

T407016 // AUTUMN 2026 // UNIVERSITÉ DE GENÈVE

COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Session 02: States and state capacity.

THU 24 SEP 2026

UNI MAIL M2160

DR. JIHYE PARK

GROUP FORMATION

Your groups

GROUP 1

- Rahnia Sofia Kadri
- Aymeric Mathis
Louis Montaz-
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- Anouk Muriel Roth
- Dmitri Sergueev
- Xuan Tinh Catherine
Trac

GROUP 2

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- Léa Mosquera
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- Younes Reda
- Valentine Salihu

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- Leyla Sahin
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GROUP 5

- Alexander
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- Emanuela Lorenza
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- Mukund Saini
- Tezer Kemal Tezer
- Luana Wirz

PREVIOUSLY

Last week, this week

SESSION 01

- Comparison is a method of control
- Lijphart's four methods and six types of case study
- Most similar and most different designs
- Three traps. Selecting on the outcome, cases that copy each other, stretched concepts

SESSION 02

- Where states come from, with Tilly on war, taxes and protection
- How to measure what states can do, with Hanson and Sigman
- Two group exercises

Keep last week's tools at hand. **We will use them to argue with both readings.**

OPENER · ANY VOLUNTEERS?

One question before the reading

**What separates a state that taxes you
from a gang that sells you protection?**

01

What does each one give you in return?

02

Who sets the price, and can you refuse to pay?

03

At what point would you start calling the gang a government?

TILLY 1985

Protection, two ways

COMFORTING

A shelter against danger, such as a powerful friend, a large insurance policy or a sturdy roof.

OMINOUS

A racket in which a local strongman makes merchants pay to avoid damage he himself threatens to deliver.

"Someone who produces both the danger and, at a price, the shield against it is a racketeer."

When the threats a government guards against are imaginary or of its own making, **the government runs a protection racket.**

TILLY 1985 · VIOLENCE AND GOVERNMENT

From bandits to kings

Bandits and pirates



Tax collectors



Regional powerholders



Professional soldiers



Kings

BLURRED LINES

Kings commissioned privateers and hired bandits to raid their enemies. Demobilized troops became bandits and demobilized ships became pirates.

DISARMING THE GREAT

The Tudors broke up the lords' private armies and razed their fortresses. In France, Richelieu began the great disarmament in the 1620s.

INDIRECT RULE

No monarch could govern a large population by armed force alone. Rulers leaned on local magnates, who were also their likeliest rivals.

The line between legitimate and illegitimate violence **came clear only slowly**, as states made their armed forces unified and permanent.

TILLY 1985 · WHAT DO STATES DO?

