

PLS 140
Introduction to
Comparative Politics

Week 3, Lecture 2:
State-making in Britain

Recap

- The importance of contingency in state-making and diffusion of the state as an organizational form

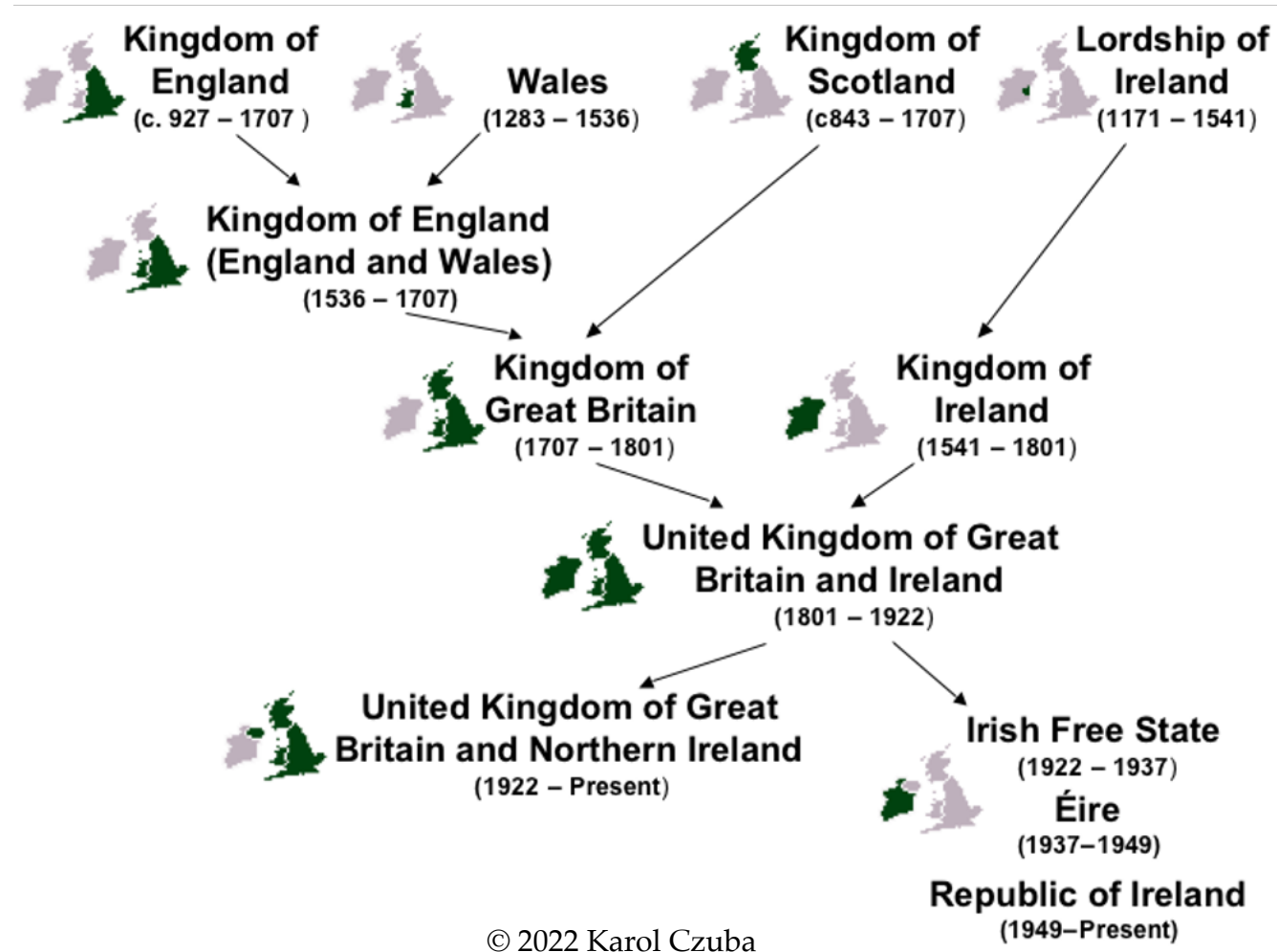
Plan for today

- The making of the British state:
 - Historical overview
 - Britain as a case study for the testing of theories of state-making

