

The State, State-Building, and State Weakness

Section 4

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Gov 20: Foundations of Comparative Politics

Fall 2025

1. Housekeeping
2. Discussion
3. Looking Ahead

Housekeeping

- Paper 1 due 7. October (questions released Monday)
- Final exam on 17. December at 2pm

1. Housekeeping
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Our Aims

- Differentiate the state from the regime and government
- Differentiate state capacity from state scope
- Understand the bellicist theory of state-building
- Explain why strong states have not appeared across the world

Literature Overview

- Structural functionalism and bringing the state back in

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- Structural functionalism and bringing the state back in
- The state as an independent actor that coordinates groups and impacts individuals
- But where does the state come from?
- Pushback: states without autonomy and without much power

The State and Bellicist Theory



Group Exercise

Assignment to one of the following groups:

1. Centeno
2. Herbst
3. Dincecco and Wang

Now discuss the following:

1. How do we explain state development (or the lack thereof) in your region?
2. What is the role of the international context?
3. Is this argument in agreement with or in opposition to Tilly?

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Looking Ahead

- Readings
- Paper