Four uses of organized violence

01

Warmaking

AIM

Neutralize rivals
outside the territory

LEAVES

Armies and navies

02

Statemaking

AIM

Neutralize rivals inside
the territory

LEAVES

Surveillance and
control

03

Protection

AIM

Neutralize the enemies
of the rulers' clients

LEAVES

Courts and assemblies

04

Extraction

AIM

Acquire the means for
the other three

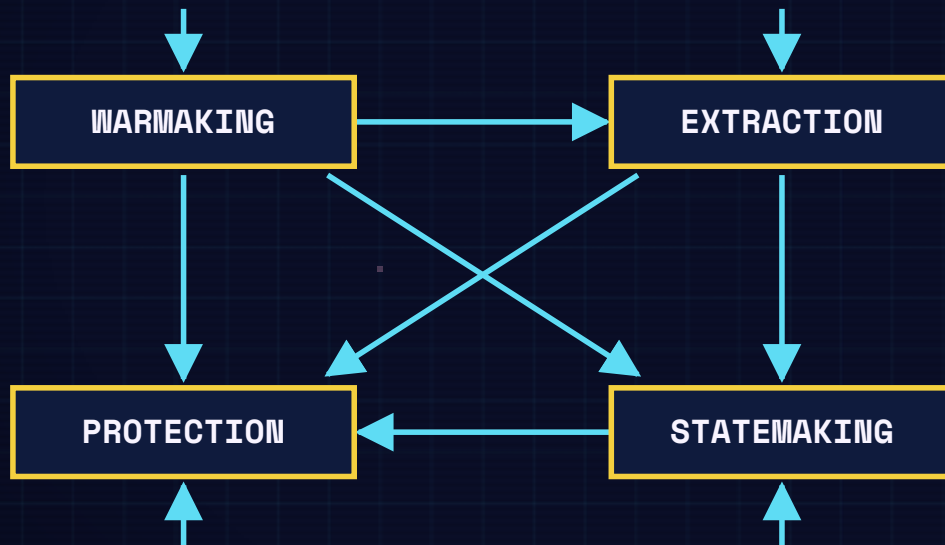
LEAVES

Fiscal and accounting
offices

Tilly's rule is that **the costlier the activity, the larger the organization it leaves behind.**

TILLY 1985

How war builds a state



- 01 A lord makes war well enough to dominate a substantial territory.
- 02 War needs men, arms, food and money, so he extracts them from the population.
- 03 Extraction means neutralizing local rivals and building tax offices, police and courts. That is statemaking.
- 04 Classes that lend money or help keep order receive protection in return.

National states grew as **a by-product of rulers' pursuit of war**, and none of those rulers foresaw it.

TILLY 1985 · LANE'S MODEL

Protection as a business

THE ARITHMETIC

Taxes collected 75

Cost of protection - 50

Tribute to the prince 25

A merchant who pays his prince 10 for protection, while foreign rivals pay theirs 15, earns a **protection rent** of 5.

IF THE GOVERNMENT IS
OWNED BY

ITS MANAGERS WILL

IT RESEMBLES

Citizens

Keep costs and tribute low

A Jeffersonian
democracy

A monarch

Maximize tribute

A petty despotism

The managers

Pay themselves well and
maximize tribute

A military junta

A dominant class

Tune tribute and protection rents
to that class

Tilly's addition

Swap princes for governments and the question stays current. **Who captures the surplus the state produces?**

War, debt and taxes

12.5%

Interest Francis I paid the merchants of Paris on 200,000 francs, borrowed in 1522 for his war against Charles V

18 years

Of royal revenue. France's war debt reached about 3 billion francs by Louis XIV's death in 1715

1689

England's national debt begins with William and Mary and grows with each major war

15 → 24%

British taxes as a share of national income during the Napoleonic Wars, almost triple the French level

Tilly borrows Peacock and Wiseman's ratchet effect. **Revenue raised for a war set a new floor once peace returned.**

TILLY 1985 · THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

States that got their armies elsewhere

DEPENDS ON EXPORTS FOR MILITARY RESOURCES

INDEPENDENT OF EXPORTS

MILITARY SUPPLIED
BY OTHER STATES

CLIENT STATES · HONDURAS

Follow signals from their patrons

CLONES · SOUTH KOREA

Especially vulnerable to military coups

MILITARY BUILT AT
HOME

MERCHANTS · IRAQ

Wax and wane with world markets for their exports

AUTONOMOUS · CHINA, SOUTH AFRICA

Resemble the old European states

European rulers built armies by bargaining with their subjects, and the bargains constrained them. **States that import their militaries skip that bargain.** The examples date from 1982.

GROUP EXERCISE 01

Argue with Tilly

SURVIVORS ONLY

Tilly notes that fewer states came out of each large war than went in. An account built on the survivors may be selecting on the outcome.

CASES THAT COPY

Rivals imitated the winners, as when Peter the Great rebuilt Russia on Dutch examples. How independent are these cases?

WHICH TYPE OF STUDY?

Tilly calls his essay history as a source of hypotheses. Where does that put it among Lijphart's six types?

"If summarizing European warmaking and statemaking is like skating on thin ice, extrapolating that summary to the contemporary world resembles walking on water."

HANSON AND SIGMAN 2021

The capacity to do what?

◀ NARROW

BROAD ▶

TOO NARROW

Stateness

Only the monopoly on the legitimate use of force. It misses much of what modern states are expected to do.

HANSON AND SIGMAN

Core functions

Defense against external threats, internal order, basic infrastructure for the economy, and revenue extraction.

TOO BROAD

Every Function

Justice, public services, economic management and more. It risks measuring political priorities instead of ability.