Countries of the United Kingdom



Britain's territorial evolution



The making of the British state

- Norman Conquest, 1066
- Elite replacement and state control
- Seeing like a state c. 1086: the Domesday Book
- Pipe Rolls and the Exchequer
- The creation of common law and diminution of regional loyalties



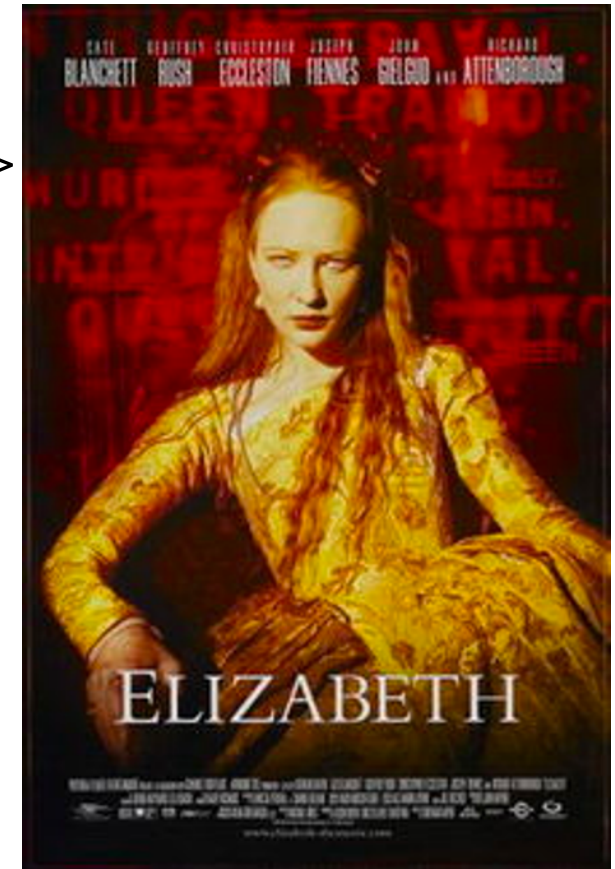
The making of the British state

- Reign by *vis et voluntas* ("force and will")
- Magna Carta, 1215, and the 'mother of all parliaments'



