¹¹ But he also stated, “He would however leave the sums blank. His motion was that the President of the U. S. the Judges, and members of the Legislature should be required to swear that they were respectively possessed of a clear unincumbered Estate to the amount of - in the case of the President, &c &c-.”¹¹²

Others, including Rutledge, supported this, while Oliver Ellsworth argued it would be too complicated: “The different circumstances of different parts of the U. S. and the probable difference between the present and future circumstances of the whole, render it improper to have either uniform or fixed qualifications. Make them so high as to be useful in the S. States, and they will be inapplicable to the E. States.”¹¹³ And Benjamin Franklin “expressed his dislike of every thing that tended to debase the spirit of the common people. If honesty was often the companion of wealth, and if poverty was exposed to peculiar temptation, it was not less true that the possession of property increased the desire of more property - Some of the greatest rogues he was ever acquainted with, were the richest rogues.”¹¹⁴ Eventually it was agreed that property requirements would be left to states, which already all had them in place. In other words, the framers compromised on the basis that, as states already had laws in place to make sure those without wealth could not vote, and it would be highly impractical to calculate such a thing on a national scale, the issue could be left to states.

6. Property and Slavery

The question of wealth and representation was also shaped by the perennial overarching question of slavery. James Madison, for one, was well aware that tensions in building the new state were not just about, for instance, small and big states, but the sectional imbalance between Southern states with large-scale plantation slavery and Northern states where slavery still existed, but in different forms, where pressure to ban it had been rising: “It seemed now to be pretty well understood that the real difference of interests lay, not between the large & small but between the N. & Southn. States. The institution of slavery & its consequences formed the line of discrimination.”¹¹⁵ During the Convention, at times, Southerners

threatened to leave unless their class interests were protected.¹¹⁶ And while some delegates, such as William Paterson, hesitated about creating a new state that would protect slavery, Southern delegates, such as South Carolina’s Pierce Butler, had the opposite fear: “The security the Southn. States want is that their negroes may not be taken from them which some gentlemen within or without doors, have a very good mind to do.”¹¹⁷

The debate over slavery and representation had many sides. For instance, Gerry suggested that “the idea of property ought not to be the rule of representation. Blacks are property, and are used to the southward as horses and cattle to the northward; and why should their representation be increased to the southward on account of the number of slaves, than horses or oxen to the north?”¹¹⁸ Or, as Charles Pinckney argued, the dilemma of taxes and representation was that calculating based on land values was “impracticable,” and if taxes were based on commerce, they would be unevenly burdened upon more commercial states. While Pinckney believed that Black slaves should count as full persons for purposes of representation, he agreed to the Three-Fifths Compromise.¹¹⁹

Meanwhile, to take another position, William Paterson argued that if Black people were not to be treated as human, but as property, their lives should not count for representation at all, and that “he was also agst. such an indirect encouragement, of the slave trade; observing that Congs. in their act relating to the change of the art: of Confedn. had been ashamed to use the term ‘Slaves’ & had substituted a description.”¹²⁰ Madison responded, suggesting (among other proposals) that the first house could count representation based on free inhabitants, and the second house could include slaves as a measure.¹²¹ The result of all these discussions was the famous Three-Fifths Compromise, in which slaves would count as three-fifths of a person for representation in the house and for tax purposes.

While not *all* slavery was exactly “capitalist”—for instance, in some cases, yeoman patriarchal farm families included slaves in their mode of production—plantation slavery was a form of large-scale capitalism in which the commodities produced contained within them the labor power of the enslaved, and it was on this labor that the Southern capitalist class would reproduce itself.¹²² By the time of the Convention, slavery in Northern states had already—very gradually—begun to be phased out, although it would persist for some time.¹²³ But if the foundation of government was the protection of private property—including the right to use slave labor to produce wealth—then how would this play into the Constitution and class structure?

Returning to Poulantzas, “We have to grasp the mode in which the class struggle, and especially political struggle and domination, are inscribed in the institutional structure of the state (in our case, bourgeois domination in the material framework of

¹¹⁵Madison’s notes, *Ibid.*, 9–10.

¹¹⁶Klarman, *The Framers’ Coup*, 257–58.

¹¹⁷Madison’s notes, in Farrand, *The Records of the Federal Convention Volume 1*, 605.

¹¹⁸Yates’s notes, *Ibid.*, 205–6.

¹¹⁹Madison’s notes, *Ibid.*, 542.

¹²⁰Madison’s notes, *Ibid.*, 561.

¹²¹Madison’s notes, *Ibid.*, 562.

¹²²While contributions to the ‘new’ history of capitalism and The 1619 Project have highlighted that the Constitution protected and guaranteed slavery, perspectives around these have not always grappled with the complex social dynamics of slavery outside of plantation slavery and the question of slavery and the articulation of modes of production in the transition to capitalism. See: Parisot, *How America Became Capitalist*, 112–29.

¹²³Julie Winch, *Between Slavery and Freedom: Free People of Color in America from Settlement to the Civil War* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 39–42.

¹¹⁰Madison’s notes, *Ibid.*, 248.

