

## POL 102

### STATE-BUILDING PROJECT

#### Assignment Overview

In this project, your primary task is to explore the critical role of the state in preventing violent conflicts and providing essential services to its citizens. This includes examining the characteristics of effective governance, evaluating different governance systems, and identifying challenges in state-building's initial stages. Your goal is to cultivate a nuanced understanding of the state's impact on society, especially in terms of its relationship with the population and links to the territory it controls.



Fig. 4. The conceptual map of state-building and peace – building. Barnes, Catherine 2009. *Renegotiating the political settlement in war-to-peace transitions*, London.

The first part of your journey involves examining how to rebuild the capacity of a failed state and reassert its monopoly over the legitimate use of violence within its borders. Picture yourselves as part of a think tank or consultancy, tasked with devising a detailed plan for revitalizing state institutions and increasing its state capacity. This plan should detail the necessary institutions and processes for a modern state to function efficiently, offering a clear, step-by-step roadmap for institutionalization. This phase emphasizes careful selection and sequencing of tasks. Instead of conceptualizing an ideal state structure, you're tasked with creating a detailed, actionable plan—akin to a contractor laying out each phase of construction, from foundational work to the finishing touches.

This assignment is designed as a group project, emphasizing collaboration and diverse perspectives in tackling a complex topic like state-building. Within each group, members will assume specific roles, each contributing uniquely to the project's success. These roles, detailed below, are crafted to ensure a well-rounded approach to research, analysis, and presentation of the findings and solutions.

#### Group Roles

##### Project Manager:

1. **Organizes** group meetings, moderates discussions, and keeps the group on task, redistributing the work when necessary.
  - Ensures the group is aware of time constraints and deadlines, making sure meetings start on time and assignments are submitted promptly.
2. **Evaluates** the process and the group members, sharing these evaluations with the professor and the rest of the class.
  - Maintains contact, promotes active participation, assesses interaction quality, and stimulates community cohesion.
3. **Observes** team dynamics and behavior, striving to create a harmonious and positive team atmosphere.

- Addresses questions like “Is everyone in the team participating?” and “Are we achieving the assignment goals by doing this?”
4. Encourages group members to think through their approaches and ideas, using probing questions to facilitate deeper thinking and group-wide consideration of ideas.
    - Facilitates knowledge transfer between groups to leverage collective expertise.

### **Recorder/Reporter:**

1. Takes notes summarizing team discussions and decisions and keeps all necessary records.
  - Manages meeting minutes, provides summaries of previous meetings, and keeps track of decisions.
2. Serves as the group spokesperson to the class or professor, summarizing the group’s activities and conclusions on workshop days.
  - Acts as the liaison between groups and between their group and the professor.
3. Takes the lead in preparing and conducting team presentations, ensuring clarity and coherence in conveying the group’s ideas.
  - Prepares necessary materials (e.g., handouts or PowerPoint presentations).
4. Acts as a mediator in case of conflicts within the team, promoting a positive and inclusive team atmosphere.
  - Assumes the role of any missing member and fills in wherever needed.

### **Country Expert:**

1. Gains expertise in the politics of the selected country or engages in world-building, developing histories, actors, motivations, and conflicts.
2. Finds, creates, or collects appropriate resources and shares them with the team.
  - Creates (or collects) information on the country, organizes (or creates) materials for presentation (e.g., map, flag, national anthem).
3. Raises counterarguments and constructive objections, introducing alternative solutions based on the country's characteristics.
  - Provides creative and imaginative solutions to complex problems, finding new perspectives/ideas to enhance discussions.
4. Takes on the role of quality control, ensuring that all reports and materials meet the required standards before submission.
  - Contributes to the development of a cohesive narrative in reports and presentations, tying together insights from both country and policy perspectives.

### **Policy Expert:**

1. Checks to ensure all group members understand the concepts and the group’s conclusions.
  - Provides information about how different institutions work and finds solutions for technical problems.
2. Conducts a comparative analysis of successful and unsuccessful state-building efforts to extract valuable lessons and insights for the group.
  - Encourages the group to consider long-term sustainability and adaptability of the proposed institutions, beyond the immediate state-building phase.

