

DISCUSSION AGENDA

1. The Strategic Relational Approach

- What defines this approach?
- What is the real meaning of “strategic selectivity” of structures? How is this connected to agency? (Janaina, Benny)
- Why does Jessop prefer it? (Tamara)
- How would you operationalize it? (Pete)

2. Definition/concept of the state.

- *The state and power*: “the state cannot exercise power” but rather “its powers ...are activated”; Jessop’s critique of the use of the term “power” (Griffin, Loren, Kris)
- *State public/private boundaries*: how are these drawn? How does politicization/depolicitization extend/roll back boundaries? State and civil society: how connected/differentiated? (Sarah)
- *Legitimacy/state-idea* – the state “acting in the name of common interest or general will...” (Courtney, Tamara)
- *Capitalist state vs state in capitalist society* (Youbin); the formal account of the state vs “historic and agent-centered account” of the state (Masoud)
- *Generality of the four elements*: Jessop’s definition (p.49) doesn’t seem appropriate for many states in the world, e.g. in Africa. Is it really a concept of the *modern* state, or just the *western* state? (Kaan)
- *Levels of the state*: How should we think of U.S. states, towns, cities, etc. with respect to Jessop’s definition of the state? How does this relate to “Stateness” as a variable? (Aaron)

3. States and parties

- Do parties mediate between states and civil society or the state mediate between civil society and parties? (Kurt)
- Analysis of mass media and parties in modern democratic states. (Samina)

4. Methodological issue

- Real abstraction vs formal abstraction (Griffin)