¹¹¹Madison’s notes, *Ibid.*

¹¹²Madison’s notes, *Ibid.*, 248–49.

¹¹³Madison’s notes, *Ibid.*, 249.

¹¹⁴Madison’s notes, *Ibid.*

the capitalist State); this must be done in such a way as to explain the differential forms and precise historical transformations of the State.¹²⁴ Part of this was explaining the political power of “fractions” of capital—those divisions within the capitalist class as a whole—often conceptualized (very generally) as industrial, commercial, and financial fractions of capital.¹²⁵ Different fractions of capital may push state policy in different ways and shape the institutional structure of the state toward their interests. In the case of the Constitutional Convention, while plantation slave owners like George Washington, who had invested in speculation in western lands, were not a pure fraction of capital, something that rarely if ever exists, they did tend to have a shared political interest in exerting slave power’s hold on the state. And the way slavery was legally supported by the Constitution would make sure that the interests of Southern capitalists would be protected.

In this sense, law and class were inseparable. Law and class power and practice may be conceptually distinct, but in this case, their relative autonomy had strong limits. The state and law that protected slavery was not an “instrument” of a particular class, but law and class were built into each other. State and law were not built as autonomous processes that might be influenced by “outside” forces. Rather, slave owners exerted their class influence directly upon the creation of the legal architecture and “institutional materiality” of the state. Their class interests, in other words, became directly embedded in the state.¹²⁶

In addition to representation, the overarching question regarding slavery at the Convention was not, say, abolition. Even those uncomfortable with slavery thought this unrealistic and, besides, twenty-five of the delegates were slave owners themselves.¹²⁷ Rather, it was how to manage the question of empire building and westward expansion in the context of slavery. Even those at the Convention who had hesitations about slavery knew that it would be impossible to ratify the Constitution if it overly constricted slavery, and they were often more worried about the threat of a supposedly racially inferior Black population who would be freed than the persistence of slavery itself.¹²⁸ And Southerners such as Charles Pinckney pushed for the new Constitution to protect slavery. Regarding the slave trade, which even many Southerners considered terrible, for Charles Pinckney, South Carolina and Georgia were more dependent upon the slave trade than Virginia, which would benefit more from the value of banning the international slave trade, and disadvantage South Carolina and Georgia. On a personal level, “if the S. States were let alone they will probably of themselves stop importations. He wd. himself as a Citizen of S. Carolina vote for it.”¹²⁹ Thus, while in the long run, Southern states may support outlawing the international slave trade, he believed that states would not ratify the Constitution if the slave trade ban was included. Thus, “He contended that the importation of slaves would be for the interest of the whole Union. The more slaves, the more produce to employ the carrying trade; The more

consumption also, and the more of this, the more of revenue for the common treasury. He admitted it to be reasonable that slaves should be dutied like other imports, but should consider a rejection of the clause as an exclusion of S. Carola from the Union.”¹³⁰

The combination of the basis of the Constitution as the protection of private property—including enslaved people—and the political maneuvering of slave owners to have their class interests built into state and law, along with hesitations about the moral guilt that some of the framers had about slavery, led to a result in which the Constitution protected slavery, seen in the fugitive slave clause, Three-Fifths Compromise, and policy toward the international slave trade, even if the political arrangement that formed placed some limits on its expansion. This also led to slaves being termed “persons held to service or labor” in the fugitive slave clause, so that the word “slavery” was left out of the Constitution.¹³¹

Slavery would also be indirectly protected by the Northwest Ordinance, passed by the Confederation Congress during the time the Convention was occurring. By making slavery illegal in new states in the Northwest, this suggested that slavery would be able to expand in the Southwest, giving slave owners space they needed to keep the ever-expanding mode of production alive. When the issue came to debate, “those southern delegates present unanimously supported it. There was an implicit quid pro quo: Barring slavery north of the Ohio River implied permitting it in the territories south of the river, which Congress later explicitly did. It is likely as well that some southern planters favored excluding slavery from the Northwest Territory to suppress economic competition.”¹³²

7. Conclusion

Article I, section 8 of the U.S. Constitution would lay out many of the general functions of the new federal state. These included the power to lay and collect taxes and generate revenue from an impost, borrow money, regulate commerce, establish naturalization and bankruptcy laws, coin and regulate the value of money, build post offices and roads, secure patents, create federal courts, punish offenses on the seas and “against the Law of Nations,” declare war, raise a federal army and navy, call forth militias to crush rebellion, control the territory where the federal seat of government would be, and make laws to enforce, protect, and execute the federal government’s powers.¹³³

These new powers would play a key role in the creation of a national state that would secure capitalist relations of production and support capitalist development in the long run. As Kulikoff notes, one key feature of the federal government would be the destruction of trade barriers between states as “the Constitution created a national common market.”¹³⁴ This allowed investment capital to flow through the country. And preventing states from printing money, along with a large increase in the number of

¹²⁴Poulantzas, *State, Power, Socialism*, 125.

¹²⁵Nicos Poulantzas, *Political Power and Social Classes* (New York: Verso, 1978), 84.