3. Pushes back when the team comes to a consensus too quickly, without considering a variety of options or points of view.
  - Ensures the group hears varied perspectives and does not avoid potentially rich areas of disagreement.
4. Creates a step-by-step guide to institution building and submits the group's plan in the form of a policy memorandum.
  - Ensures the group focuses on the most important issues and avoids getting caught up in details.

### **Workshop Format**

The first workshop, which takes place in class during class time, consists of three sessions and simulates the state-building process. It aims to promote collaboration across roles (project managers, reporters, policy experts, country experts) and groups to understand the complexities of establishing state institutions in conflict and post-conflict situations.

<b>Session 1:</b>	<b>Session 2:</b>	<b>Session 3:</b>
<p><b>Discussing Challenges and Raising Questions</b></p> <p><b>(10-15 mins)</b></p>	<p><b>Presenting and Critiquing</b></p> <p><b>(30-40 mins)</b></p>	<p><b>Problem-Solving and Debriefing</b></p> <p><b>(15-20 mins)</b></p>
<p>Members from different groups engage in role-specific discussions: project managers talk about resource allocation and timelines with their counterparts, policy experts share policy rationales with fellow experts, and so on, ensuring focused conversations within each specialized area.</p>	<p>Reporters share their groups' state-building strategies, outlining challenges and proposed solutions. Following these presentations, the audience is invited to provide feedback and ask questions.</p>	<p>Groups work together to develop and present solutions to challenges, mindful of potential unintended consequences. They actively seek collaboration opportunities and conclude with a debriefing session to reflect on their experiences and the outcomes of their strategies.</p>

### **Grading Rubric**

**Group Grade: Policy Memorandum (20%) → *evaluated by the professor***

- **Excellent:** Develops a comprehensive, well-structured policy memorandum that addresses all key aspects, demonstrates deep understanding, and provides innovative solutions.

- **Good:** Produces a solid policy memorandum that covers essential aspects, displays a good understanding, and offers effective solutions.
- **Satisfactory:** Creates a policy memorandum that addresses key aspects adequately, with some room for improvement in understanding or solutions.
- **Needs Improvement:** Develops a policy memorandum with limited (or too wide) coverage of key aspects, lacking depth in understanding or solutions.
- **Unsatisfactory:** Fails to produce a meaningful policy memorandum, or creates a document that does not fulfill the assignment guidelines.

**Group Grade: Presentation (60%) → *evaluated by the audience (including the professor)***

- **Excellent:** Delivers a compelling and well-organized presentation, effectively communicating key points, engaging the audience, and responding adeptly to questions. Creates visually appealing and highly informative materials (e.g., slides, handouts) that enhance the presentation and effectively convey complex information. Demonstrates exceptional audience engagement.
- **Good:** Presents information clearly and coherently, with good organization and engagement, and responds appropriately to questions. Develops visually appealing materials that support the presentation and convey information effectively. Engages the audience effectively.
- **Satisfactory:** Presents information adequately, with occasional lapses in clarity, organization, or engagement, and responds adequately to questions. Creates materials that are somewhat visually appealing and provide a satisfactory level of support to the presentation. Audience engagement is satisfactory.
- **Needs Improvement:** Presentation is somewhat unclear, lacks engagement, or has notable issues in conveying key information, and responses to questions are limited. Visual materials are limited in appeal or fail to effectively support the presentation. Audience engagement is somewhat lacking.
- **Unsatisfactory:** Presentation is confusing, disengaged, and fails to convey key information effectively, with inadequate responses to questions. Visual materials are unappealing, irrelevant, or detrimental to the presentation. Audience engagement is poor.

**Individual Grade: Contributions to the Group (20 %) → *evaluated by the project manager***

- **Excellent:** Demonstrates exceptional commitment to fulfilling assigned role, actively contributes to group efforts, and goes above and beyond assigned tasks to ensure group success.
- **Good:** Demonstrates effective individual responsibility, consistently fulfilling assigned tasks and contributing positively to group efforts.
- **Satisfactory:** Meets individual responsibilities adequately, with occasional lapses in consistency or depth of contribution to group efforts.
- **Needs Improvement:** Individual responsibility is somewhat lacking, with notable gaps in consistency or depth of contribution to group efforts.
- **Unsatisfactory:** Fails to fulfill assigned role effectively, negatively impacting the group's overall performance.