Capacity is kept apart from regime type and from policy choices. **A highly capable state can still choose to do little.**

HANSON AND SIGMAN 2021

Three dimensions

EXTRACTIVE

Raising revenue. It takes reach into the population, good records, trustworthy agents and enforcement.

MEASURED BY

Taxes as a share of GDP, income and trade taxes as shares of all taxes

COERCIVE

Holding enough force to defend borders, keep order and enforce the law across the territory.

MEASURED BY

Military spending and personnel, police, territory under state authority

ADMINISTRATIVE

Making policy, delivering services and regulating commerce through capable agents and reliable information.

MEASURED BY

Bureaucratic quality, census frequency, statistical capacity

Tilly's extraction and warmaking reappear here as **dimensions you can measure**.

Many indicators, one latent variable

Nobody can observe state capacity directly. A Bayesian latent variable model treats each indicator as a noisy reading of the same hidden quantity.

21

Indicators from many sources

163

Countries in a year, at most

1960-2015

Annual estimates

94,135

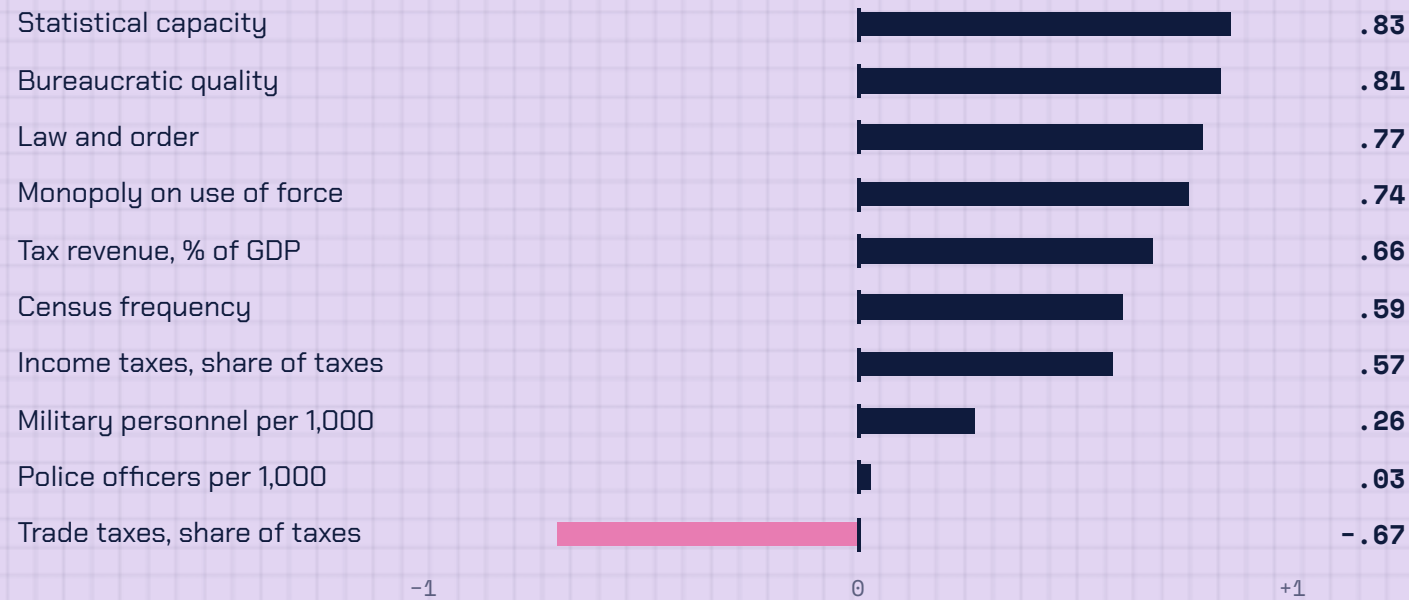
Data points in total



Models with two or three dimensions failed to converge. **Only one dimension held up**, which the authors read as the three being entwined in practice.

HANSON AND SIGMAN 2021 · TABLE 2

What moves with Capacity



TRADE TAXES

Customs duties are easy to collect at the border and need little administration. States that lean on them tend to score low.