¹²⁶Although he tends to see the state as an instrument of the bourgeoisie, Pashukanis began to grasp this a century ago, noting that bourgeois law that presents itself as class neutral is deeply embedded with class relations and reproductive of class inequality. Evgeny Pashukanis, “The General Theory of Law and Marxism,” in *Selected Writings on Marxism and Law*, ed. P. Beirne and R. Sharlet (1980), accessed at the Marxist Internet Archive, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/pashukanis/1924/law/index.htm>.

¹²⁷Klarman, *The Framers’ Coup*, 262.

¹²⁸Ibid., 264.

¹²⁹Madison’s notes, in Farrand, *The Records of the Federal Convention Volume II*, 371.

¹³⁰Madison’s notes, Ibid., 371–72.

¹³¹Klarman, *The Framers’ Coup*, 265. Also see the discussion in George William Van Cleve, *A Slaveholders’ Union: Slavery, Politics, and the Constitution in the Early American Republic* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

¹³²Klarman, *The Framers’ Coup*, 296. See also Staughton Lynd, *Class Conflict, Slavery, and the United States Constitution* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 205–13.

¹³³*The Constitution of the United States*, U.S. National Archives, accessed December 20, 2022, <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/constitution-transcript>.

¹³⁴Kulikoff, *The Agrarian Origins of American Capitalism*, 107.

banks in the country, created a credit system conducive to capitalist investment, as opposed to supporting small farmers, as “Bankers, often former merchants or merchant farmers, became key figures in capitalist development. They helped finance early textile mills and canals; frequently lent money to merchants and manufactures; but less often granted mortgages to farmers.”¹³⁵

Creating a system to manage federal debt and secure both domestic and international investment would also be famously ensured by Alexander Hamilton’s machinations as George Washington’s Treasury Secretary. Hamilton, more than any other framer, seemed to understand the importance of debt financing to the federal state’s success, and he pushed for the First Bank of the United States to be formed.¹³⁶ Of course, the early “energetic” state constructed by the federalists was soon, to some degree, rolled back after Thomas Jefferson took power in the “Revolution of 1800.”¹³⁷ The result would mean, as Joyce Appleby mentions, that “when Jefferson came into the presidency in 1801, he worked swiftly to democratize Hamilton’s accomplishments, dismantling the Federalist fiscal program, reducing taxes, and cutting the size of the civil service. The United States got the best of two worlds with Hamilton’s and Jefferson’s economic programs.”¹³⁸ While Hamilton’s work secured capitalist investor confidence, Jefferson “distrusted financiers and wanted to liberate working-class white men from the condescension of their superiors. His belief in limiting government power also had roots in the slaveholders’ determination not to be harassed by the federal government.”¹³⁹

Overall, the Constitutional Convention created the outlines of a capitalist state, yet one not completely settled in time. Even after the Civil War, it would be hard to say that the capitalist transition was entirely “complete,” and the new government reflected this incompleteness. As Clark has argued, while capitalism spread

west, from the rise of large scale capitalist farming in the Great Plains and California, to mining in Appalachia, to the rise of a national livestock industry and development of industrial capitalism, and massive grants of land to railroad companies, the Homestead Act of 1862 also provided land to small farmers: “land grants to railroads between 1850 and 1871 totaled some 180 million acres; actual grants of Homestead land to claimants reached 80 million acres by 1900, of which at least 73 million acres went to bona fide settlers.”¹⁴⁰ If aspects of American capitalism developed as early as the colonial age of the 1600s, yet were not necessarily the dominant mode production for some time, it may not be possible to talk about the relative “completion” of U.S. capitalism’s transition until the later decades of the 1800s.

Somewhere in the middle sits the Constitutional Convention. On one hand, it did create the framework for a new imperial state that “sealed,” to use Perry Anderson’s term, capitalist class interests by representing them and creating the outline of an institutional framework that would structurally support capitalist development.¹⁴¹ On the other hand, it allowed enough space for social classes not fully “subsumed” by capital to continue. That being said, this mode of social life would gradually become more deeply emmeshed in market relations, decade after decade, and as land speculators were able to mobilize state power to crush squatters and rural rebellions. Ultimately, the Convention created the foundation of a new federal state that was internally shaped by contradictory noncapitalist and capitalist (or perhaps better stated as “less” capitalist and “more” capitalist relations) relations that, in the articulation of modes of production, would in the long run privilege those capitalist relations above all else.

Competing interests. The author declares none.

¹³⁵Ibid., 109.

¹³⁶David McNally, *Blood and Money: War, Slavery, Finance, and Empire* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2020), 185–86; Levy, *Ages of American Capitalism*, 68–77.

¹³⁷James J. Horn, Jan Ellen Lewis, and Peter S. Onuf, eds., *The Revolution of 1800: Democracy, Race, and the New Republic* (Charlottesville: University of Press Virginia, 2002).

¹³⁸Joyce Appleby, *The Relentless Revolution: A History of Capitalism* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2010), 176.

¹³⁹Ibid.

¹⁴⁰Clark, “The Many Faces of Rural Capitalism,” 20.

¹⁴¹Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State*, 11.