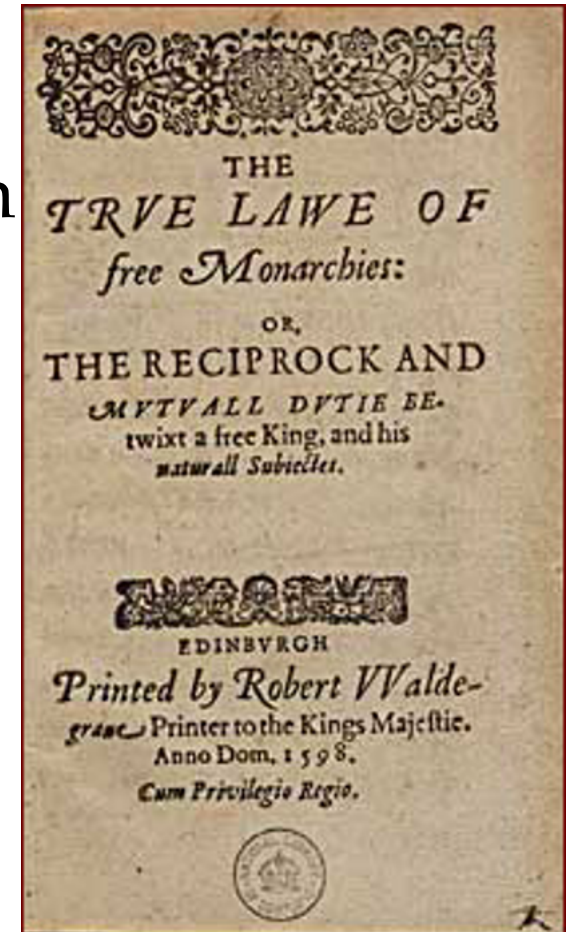
The making of the British state

- ‘Bastard feudalism’ and decentralization —>
- Attempted recentralization and deposition —>
- Wars of the Roses, 15th c. —>
- The Tudor state-making project, 15th-16th c.
- Act of Supremacy, 1534:
 - The monarch as ‘the only supreme head on Earth of the Church of England’
 - Suppression of the Monasteries



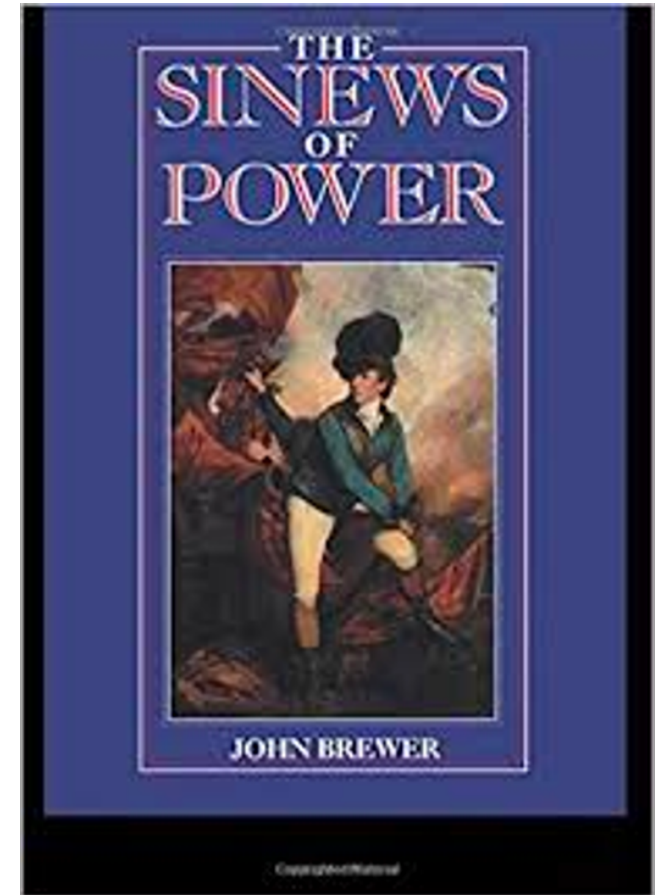
The making of the British state

- The Stuart kings and Union of the Crowns, 1603
- The divine right of kings and political absolutism
- English Civil War, 1642-1651 —> no governance without Parliament's consent
- Restoration, 1660 —> Glorious Revolution, 1688 —> parliamentary sovereignty and prime ministerial office
- Acts of Union, 1707 and 1800



The making of the British state

- Transformation and ever-increasing reach of the British government due to:
 - Radical increase in taxation
 - Development of public deficit finance (national debt)
 - Growth of public administration —>
- Creation of the ‘fiscal-military state’
 - Brewer, John. 2014. *The Sinews of Power: War, Money and the English State, 1688-1783*. London: Routledge.



The making of the British state—and empire



The making of the British state

- Irish independence and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
- Reemergence of regionalisms and devolution
- Accession to the European Union, 1973 and Brexit, 2016-2020



State-making and the British case

- Britain as a capitalized-coercion state
- British (absolutist) state as an instrument of class power
- Parliament as the locus of bargaining, making the establishment of open access order possible
- Institutional agility and administrative innovations
- Imperial success as a function of state weakness elsewhere and of fiscal development in Britain
- Diffusion of the British state model

Takeaways

- Analytical usefulness of informal consideration of the validity of theories and explanations
- Empirical evidence of the contingency of state-making