HEAD COUNTS

Soldiers and police per person barely track Capacity. Weak states often expand their forces in response to weakness.

Does the measure work?

FACE VALIDITY

In 2015 Singapore ranks in the top 25, so the measure picks up more than democracy. Somalia, Yemen and the Central African Republic sit near the bottom.

CONVERGENT VALIDITY

Capacity correlates at .91 with the World Bank's government effectiveness index and at $-.88$ with the fragile states index.

DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY

Its correlation with log GDP per capita is .79. The two are close, and still distinct.

CONSTRUCT VALIDITY

Researchers sent undeliverable letters to 159 countries. One point more Capacity means about 21 percentage points more letters returned, and 69 days faster.

Capacity in 1960 also predicts 2010. **One point higher meant about 12 fewer infant deaths per 1,000 and 5.3 more years of life expectancy,** holding income, democracy and taxes constant.

HANSON AND SIGMAN 2021 · 1975 TO 2015

Who gained and who lost

ROSE THE MOST

Uganda

Bolivia

Rwanda

Lesotho

Nicaragua

FELL THE MOST

Somalia

Libya

Venezuela

Syria

Kuwait

Iraq

Most countries that scored high in 1975 still scored high in 2015, and Capacity rose in most countries.

In 1982 Tilly picked Iraq as his example of an oil-exporting merchant state. Does its fall bear out his warning?

WATCH OUT

Argue with the measure

ONE DIMENSION

Only the one-dimensional model converged. That fits dimensions that are entwined, and it also fits indicators too noisy to pull apart.

EXPERT RATINGS

Several indicators are expert scores. The authors concede that bureaucratic quality ratings may reflect analysts' views of economic outcomes.

NATIONAL AVERAGES

One score per country and year hides variation inside a state, such as a capital that works and a periphery that does not.

Measurement validity returns at the **27 October complement**.

COMPARE THE READINGS

Two ways to study the state

	TILLY 1985	HANSON AND SIGMAN 2021
Question	Where did national states come from?	How much capacity does each state have?
Cases	Early modern Europe, a handful of named states	Up to 163 countries a year, 1960 to 2015
Method	Comparative history that generates hypotheses	Statistical measurement with a latent variable
Evidence	"Few illustrations, and no evidence worthy of the name," in his own words	21 indicators and four kinds of validity test
Last week's axis	Depth	Breadth

Hanson and Sigman cite Tilly's 1990 book for the idea that **the dimensions of capacity grow together**. Their single dimension is one way to check it.

GROUP EXERCISE 02

A finance ministry sends your group one question

Our new trade agreement phases out most tariffs over ten years. Can the state replace the lost customs revenue?

COUNTRY X · STYLIZED PROFILE

Tax revenue	11% of GDP
Trade taxes	38% of taxes
Income taxes	14% of taxes
Last census	17 years ago
Territory under state authority	80%
Military spending	Rising after a border dispute

- 01 Rate the state's extractive, coercive and administrative capacity as low, medium or high, with one reason each.
- 02 Use Tilly. Where could new revenue come from, and whom would the state have to bargain with or coerce to get it?
- 03 Write a three-sentence memo that answers the ministry and names the one indicator you would watch over the ten years.

The profile is invented and describes no real country.

NEXT UP

Before Thursday 1 October

Week 03. Regimes and how we measure them.

READ

Munck, Gerardo L., and Jay Verkuilen. 2002.
"Conceptualizing and Measuring Democracy. Evaluating
Alternative Indices." *Comparative Political Studies* 35(1),
5-34.

READ

Levitsky, Steven, and Lucan A. Way. 2002. "The Rise of
Competitive Authoritarianism." *Journal of Democracy*
13(2), 51-65.



Thu 01 Oct

Quiz 1 opens the class

UNI MAIL @ R030



Tue 06 Oct

Week 4 class

M2170



Thu 08 Oct

No class

PROGRESS SAVED

QUESTIONS?

Office hours Thursdays 14:30 to 16:00 in M4328

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BEFORE YOU LEAVE



Rate each group member's participation in today's exercises. **Required before you leave the room.**