



The Rule of the Clan: What an Ancient Form of Social Organization Reveals About the Future of Individual Freedom

Mark S. Weiner

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A revealing look at the role kin-based societies have played throughout history and around the world

A lively, wide-ranging meditation on human development that offers surprising lessons for the future of modern individualism, *The Rule of the Clan* examines the constitutional principles and cultural institutions of kin-based societies, from medieval Iceland to modern Pakistan.

Mark S. Weiner, an expert in constitutional law and legal history, shows us that true individual freedom depends on the existence of a robust state dedicated to the public interest. In the absence of a healthy state, he explains, humans naturally tend to create legal structures centered not on individuals but rather on extended family groups. The modern liberal state makes individualism possible by keeping this powerful drive in check—and we ignore the continuing threat to liberal values and institutions at our peril. At the same time, for modern individualism to survive, liberals must also acknowledge the profound social and psychological benefits the rule of the clan provides and recognize the loss humanity sustains in its transition to modernity.

Masterfully argued and filled with rich historical detail, Weiner's investigation speaks both to modern liberal societies and to developing nations riven by "clannism," including Muslim societies in the wake of the Arab Spring.

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