



CHAPTER 7

Institutions and States

Chapter 7 looks at institutions, particularly the state. An institution is defined as providing regular patterns of behaviour that give predictability to social life. Institutions involve both structures and agents which work to shape each other. The state, its capacities, and history are discussed. The chapter notes that the modern state is largely built upon the European or Westphalian state model which was then spread globally through colonialism. Modern states are defined by terms set forth in the Treaty of Montevideo, and are expected to perform a number of internal and external functions. The strength or weakness of a state is determined by how well these functions are executed. The chapter concludes by raising a number of questions about the democratic state. Is the accountability of the ruler to the citizens enough to ensure the success of the state, or is a democratic political culture also required?

Chapter Outline

- **Understanding Institutions: Informal and Formal**
- **States**
- **The Rise of the European State**
- **The Spread of the European State Model**
 - Colonialism
 - Spreading the Western Model
- **The Modern State**
 - Internal Functions
 - External Functions
 - Strong States and Weak States
- **The Democratic State**
- **Conclusion**

Key Terms

Anarchy	Empire	National interest
Balance of power	Federalism	Patrimonial states
Civil society	Illiberal democracy	Political culture
Colonialism	Institutions	Sovereignty
Consociational democracy	International society	Structuration
Developmental state	Liberal democracy	Totalitarianism

Discussion Questions

1. What are the differences among structure, structuration, and agency?
2. What is the advantage of classifying states as either strong or weak? Is there a disadvantage to doing so?
3. What are the origins of European state system? How did it become global?
4. Must a state be guided by liberal ideology in order to be strong? Why or why not?
5. What is the intended purpose of state sovereignty? Is it working?
6. What is the Peace of Westphalia and why is it significant?

Further Resources

- http://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th_century/westphal.asp
Full text of the Treaty of Westphalia (1648) from the Avalon Project
- <http://www.cfr.org/sovereignty/montevideo-convention-rights-duties-states/p15897>
Full text of the Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States from the Council on Foreign Relations
- <http://chnm.gmu.edu/revolution/>
Range of resources on the French Revolution
- <http://www.pbs.org/ktca/liberty/>
PBS web site with links to a number of sources on the American Revolution
- http://www.warmuseum.ca/cwm/exhibitions/gallery1/revolution_e.shtml
Canadian War Museum
- http://www.foreignpolicy.com/failed_states_index_2012_interactive
Foreign Policy 2012 index of failed states