The essays in this book trace the development of Joel S. Migdal's “state-in-society” approach. His process-oriented analysis illuminates how power is exercised around the world, and how and when patterns of power change.

Despite the triumph of the concept of state in social science literature, actual states have demonstrated less coherence than their theoretical counterparts, and, despite their apparent resources, have had great difficulty in transforming public policies into successful social change. The state-in-society approach demonstrates both that states are fragmented and that they face a multitude of social organizations – families, clans, multinational corporations, domestic businesses, tribes, political parties, and patron-client dyads – that maintain and vie for the power to set the rules guiding people's behavior. These ongoing and overlapping struggles ally parts of the state with groups in society against other such coalitions. In the process, they determine how societies and states create and maintain distinct ways of structuring day-to-day life, including the nature of the rules that govern people's behavior, whom they benefit and whom they disadvantage, which sorts of elements unite people and which divide them, and what shared meanings people hold about their relations with others and their place in the world.

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State in Society

STUDYING HOW STATES AND SOCIETIES TRANSFORM AND CONSTITUTE ONE ANOTHER

JOEL S. MIGDAL
University of Washington
Dedicated to sisters and brothers

Ayala and Yudi
Penina and Mickey
Steve and Nancy

For their never-ending love and support
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Acknowledgments

The ideas in this book have been battered by merciless criticism from colleagues and students at Tel-Aviv University, Harvard University, and the University of Washington over the last three decades. Colleagues from other universities also weighed in at various times with their own brands of dissatisfaction. I suppose that only the hard-edged nature of their critiques forced me to work over these ideas countless times. The book, I think, is the better for it. A number of colleagues deserve special thanks: Myron Aronoff, Mickey Glazer, Penina Migdal Glazer, Reşat Kasaba, Atul Kohli, Ben Smith, Robert Vitalis, and Patricia Woods. Chandni Gupta, Kammerle Schneider, Tina Smith, Cathy Vuong, and Zoë Stemm provided selfless hours of research assistance and preparation time. And Jane Meyerding helped in final preparation of the manuscript. Support for work on the book came from the Robert F. Philip Professorship at the University of Washington. Nothing has been more important to me than the warm, supportive environment my sprawling clan has given me over the years. It is with warm affection that I dedicate this book to my sisters and brothers, by birth and by marriage (the latter known in our family as the zugekommener).